Postcolonial Studies and the Challenge of Climate Change

Dipesh Chakrabarty

For Homi K. Bhabha

However we come to the question of postcolonial studies at this historical juncture, there are two phenomena, both topics of public debate since the early 1990s, that none of us can quite escape in our personal and collective lives at present: globalization and global warming. All thinking about the present has to engage both. What I do in this essay is to use some of the recent writings of Homi K. Bhabha to illustrate how a leading contemporary postcolonial thinker imagines the figure of the human in the era of what is often called "neoliberal" capitalism, and then enter a brief discussion of the debate on climate change to see how postcolonial thinking may need to be stretched to adjust itself to the reality of global warming. My ultimate proposition in this essay is simple: that the current conjuncture of globalization and global warming leaves us with the challenge of having to think of human agency over multiple and incommensurable scales at once.

The nineteenth century left us with some internationalist and universal ideologies, prominent among them Marxism and liberalism, both progenies in different ways of the Enlightenment. Anticolonial thought was born of that lineage. The waves of decolonization movements of the 1950s and 60s were followed by postcolonial criticism that was placed, in the universities of the Anglo-American countries at least, as brother-in-arms to cultural studies. Together, cultural studies and postcolonial criticism fed into the literature on globalization, though globalization studies, as such, also drew on developments in the cognate disciplines of sociology, economics, and anthropology. Now we have a literature on global warming and a general sense of an environmental crisis that is no doubt mediated by the inequities of capitalist development, but it is a crisis that faces humanity as a whole. In all these moves, we are left with three images of the human: the universalist-Enlightenment view of the human as potentially the same everywhere, the subject with

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 1–18

capacity to bear and exercise rights; the postcolonial-postmodern view of the human as the same but endowed everywhere with what some scholars call "anthropological difference"—differences of class, sexuality, gender, history, and so on. This second view is what the literature on globalization underlines. And then comes the figure of the human in the age of the Anthropocene, the era when humans act as a geological force on the planet, changing its climate for millennia to come. If critical commentary on globalization focuses on issues of anthropological difference, the scientific literature on global warming thinks of humans as constitutively one—a species, a collectivity whose commitment to fossil-fuel based, energy-consuming civilization is now a threat to that civilization itself. These views of the human do not supersede one another. One cannot put them along a continuum of progress. No one view is rendered invalid by the presence of others. They are simply disjunctive. Any effort to contemplate the human condition today—after colonialism, globalization, and global warming—on political and ethical registers encounters the necessity of thinking disjunctively about the human, through moves that in their simultaneity appear contradictory.

But since I come to all these questions as someone trained in the discipline of history, allow me to approach them via this discipline and by way of a brief historical detour. And I apologize in advance for the slight intrusion of the autobiographical at this point, for I was also a witness to the history I recount here. My entry into the field of postcolonial studies, quite fittingly for someone interested in the theme of belatedness, was late.[1] Postcolonial ideas, as we know, took by storm departments of English literature in the Anglo-American academe in the 1980s. Now when I look at back on it, postcolonial studies seem to have been a part, initially at least, of a cultural and critical process by which a postimperial West adjusted itself to a long process of decolonization that perhaps is not over yet. After all, it cannot be without significance that what brought Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Isaac Julien together to read Fanon in the London of the late 1980s and the 1990s was the struggle against racism in a postimperial Britain, a struggle sometimes given official backing by the radical Greater London Council and hosted by the Institute of Contemporary Art.[2]

The American scene with regard to postcolonial studies was admittedly somewhat different. Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* (1978) out of his sense of involvement in the Palestinian struggle and Gayatri Spivak, I assume, was responding in part to the culture wars on American campuses about opening up core curriculum (as at Stanford in the late 1980s) and redefining the literary canon when she introduced the Indian feminist writer Mahasweta Devi to academic readers in the United States. Australian

developments that I personally witnessed in these years drew on both English and North-American instances. I got drawn into debates about "culture as distinction" and about the literary canon that took place in the meetings of the Arts Faculty at the University of Melbourne in the late 1980s. A leading scholar in those debates was Simon During, a pioneer in what was then emerging as the field of cultural studies.[3] The University of Essex conferences on postcolonial studies had just taken place. I was aware of During's involvement in those conferences. Lata Mani, then a graduate student with the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California–Santa Cruz, had published a path-breaking paper on "sati" in one of their proceedings volumes.[4] But the volumes still had not impacted the world of historians. We began to publish *Subaltern Studies* in India in 1983 without much awareness of postcolonial literary criticism. I remember Simon During returning to Melbourne in the mid-80s from a postcolonialism conference overseas and asking me if I knew of the work of Homi Bhabha. I answered, with some surprise but as any educated newspaper-reading Indian would have answered in those days, "Sure, a major Indian Atomic Research Centre is named after him. He was one of our best physicists; but why would you be interested in him?" That was the day the other Homi Bhabha entered my life, as a problem of mistaken identity, through a stand-in, as a question of difference *within* the identity "Homi Bhabha" (to mimic my dear friend who bears that name).

Subaltern Studies, the historiographical movement with which I was associated, emerged out of anti-, and not postcolonial, thought. We were a bunch of young men (initially men) interested in Indian history and were in some ways disillusioned with the nationalisms of our parents. The two Englishmen in the group, David Arnold and David Hardiman, were anti-imperial in their political outlook and rejected the dominantly proimperial historiography that came out of England. The Indian members of the group were disappointed and angry about the Indian nation's failure to deliver the social justice that anticolonial nationalism had promised. Our historiographical rebellion raised many interesting methodological issues for Indian history and for history in general. Ranajit Guha, our mentor, could easily be seen as one of the pioneers of the so-called linguistic turn in the discipline of history though, it has to be acknowledged, Hayden White had already raised many of the most pertinent issues in the 1970s.[5] Our analyses of subaltern histories were deeply influenced by Guha's infectious enthusiasm for structuralism of the kind that was associated with Barthes, Jakobson, and Levi-Strauss, a structuralism one could also associate with Hayden White and with an early moment of cultural studies—especially in Britain where the New

Accent series of publications emphasized the importance of structuralism, and where Guha was originally based. Gramsci—with a selection of his prison notebooks translated into English in 1971—had softened the Stalinist edges of our Indo-British Marxism and attuned us to the importance of the popular, and Mao—many of the historians in the group had earlier been involved in the Maoist movement that took place in India between 1967 and 1971—had helped us to think of the peasant as a modern revolutionary subject. But we did not encounter postcolonial thought until Spivak brought our group into contact with her deconstructionist variety of Marxism and feminism, and made us confront our theoretical innocence in proposing to make the subaltern the "subject" of his or her own history. As we pondered the challenge she posed to the group and embraced its consequences, we crossed over from being merely anticolonial historians (with incipient critiques of the nation-state form) to being a part of the intellectual landscape of postcolonial criticism.

What was the difference? one might ask. The difference was signaled by Spivak's epochal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that she had begun to draft in response to the *Subaltern Studies* project and before our first meeting with her took place.[6] The human in our anticolonial mode of thinking was a figure of sovereignty. We wanted to make the peasant or the subaltern the subject of his or her history, period. And we thought of this subject in the image of the autonomous rights-bearing person with the same access to representation in national and other histories as others from more privileged backgrounds enjoyed. A straightforward plea for social justice underlay our position, just as it did in a variety of Marxist, feminist, or even liberal histories. And like Fanon, we saw the subaltern classes as claiming their humanity through revolutionary upheavals. Becoming human was for us a matter of becoming a subject.[7]

This was why Spivak's exercise in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" was so salutary. It challenged the very idea of the "subject" that *Subaltern Studies* and much anticolonial thought celebrated and invited us to write deconstructive histories of subjecthood.

This critique of the subject was not the same as that performed by Althusserian antihumanism of the 1960s and 70s that so riled E. P. Thompson, the great humanist historian of the last century.[8] Postcolonial critique of the subject was actually a deeper turning towards the human, a move best exemplified for me in the work of Homi Bhabha. It was a turn that both appreciated difference as a philosophical question and at the same time repudiated its essentialization by identity politics.[9] That single move—channeled not through identity politics but through difference philosophies—connected postcolonial thinking to thinking about the human condition in the age of globalization.

To appreciate the close political relations that existed between "rights" thinking and the body of postcolonial thought that drew on the post-structuralist critique of the subject, we have to get beyond some of the fruitless debates of the 1990s. I think it was a mistake of the Left on both sides of the postmodern divide in the 1990s to think of these two different figurations of the human—the human as a rights-bearing subject and the figure of the human glimpsed through the critique of the subject—as somehow competing with each other in a do-or-die race in which only the fittest survived. The critique of the subject did not make the idea of the autonomous subject useless any more than the critique of the nation-state made the institution of the nation-state obsolete. What I have learnt from postcolonial thinkers is the necessity to move through contradictory figures of the human, now through a collapsing of the person and the subject as in liberal or Marxist thought, and now through a separation of the two. Before I discuss what forces us to engage in such border-crossing in our thinking, let me illustrate the fleet-footed movement I am speaking of by turning to some recent writings of Homi K. Bhabha.

The Human in Postcolonial Criticism Today

Listen to Bhabha writing of the new subaltern classes of today, "the stateless," "migrant workers, minorities, asylum seekers, [and] refugees" who "represent emergent, undocumented lifeworlds that break through the formal language of 'protection' and 'status' because"—he says, quoting Balibar—"they are '*neither insiders [n]or outsiders, or (for many of us) . . . insiders officially considered outsiders.*"[10] Classic Bhabha, one would have thought, this turning over of the outside into the inside and vice versa. Yet it is not the "cosmopolitan claims of global ethical equivalence" that Bhabha reads into these new subalterns of the global capitalist order. His eyes are fixed as much on the deprivation that the human condition suffers in these circumstances as they are on the question of rights: "As insiders/outsiders they damage the cosmopolitan dream of a 'world without borders' . . . by opening up, *in the midst of* international polity, a complex and contradictory mode of being or surviving somewhere in between legality and incivility. It is a kind of no-man's land that, in the world of migration, shadows global success . . . it substitutes cultural survival in migrant *milieux* for full civic participation."[11]

"Full civic participation"—one can see at once the normative horizons on which Bhabha has set his sights. They are indeed those that acknowledge that our recognition of the human condition in the everyday does

not *eo ipso* negate questions of social justice. On the contrary. Bhabha, of course, acknowledges the fact that the politics of (cultural) survival often takes the place of "full civic participation" in the lives of these new subalterns of the global economy. But he has to move between these poles (survival versus civic participation) to see the subaltern politics of cultural survival not only as a zone of creativity and improvisation—which it is—but also as an area of privation and disenfranchisement. It will be interesting, then, to see how it is precisely this freedom that Bhabha claims for himself to think contradictorily—to think mobility (survival) and stasis (civic participation) at the same time—that allows him to turn the tables on his erstwhile critics, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who found in "nomadism and miscegenation" "figures of virtue, the first ethical practices on the terrain of Empire," since, they argued, "circulation" or "deterritorialisation" were steps towards the goal of global citizenship that entailed "the struggle against the slavery of belonging to a nation, an identity and a people, and thus the desertion from sovereignty and the limits it places on subjectivity" were for them and this reason "entirely positive" developments.[12] "Such an emancipatory ideal," writes Bhaba, "—so fixated on the *flowing*, borderless, global world—neglects to confront the fact that migrants, refugees, or nomads do not merely circulate." Rather, he goes on to point out:

> They need to settle, claim asylum or nationality, demand housing and education, assert their economic and cultural rights, and seek the status of citizenship. It is salutary, then, to turn to less "circulatory" forms of the economy like trade and tariffs, or taxes and monetary policy—much less open to postmodern metaphoric appropriation—to see how they impact on the global imaginary of diasporic cultural studies. Positive global relations depend on the protection and enhancement of these national "territorial" resources, which should then become part of the "global" political economy of resource redistribution and a transnational moral economy of redistributive justice.[13]

The point of these long quotations is simply to show how juxtaposed and crossed-over remain the two figures of the human in these discussions by Bhabha: the human of the everyday who illustrates the human condition as the embodiment of what Bhabha once called "difference within"—the insider as the outsider and vice versa—the human who improvises and survives, and the human who asserts his or her cultural and economic rights in the expectation of being the sovereign figure of the citizen some day.

This constant movement between normative and onto-existential images of the human in Bhabha's prose is an index of the human predicament produced by dominant forms of globalization. Bhabha

turns to Hannah Arendt to explain this predicament. Arendt had once argued that the very creation of a "One World" through the positing of so many "peoples" organized into nation-states produced the problem of statelessness, not from "a lack of civilization" but as "the perverse consequence of the political and cultural conditions of modernity."[14] Modernity created this new "savage" condition of many human beings, the condition of being declared stateless if they could not be identified with a nation-state, forcing them to fall back on the politics of survival. Today, it is not simply the arrangement of nation-states that creates this condition of stateless, illegal migrants, guest workers, and asylum seekers. It is a deeper predicament produced by both the globalization of capital and the pressures of demography in poorer countries brought about by the unevenness of postcolonial development. Whether you read Mike Davis on *The Planet of Slums* or documents produced by Abahlali baseMjondolo, the shack-dwellers' movement in Durban, South Africa, it is clear that today's capitalism feeds off a large pool of migrant, often illegal, labor that is cast aside by many as "surplus population"—a process that deprives these groups of the enjoyment of any social goods and services, while their labor remains critical to the functioning of the service sector in both advanced and growing economies.[15] At the same time, it has to be acknowledged, refugees and asylum seekers are produced also by state-failures connected to a whole series of factors: economic, political, demographic, and environmental. Together, these groups, today's subaltern classes, embody the human condition negatively, as an image of privation. No ethnography of their everyday lives can access its object positively through the figure of the citizen. Yet our normative horizons, belonging as we analysts do to one or another kind of civil society, cannot but depend on the measure of "cultural and economic rights" and "full civic participation," even as any real possibility of effective citizenship for all humans seems increasingly remote. Do not one billion human beings already live without access to proper drinking water? When will the illegal Bangladeshi and North-African workers one encounters on the streets of Athens, Florence, Rome, Vienna, Paris, London—not to speak of illegal Bangladeshi labor in the informal sectors of India and Pakistan—become full-fledged European citizens? There is one predicament of our thinking, however, that speaks to the contradictions of our lifeworlds today. Our normative horizons, unlike those of Marx's classical writings, say, give us no vantage point from which we could not only judge but also describe and know these classes, while ethnographies of what the marginal, the poor, and the excluded actually do in order to survive yield no alternative norms for human societies that are still in the grip of large and centralizing institutions, corporations, and bureaucracies.[16]

This disjuncture is at its most acute now in what progressive European theorists such as Etienne Balibar or Sandro Mezzadra write by way of placing refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal immigrants in European history, politics, and policy.[17] It may or may not surprise the reader to know that Europe today is dotted with detention centers for these unwelcome people. The number of such centers exceeds one hundred and they extend outside Europe into North Africa.[18] Europe has adopted border protection policies that are reminiscent of those pursued by the United States or Australia, except that in Europe the borders, if a detention camp is indeed a border, are as much inside Europe as outside. It is this indeterminacy of borders that has led Balibar to make the observation that if the nineteenth century was the time when European imperialism made frontiers into borders by exporting the border-form outside Europe, we stand today on the threshold of an age when borders are becoming frontiers again.[19]

However, reading Balibar and Mezzadra on these questions makes it clear that their writing is caught in tension between two tendencies: on the one hand they have to acknowledge the historical and current barbarisms that have in the past acted as a foundation of European "civilization" and continue to do so to some extent even in the present; on the other hand they have to appeal to the highest utopians ideals of their civilizational heritage in order to imagine into being a vibrant European polity that not only practices the ethics of hospitality and responsibility that Derrida, Levinas, and others have written about, but that also grounds itself in a deep acceptance of the plurality of human inheritances inside its own borders.[20] It is no wonder, then, that European intellectuals, whether discussing refugees from outside Europe or internal migrants from the ex-colonies and the question of "Eastern Europe," are increasingly debating postcolonial theory and are even producing their own readers and translations of postcolonial writings.[21] Europe today is clearly a new frontier of postcolonial studies—and not because the classical peasant-subaltern subject can be found in Europe. No, it is because the new subalterns of the global economy—refugees, asylum seekers, illegal workers—can be found all over Europe and it is by making these groups the object of his thinking that Homi Bhabha arrives at a figure of the human that is constitutionally and necessarily doubled and contradictory.

Let me now turn to the issue of global warming to consider how it challenges us to imagine the human.

The Human in the Anthropocene

If the problem of global warming or climate change had not burst in on us through the 2007 Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), globalization would have been perhaps the most important theme stoking our thoughts about being human. But global warming adds another challenge. It calls us to visions of the human that neither rights talk nor the critique of the subject ever contemplated. This does not, as I said before, make those earlier critiques irrelevant or redundant, for climate change will produce—and has begun to produce—its own cases of refugees and regime failures.[22] The effects of climate change are mediated by the global inequities we already have. So the two visions of the human that I have already outlined—the universalist view of global justice between human individuals imagined as having the same rights everywhere and the critique of the subject that poststructuralism once promoted—will both remain operative. In discussing issues of climate justice, we will thus necessarily go through familiar moves: criticize the self-aggrandizing tendencies of powerful and rich nations and speak of a progressive politics of differentiated responsibilities in handling debates about migration, legal or illegal. Indeed, one of the early significant tracts to be written on the problem and politics of global warming was authored by two respected Indian environmental activists who gave it the title, *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism*.[23] The science and politics of climate change have not rendered these moves irrelevant or unnecessary; but they have become insufficient as analytical strategies.[24]

Consider the challenge that climate science poses to humanists. Climate scientists raise a problem of scale for the human imagination, though they do not usually think through the humanistic implications of their own claim that, unlike the changes in climate this planet has seen in the past, the current warming is anthropogenic in nature. Humans, collectively, now have an agency in determining the climate of the planet as a whole, a privilege reserved in the past only for very large-scale geophysical forces. This is where this crisis represents something different from what environmentalists have written about so far: the impact of humans on their immediate or regional environments. The idea of humans representing a force on a very large geological scale that impacts the whole planet is new. Some scientists, the Nobel-winning Paul J. Crutzen at the forefront, have proposed the beginning of a new geological era, an era in which human beings act as a force determining the climate of the entire planet all at once. They have suggested that we call this period "the Anthropocene" to mark the end of the Holocene

that named the geological "now" within which recorded human history so far has unfolded.[25] But who is the "we" of this process? How do we think of this collective human agency in the era of the Anthropocene?

Scientists who work on the physical history of the universe or on the history of the earth's climate in the past no doubt tell certain kinds of histories. But in Gadamerian or Diltheyan terms, they *explain* and are not required to *understand* the past in any humanist sense. Every individual explanation makes sense because it relates to other existing explanations. But a cognitive exercise is not "understanding" in the Gadamerian sense, and until there is an element of the latter, we do not have history, not human history at least. Which is why, usually, a purely "natural" history of climate over the last several million years would not be of much interest to a postcolonial historian who works on human history.

What is remarkable about the current crisis is that climate scientists are not simply doing versions of natural history. They are also giving us an account of climate change that is neither purely "natural" nor purely "human" history. And this is because they assign an agency to humans at the very heart of this story. According to them, current *global* (and not regional) climate changes are largely human induced. This implies that humans are now part of the natural history of the planet. The wall of separation between natural and human histories that was erected in early modernity and reinforced in the nineteenth century as the human sciences and their disciplines consolidated themselves has some serious and long-running cracks in it.[26]

The ascription of a geological agency to humans is a comparatively recent development in climate science. One of the earliest references I could find of scientists assigning to humans a role in the geophysical process of the planet was in a paper that the University of California, San Diego, oceanographer Roger Revelle and the University of Chicago geophysicist H. E. Suess coauthored in the geophysics journal *Tellus* in 1957. "Human beings are now carrying out a large-scale geophysical experiment of a kind that could not have happened in the past nor be reproduced in the future," they wrote. "Within a few centuries we are returning to the atmosphere and oceans the concentrated organic carbon stored in the sedimentary rocks over hundreds of millions of years. This experiment, if adequately documented, may yield a far-reaching insight into the processes determining weather and climate."[27] The Environmental Pollution Panel of the U.S. President's Science Advisory Committee expressed the opinion in 1965 that "through his worldwide industrial civilization, Man is unwittingly conducting a vast geophysical experiment. Within a few generations, he is burning fossil fuel that slowly accumulated in the earth over the past 500 million years." They

went on to warn: "The climatic changes that may be produced by the increased CO_2 content could be deleterious from the point of view of human beings."[28] Even as late as 1973, the Committee on Atmospheric Sciences of the National Academy of Science said: "Man clearly has no positive knowledge of the magnitude or the manner in which he is presently changing the climate of the earth. There is no real question that inadvertent modification of the atmosphere is taking place."[29]

We can thus see a progress or inflation, if you like, in the rhetoric of climate scientists. Man was an experimenter on a geophysical scale in the 1950s; by the 1990s, he was a geophysical force himself. Silently and implicitly, climate scientists have doubled the figure of the human as the agent of anthropogenic global warming (AGW). Humans put out greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the biosphere. Here the picture of the human is how social scientists have always imagined humans to be: a purposeful biological entity with the capacity to degrade natural environment. But what happens when we say humans are acting like a geophysical force? We then liken humans to some nonhuman, nonliving agency. That is why I say the science of anthropogenic global warming has doubled the figure of the human—you have to think of the two figures of the human simultaneously: the human-human and the nonhuman-human. And that is where some challenges lie for the postcolonial scholar in the humanities.

The first challenge is the scale on which scientists invite us to imagine human agency. Consider the point that, collectively, we are now capable of affecting the climate of this planet and changing it, as the geophysicist David Archer says, for the next one hundred thousand years.[30] Such numbers usually function as operators with which we manipulate information. We do not understand them without training. Scientists are aware of this problem and do what historians do to bring vast scales within the realm of understanding: appeal to human experience. The Australian social and environmental historian Tom Griffiths recently published a splendid history of the Antarctic. But how does a social historian go about writing a *human* history of an uninhabited and uninhabitable vast expanse of snow and ice? Griffiths does what all good historians do: go to the experience that past humans have already had of such a region in order to write a human history of this place. He consults the private papers of historical explorers, looks at their letters to see how they experienced the place, and intercalates his reading of these documents with leaves from his own diary of traveling to the South Pole. This is how the Antarctic gets humanized. We use the metaphoric capacity of human language and visual records to bring its ice within the grasp of human experience. The Australian explorer Douglas Mawson went to

the Antarctic for the years 1911–14, having just become engaged to a Paquita Delprat of Broken Hill in Western Australia. In one of her lovelorn letters to Mawson, Delprat wrote: "Are you frozen? In heart I mean . . . . Am I pouring out a little of what is in my heart to an iceberg? . . . Can a person remain in such cold and lonely regions however beautiful and still love warmly?" Mawson reassured her that her love had warmed her "proxy iceberg" and that "he felt less cold this time."[31] It is through such interleaving of experiences and through the employment of figures of speech—some telling metaphors and similes—that we make a human history of the empty vastness and ice of the South Pole.

Scientists interested in creating an informed public around the crisis of climate change make a very similar appeal to experience. For reasons of space, I will illustrate the point with an example from David Archer's book *The Long Thaw*. Archer distills out of his analysis a problem that turns around the explanation/understanding distinction I mentioned earlier. Human beings cannot really imagine beyond a couple of generations before and after their own time, he says. "The rules of economics, which govern much of our behavior," he writes, "tend to limit our focus to even shorter time frames," for the value of everything gets discounted in decades.[32] Archer faces the problem that humans may not care for the science he is telling us about. One hundred thousand years is too far—why should we care for people so far into the future? "How would it feel," Archer asks, trying to translate geological units into human scales, "if the ancient Greeks, for example, had taken advantage of some lucrative business opportunity for a few centuries, aware of potential costs, such as, say, a [much] stormier world, or the loss of . . . agricultural productivity to rising sea levels—that could persist to this day?"[33] I find it remarkable as a historian that Archer, a socially concerned paleoclimatologist, should be asking us to extend to the future the faculty of understanding that historians routinely extend to humans of the recorded past.

But this is also where we encounter a real problem of interpretation. We write of pasts through the mediation of the experience of humans of the past. We can send humans, or even artificial eyes, to outer space, the poles, the top of Mount Everest, to Mars and the Moon and vicariously experience that which is not directly available to us. We can also—through art and fiction—extend our understanding to those who in future may suffer the impact of the geophysical force that is the human. But we cannot ever experience ourselves as a geophysical force—though we now *know* that this is one of the modes of our collective existence. We cannot send somebody out to experience in an unmediated manner this "force" on our behalf (as distinct from experiencing the impact of it mediated by other direct experiences—of floods, storms, or earthquakes,

for example). This nonhuman, forcelike mode of existence of the human tells us that we are no longer simply a form of life that is endowed with a sense of ontology. Humans have a sense of ontic belonging. That is undeniable. We used that knowledge in developing both anticolonial (Fanon) and postcolonial criticism (Bhabha). But in becoming a geophysical force on the planet, we have also developed a form of collective existence that has no ontological dimension. Our thinking about ourselves now stretches our capacity for interpretive understanding. We need nonontological ways of thinking the human.

Bruno Latour has complained for a long time that the problem with modern political thought is the culture/nature distinction that has allowed humans to look on their relationship to "nature" through the prism of the subject/object relationship.[34] He has called for a new idea of politics that brings together—as active partners into our arguments—both humans and nonhumans. I think what I have said adds a wrinkle to Latour's problematic. A geophysical force—for that is what in part we are in our collective existence—is neither subject nor an object. A force is the capacity to move things. It is pure, nonontological agency. After all, Newton's idea of "force" went back to medieval theories of impetus.[35]

Climate change is not a one-event problem. Nor is it amenable to a single rational solution. It may indeed be something like what Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, planning theorists, once called a "wicked problem," an expression they coined in 1973 in an article entitled "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning" published in *Policy Sciences* "to describe a category of public policy concern that [while susceptible to a rational diagnosis] defied rational and optimal solutions," because it impinged on too many other problems to be solved or addressed at the same time.[36] Besides, as Mike Hulme, a climate researcher, points out: "This global solution-structure also begs a fundamental question which is rarely addressed in the respective fora where these debates and disagreements surface: What is the ultimate performance metric for the human species, what is it that we are seeking to optimise? Is it to restabilise population or to minimise our ecological footprint? Is it to increase life expectancy, to maximise gross domestic product, to make poverty history or to increase the sum of global happiness? Or is the ultimate performance metric for humanity simply survival?"[37]

Given that it is difficult to foresee humanity arriving at a consensus on any of these questions in the short-term future, even while scientific knowledge about global warming circulates more widely, it is possible that the turn towards what Ulrich Beck calls a "risk society" will only be intensified in the current phase of globalization and global warming. As we cope with the effects of climate change and pursue capitalist growth,

we will negotiate our attachments, mediated no doubt through the inequities of capitalism, knowing fully that they are increasingly risky.[38] But this also means that there is no "humanity" that can act as a self-aware agent. The fact that the crisis of climate change will be routed through all our "anthropological differences" can only mean that, however anthropogenic the current global warming may be in its origins, there is no corresponding "humanity" that in its oneness can act as a political agent. A place thus remains for struggles around questions on intrahuman justice regarding the uneven impacts of climate change.

This is to underline how open the space is for what may be called the politics of climate change. Precisely because there is no single rational solution, there is the need to struggle to make our way in hitherto uncharted ways—and hence through arguments and disagreements—toward something like what Latour calls "the progressive composition of a common world."[39] Unlike the problem of the hole in the ozone layer, climate change is ultimately all about politics. Hence its openness as much to science and technology as to rhetoric, art, media, and arguments and conflicts conducted through a variety of means. The need then is to think the human on multiple scales and registers and as having both ontological and nonontological modes of existence.

With regard to the climate crisis, humans now exist in two different modes. There is one in which they are still concerned with justice even when they know that perfect justice is never to be had. The "climate justice" historiography issues from this deeply human concern. Climate scientists' history reminds us, on the other hand, that we now also have a mode of existence in which we—collectively and as a geophysical force and in ways we cannot experience ourselves—are "indifferent" or "neutral" (I do not mean these as mental or experienced states) to questions of intrahuman justice. We have run up against our own limits as it were. It is true that as beings for whom the question of Being is an eternal question, we will always be concerned about justice. But if we, collectively, have also become a geophysical force, then we also have a collective mode of existence that is justice-blind. Call that mode of being a "species" or something else, but it has no ontology, it is beyond biology, and it acts as a limit to what we also are in the ontological mode.

This is why the need arises to view the human simultaneously on contradictory registers: as a geophysical force and as a political agent, as a bearer of rights and as author of actions; subject to both the stochastic forces of nature (being itself one such force collectively) and open to the contingency of individual human experience; belonging at once to differently-scaled histories of the planet, of life and species, and of human societies. One could say, mimicking Fanon, that in an age when the forces of globalization intersect with those of global warming, the

idea of the human needs to be stretched beyond where postcolonial thought advanced it.

In Conclusion

A little more than half a century ago, "an earth-born object made by man"—the Sputnik—orbited the planet in outer space, "in the proximity of the heavenly bodies as though it had been admitted tentatively to their sublime company." The author of these words, Hannah Arendt, thought that this event foretold a fundamental change in the human condition. The earth had been "unique in the universe in providing human beings with a habitat in which they can move and breathe without effort and without artifice," but now clearly science was catching up with a thought that "up to then had been buried in the highly non-respectable literature of science fiction." The Sputnik could be the first "step toward escape from man's imprisonment to the earth." "Should the emancipation and the secularization of the modern age," asked Arendt, " . . . end with [a] . . . fateful repudiation of an Earth who was the Mother of all living creatures under the sky?"[40] Still, Arendt's reading of this change in the human condition was optimistic. A critic of "mass society," she saw the danger of such a society mainly in spiritual terms. A "mass society" could "threaten humanity with extinction" in spirit by rendering humans into a "society of laborers."[41] But it was in the same "mass society"—"where man as a social animal rules supreme"—that "the survival of the species could [now] be guaranteed on a world-wide scale," thought Arendt.[42] The Sputnik was the first symbol, for her, of such optimism regarding the survival of the human species.

Today, with the crisis of anthropogenic climate change coinciding with multiple other crises of planetary proportions—of resources, finance, and food, not to speak of frequent weather-related human disasters—we know that the repudiation of the earth has come in a shape Arendt could not have even imagined in the optimistic and modernizing 1950s. Humans today are not only the dominant species on the planet, they also collectively constitute—thanks to their numbers and their consumption of cheap fossil-fuel-based energy to sustain their civilizations—a geological force that determines the climate of the planet much to the detriment of civilization itself. Today, it is precisely the "survival of the species" on a "world-wide scale" that is largely in question. All progressive political thought, including postcolonial criticism, will have to register this profound change in the human condition.

University of Chicago

NOTES

A draft of this essay was presented as a lecture at the University of Virginia in December 2010. Thanks to my audience and to the anonymous readers of the journal for constructive criticisms. Special thanks are due to Rita Felski for the original invitation to write this essay and for her helpful suggestions. I am grateful to Homi K. Bhabha for making some of his recent writings available to me and for many discussions of the issues raised here.

1 See my "Belatedness as Possibility: Subaltern Histories, Once Again" in *The Indian Postcolonial: A Critical Reader*, ed. Elleke Boehmer and Rosinka Chaudhuri (New York: Routledge, 2011), 163–76.

2 I discuss these developments in "An Anti-Colonial History of the Postcolonial Turn: An Essay in Memory of Greg Dening," Second Greg Dening Memorial Lecture (Melbourne, Australia: Department of History, The University of Melbourne, 2009), 11–13.

3 During gives his own account of these times in his introduction to *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (New York: Routledge, 1993).

4 Lata Mani, "The Production of an Official Discourse on Sati In Early Nineteenth Century Bengal," in *Europe and Its Others*, ed. Frances Barker and others (Colchester: Univ. of Essex Press, 1985), 1:107–27. The book was published in two volumes out a conference held at Essex in July 1984 on the subject of "the Sociology of Literature."

5 See Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983) and Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1973). I have tried to bring Guha and White together in my essay "Subaltern History as Political Thought" in *Colonialism and Its Legacies*, ed. Jacob T. Levy with Marion Iris Young (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 205–18.

6 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

7 Guha's *Elementary Aspects* was the best illustration of this proposition.

8 On all this, see E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

9 The *locus classicus* for this position is still Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994). See Homi K. Bhabha, "Global Pathways" (unpublished).

10 Homi K Bhabha, "Notes on Globalization and Ambivalence" in *Cultural Politics in a Global Age: Uncertainty, Solidarity and Innovation*, ed. David Held, Henrietta L. Moore, Kevin Young (Oxford: Oneworld, 2008), 39.

11 Bhabha, "Notes," 39–40.

12 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000), 361–62, cited in Homi K. Bhabha, "Our Neighbours, Ourselves: Contemporary Reflections on Survival" (unpublished), 3. For Hardt and Negri's critique of Bhabha and of postcolonialism generally, see *Empire*, 137–59.

13 Bhabha, "Our Neighbours," 3–4.

14 Bhabha paraphrasing Arendt in "Notes," 38.

15 Bhabha, "Notes." Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006). For details on the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, see their website *http://www.abahlali.org/*.

16 I read Partha Chatterjee's *Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004) as symptomatic of this predicament.

17 See Manuela Bojadžijev and Isabelle Saint-Saëns, "Borders, Citizenship, War, Class: A Discussion with Étienne Balibar and Sandro Mezzadra," *New Formations* 58 (2006): 10–30.

18 See the map reproduced in Rochona Majumdar, *Writing Postcolonial History* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 15. Thanks to Sandro Mezzadra for bringing these maps to my and Majumdar's attention.

19 Etienne Balibar, "Europe: An 'Unimagined' Frontier of Democracy," *Diacritics* 33, no. 3–4 (2003): 36–44. Also Etienne Balibar, *We the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship,* trans. James Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004), 7.

20 See Balibar, *We the People of Europe?* and note 21 below.

21 Gerhard Stilz and Ellen Dengel-Janic, eds., *South Asian Literatures* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftslicher Verlag, 2010); Sandro Mezzadra, *La Condizione Postcoloniale: storia e politica nel presente globale* (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2008).

22 See the recent documentary film *Climate Refugees* (2009) made by Michael P. Nash. *http://www.climaterefugees.com/.*

23 Sunita Narain and Anil Agarwal, *Global Warming in an Unequal World: A Case of Environmental Colonialism* (Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment, 1991)

24 For an elaboration of this point, see my essay "Verändert der Klimawandel die Geschichtsschreibung?" *Transit* 41 (2011): 143–63.

25 I discuss historiographical and some philosophical implications of the Anthropocene hypothesis in my essay, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009): 197–222. See also Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?" *Ambio* 36, no. 8 (2007): 614–21 and the special issue of *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* edited by Jan Zalasiewicz, Mark Williams, Alan Haywood, and Michael Ellis, "The Anthropocene: A New Epoch of Geological Time?" (2011): 835–41.

26 For elaboration, see my "Climate of History."

27 R. Revelle and H. E. Suess, "Carbon Dioxide exchange between atmosphere and ocean and the question of an increase in atmospheric CO_2 during the past decades," *Tellus* 9 (1957): 18–27, cited in *Weather and Climate Modification: Problems and Prospects,* vol. 1, summary and recommendations. Final Report of the Panel on Weather and Climate Modification to the Committee on Atmospheric Sciences, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council (Washington: National Academy of Sciences, 1966), 88–89.

28 *Restoring the Quality of Our Environment (Report of the Environmental Pollution Panel, President's Science Advisory Committee)* (Washington: The White House, 1965), Appendix Y4, 127.

29 *[Report of the] Committee on Atmospheric Sciences*, National Research Council (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1973), 160.

30 David Archer, *The Long Thaw: How Humans are Changing the Climate of the Planet for the Next 100,000 years* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010).

31 Tom Griffiths, *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007), 200.

32 Archer, *The Long Thaw,* 9.

33 Archer, *The Long Thaw,* 9–10.

34 Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004). Also see the debate between David Bloor and Bruno Latour: Bloor, "Anti-Latour," and Latour, "For David Bloor . . . And Beyond," in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 30, no. 1 (1999): 81–112 and 113–29.

35 J. Bruce Brackenridge, *The Key to Newton's Dynamics: The Kepler Problem and the Principia* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1995)

36 Quoted in Michael Hulme, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009), 334. Here is a contemporary definition of a "wicked problem": "A wicked problem is a complex issue that defies complete definition, for which there can be no final solution, since

any resolution generates further issues, and where solutions are not true or false or good or bad, but the best that can be done at the time. Such problems are not morally wicked, but diabolical in that they resist all the usual attempts to resolve them." Valerie A. Brown, Peter M. Deane, John A Harris, and Jaqueline Y. Russell, "Towards a Just and Sustainable Future," in *Tackling Wicked Problems: Through the Transdisciplinary Imagingation*, ed. Valerie A. Brown, John A. Harris, and Jaqueline Y. Russell (London, Washington: Earthscan, 2010), 4.

37 Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 336.

38 Ulrich Beck, "The Naturalistic Misunderstanding of the Green Movement: Environmental Critique as Social Critique," in *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk*, trans. Amos Weisz (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), 36–57. See also the discussion in Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), chap. 4.

39 Latour, *Politics of Nature*, 47

40 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed., introduction by Margaret Canovan (1958; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), 1–2.

41 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46.

42 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 46.

Postcolonial Remains

Robert JC Young

Responses to the essays by Dipesh Chakrabarty and Robert Young will appear in the next issue of New Literary History

What remains of the postcolonial? Has it already perished, leaving only its earthly relics, forgotten books, abandoned articles floating in cyberspace, remnants of yellowing conference programs? So one might think on reading the obituary announced by *PMLA* in 2007: "The End of Postcolonial Theory?"[1] There, a group of apparently former postcolonial critics pronounced "it" over. The members of the forum, for the most part, discussed postcolonial theory as if it were an entirely American phenomenon, and even there, as something of interest only to English departments. In that Anglophone characterization, the forum concurred with the more recent view of the French political scientist and director of research at the prestigious Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, Jean-François Bayart—except that for Bayart the postcolonial is far too alive, prompting him to write a whole book objecting to postcolonial theory as an unpleasant Anglo-Saxon intrusion into the purity of French thought.[2] Despite its noisy appearance in contemporary French intellectual culture, Bayart dismisses the postcolonial by claiming that its sources are entirely French, even if its identity is Anglo-Saxon, which therefore makes "postcolonial theory" altogether superfluous.

The desire to pronounce postcolonial theory dead on both sides of the Atlantic suggests that its presence continues to disturb and provoke anxiety: the real problem lies in the fact that the postcolonial remains. Why does it continue to unsettle people so much? The aspiring morticians of the postcolonial concur in scarcely relating it to the world from which it comes and for which it claims to speak: that outside Europe and North America. The desired dissolution of postcolonial theory does not mean that poverty, inequality, exploitation, and oppression in the world have come to an end, only that some people in the U.S. and French academies have decided they do not want to have to think about such things any longer and do not want to be reminded of those

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 19–42

distant invisible contexts which continue to prompt the transformative energies of the postcolonial.

"Postcolonialism" is not just a disciplinary field, nor is it a theory which has or has not come to an end. Rather, its objectives have always involved a wide-ranging political project—to reconstruct Western knowledge formations, reorient ethical norms, turn the power structures of the world upside down, refashion the world from below. The postcolonial has always been concerned with interrogating the interrelated histories of violence, domination, inequality, and injustice, with addressing the fact that, and the reasons why, millions of people in this world still live without things that most of those in the West take for granted. Clean water, for example. This is not to say that "the West" is an undifferentiated economic and social space, and nor, of course, are those countries outside the West, as economic booms transform nations such as Brazil, China, and India into new dynamics that contribute to a shifting of paradigms of economic and political power that have certainly modified the sensibility of colonial dependency.[3] Far from being over, the twenty-first century is already the century of postcolonial empowerment. The widespread anxiety that this produces provides a further reason why Western academics want to deny the realities of the postcolonial.

The postcolonial will remain and persist, whether or not it continues to find a place in the U.S. academy, just as it did not need academia to come into existence. Postcolonial theory came from outside the United States,[4] and has never involved a singular theoretical formation, but rather an interrelated set of critical and counterintuitive perspectives, a complex network of paronymous concepts and heterogeneous practices that have been developed out of traditions of resistance to a global historical trajectory of imperialism and colonialism. If anti- and postcolonial knowledge formations were generated by such circumstances, peripheral as they may seem to some metropolitan intellectuals, now, as in the past, the only criterion that could determine whether "postcolonial theory" has ended is whether, economic booms of the so-called "emerging markets" notwithstanding, imperialism and colonialism in all their different forms have ceased to exist in the world, whether there is no longer domination by nondemocratic forces (often exercised on others by Western democracies, as in the past), or economic and resource exploitation enforced by military power, or a refusal to acknowledge the sovereignty of non-Western countries, and whether peoples or cultures still suffer from the long-lingering aftereffects of imperial, colonial, and neocolonial rule, albeit in contemporary forms such as economic globalization.[5] Analysis of such phenomena requires shifting conceptualizations, but it does not necessarily require the regular production of new theoretical para-

digms: the issue is rather to locate the hidden rhizomes of colonialism's historical reach, of what remains invisible, unseen, silent, or unspoken. In a sense, postcolonialism has always been about the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies.[6]

The British Prime Minister David Cameron, for example, forgot to consult his Special Advisor in Postcolonial Studies before he led his November 2010 trade and business delegation to China, a delegation billed as the biggest ever in British history. Cameron clearly had not been reading Amitav Ghosh's 2009 novel, *Sea of Poppies*, either.[7] When the British ministers arrived at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for the reception, they wore their Remembrance Day poppies in their jacket lapels, as people in Britain do every year in the week running up to Remembrance Sunday. The poppies symbolize the sacrifice of more than a million servicemen who have died on active service since the First World War. The flowers reminded the Chinese, however, of a rather different poppy—the opium poppy, and therefore the Opium Wars fought by Britain against China in 1839–42 and 1856–60, which among other things, led to the concession of the British colony of Hong Kong. When Prime Minister Cameron and the British delegation arrived wearing their poppies in November 2010, the Chinese officials asked that they remove them, since they considered these poppies "inappropriate." In an echo of the famous incident when the British ambassador Earl McCartney refused to kowtow before the Emperor in 1793, Cameron refused to back down and insisted on wearing his poppy. When he followed this refusal with a lecture on human rights, the historical irony was apparent to all but himself.

Whereas the British often forget the Opium Wars, just as Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States forget the international "eight-nation alliance" sent to Peking to put down the Boxer "Rebellion" in 1898–1901, in China the historical injustices of its semicolonial past lingers on in official memory, repeated tirelessly to every tourist who visits the Summer Palace in Beijing, where visitors are reminded that the original was destroyed by British and French troops in 1860. The perpetrators of violence forget far sooner than those subjected to their power. Derrida used to argue that there will always be something "left over" and in that sense the postcolonial will always be left over. Something remains, and the postcolonial is in many ways about such unfinished business, the continuing projection of past conflicts into the experience of the present, the insistent persistence of the afterimages of historical memory that drive the desire to transform the present.

The postcolonial remains: it lives on, ceaselessly transformed in the present into new social and political configurations. One marker of its continuing relevance is the degree to which the power of the postcolonial perspective has spread across almost all the disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, from classics to development theory to law to medieval studies to theology—even sociology, under the encouragement of postcolonial-minded scholars such as Arjun Appadurai and Paul Gilroy, has abandoned its former narrow national focus to turn to an interest in globalization in the present.[8] So many disciplines have been, so to speak, postcolonialized, along with the creation of related subdisciplines such as diaspora and transnational studies, that this remarkable dispersal of intellectual and political influence now makes it difficult to locate any kind of center of postcolonial theory: reaching into almost every domain of contemporary thought, it has become part of the consciousness of our era. Inevitably, in each discipline in which it has been taken up, the postcolonial has been subtly adapted and transformed in different ways—in sociology's turn to globalization, for example, the historical perspective so fundamental to postcolonial studies gets largely removed. But how has the postcolonial itself changed in response to the historical transformations that have been occurring in the last decades, and, even more to the point, how should it change in the future? What conditions and situations have risen to a new visibility? What have been the greatest challenges to postcolonial analysis? And, continuing in the necessary mode of perpetual autocritique, what aspects of its own theoretical framework have limited the reach of its own radical politics?

In a reconsideration of the role of the postcolonial in the era of the twenty-first century that attempts to begin to answer these questions, I will focus on contemporary issues that have involved what can be characterized as the politics of invisibility and of unreadability: indigenous struggles and their relation to settler colonialism, illegal migrants, and political Islam. None of these fall within the template of the classic paradigm of anticolonial struggles, but they all involve postcolonial remains as well as prompting political insights that show the extent to which the postcolonial remains. What can be learned from them? They all invoke historical trajectories that have hitherto been scarcely visible, but which offer potential resources for critiques and transformations of the present. Since political Islam has highlighted questions of religion and secularism, I consider the example of the history of practices of toleration in Islamic societies, in which otherness is included rather than excluded. This in turn prompts the need for significant theoretical revision of a problematic concept appropriated by postcolonial theory from philosophy and anthropology: the idea of the Other.

I. The Politics of Invisibility

What has changed in the twenty-first century, from a postcolonial perspective? To answer the question in the first instance conceptually rather than historically, what the postcolonial eye can see more clearly now are the ways in which, like the conflictual meanings of Cameron's poppy, postcolonial remains operate in a dialectic of invisibility and visibility.

One of the most influential theoretical innovations of postcolonial theory has been the appropriation and reconceptualization of Antonio Gramsci's concept of subaltern classes.[9] Modified and typically singularized into the idea of the subaltern, this concept has enabled subaltern historians and cultural critics to recover a whole arena of historical agency that had remained invisible while history was written according to exclusive protocols of nationalist movements or class conflict. The preoccupation with the subaltern can be interpreted more generally to suggest the extent to which the postcolonial has always been concerned with a politics of invisibility: it makes the invisible visible. This is entirely paradoxical to the extent that its object was never, in fact, invisible, but rather the "invisible visible": it was not seen by those in power who determine the fault lines between the visible and the invisible. Postcolonialism, in its original impulse, was concerned to make visible areas, nations, cultures of the world which were notionally acknowledged, technically there, but which in significant other senses were not there, rather like the large letters on the map that Jacques Lacan characterizes as the structure of the unconscious. To take a simple example, until very recently, histories of "the world" were really histories of European expansion. Even today, so-called "world literature" is only belatedly being transformed from its long historical containment within the same Eurocentric paradigm. So the politics of invisibility involves not actual invisibility, but a refusal of those in power to see who or what is there. The task of the postcolonial is to make the invisible, in this sense, visible.

Within academia, this task begins with the politics of knowledge, with articulating the unauthorized knowledges, and histories, of those whose knowledge is not allowed to count. In the world beyond, politics itself often involves a practice of acting in order to make the invisible visible so that its injustices can be redressed. A postcolonial perspective will be more alert in detecting the signs of such transformations, but it, too, can be belated in its recognition of the campaigns of subaltern historical agents. This would be the case with indigenous struggles, which have only recently come to be regarded as a central issue for postcolonial politics. The obvious reason for this is that, drawing from the history of anticolonialism that formed part of so many national narratives of

emancipation, postcolonial studies did not give equal weight to the history of indigenous activism in what are, for the most part, long-standing postcolonial countries, such as those of North and South America. At the same time, there was a political-theoretical issue: indigenous activism uses a whole set of paradigms that do not fit easily with postcolonial presuppositions and theories—for example, ideas of the sacred and attachment to ancestral land. This disjunction, however, only illustrates the degree to which there has never been a unitary postcolonial theory—the right of return to sacred or ancestral land, for example, espoused by indigenous groups in Australia or the Palestinian people, never fitted easily with the postmodern Caribbean celebration of delocalized hybrid identities.[10] Postcolonial theory has always included the foundational and the antifoundational at the same time, indeed, it could be characterized by the fact that it has simultaneously deployed these apparently antithetical positions, a feature entirely missed by those who criticize it either as being too Marxist or alternatively too postmodern, though the fact that it is criticized on both counts is indicative. Suspicions about the foundations of established truths are not necessarily incompatible with, and indeed are more likely to be prompted by, the memories of an empirical, experienced history of colonial rule.[11]

While it is debatable whether the "third world" as such exists today, there is little doubt that the fourth world emphatically remains. With the demise of the third, the fourth world has risen to a new prominence, its issues thrown into starker visibility. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a transformation was underway in the long history of continued contesting resistance by tribal peoples, a history whose written articulation began with Bartolomé de Las Casas's *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542), whose institutional initiatives included the setting up of the Aborigines' Protection Society by Thomas Hodgkin in 1837, and which culminated many years later in the global political campaign that produced the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007.[12] The scope of indigenous struggles, and the ways in which they have been articulated through the power of the UN Declaration and by the use of the internet and other media as a means of facilitating transnational affiliations and forms of political organization, has meant that in a new and powerful way, indigenous peoples have been able to assert themselves effectively and very visibly within an international arena against the power of the sovereign states that have oppressed them for centuries. The narrative of emancipation whose goal was national liberation through the Leninist model of the capture of the central state apparatus has been supplemented by a political dynamic that in earlier decades was only visible to radical intellectuals such as the Peruvian

socialist José Carlos Mariátegui.[13] Despite these successes, however, oppressive forms of "fourth-world" internal colonialism continue to operate on every continent of the earth, particularly with respect to exploitation of natural resources that shows scant regard to the lives and lands of indigenous peoples. Who, though, is authorizing such exploitation? Thinking indigenous struggles through a postcolonial frame points to a topic that has remained comparatively neglected: settler colonialism.

In the arena of postcolonial studies, settler colonialism has managed, through its invocation of the tradition of colonial nationalism, to affiliate itself to the emancipatory narratives of anticolonial struggles—witness the widely circulated *The Empire Writes Back* of 1989, which assimilates all forms of colonial liberation into a single narrative of freedom from the imperial metropolis.[14] What this passes over is the degree to which settler colonies themselves practiced a form of "deep colonialism," a term recently revived by Lorenzo Veracini, which underscores the extent to which the achievement of settler self-governance enforced the subjection of indigenous peoples and indeed increased the operation of oppressive colonial practices against them.[15] In almost any settler colony one can think of, settler liberation from colonial rule was premised on indigenous dispossession. The emancipatory narrative of postcolonialism was not accessible to those who remained invisible within it. Indeed for them, national emancipation produced a more overpowering form of colonial rule, often enforced by a special contract for indigenous peoples distinct from that between settlers and metropolis.

The postcolonial question that remains is how indigenous emancipation, that is the acquisition of land and rights not mediated or already conditioned by the terms of settler emancipation from which indigenous people were excluded, can be achieved. It also becomes clear that the same paradigm of sovereignty through dispossession applies to many nonsettler colonies, where indigenous minorities or historically excluded groups have found the freedom of a postcolonial sovereignty to mean comparable or even worse forms of oppression than under colonial rule, even if the political structure is that of a democracy. One leading marker of the nationalist drive for domination over heterogeneous peoples can often be located in the history of the language policies of the independent national state. What we need to recognize now is that the postcolonial narrative of emancipation and the achievement of sovereignty was in many cases deeply contradictory. The civil wars and the often continuing civil unrest that, in many cases, followed independence have often been the product of the nationalist creation of a deep colonialism that has sought to make indigenous people or other minorities invisible.

Today this practice has in certain respects become more widespread with respect to other kinds of minorities across the world. As some minorities make themselves conspicuous, others must live their lives unseen. Paradoxically, it can often be the visible minorities who are in certain respects invisible. In Beirut, when you go to a restaurant, the waiters who serve you will generally be local people, of one sort or another. But hidden below, and only visible when you go downstairs and glance into the kitchens, you see that those cooking and washing up are Bangladeshi. While indigenous peoples have been making themselves visible, a new tricontinental has developed. Not this time the militancy of the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAL) that was developed in the 1960s, but a new subaltern tricontinental of migrants from the poorer countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, often fleeing state or other forms of violence, moving around the world in search of jobs and livelihood. These people form an invisible tricontinental diaspora, made up of refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, asylum seekers, economic migrants, illegal migrants, irregular migrants, undocumented migrants, illegal aliens. They remain almost invisible, working in unregulated conditions in building sites, hotel kitchens, brothels, cleaning lavatories, on farms, until for a moment they are thrown into sharp relief: when the media reports that the boat onto which too many are crowded has capsized off Lampedusa during the journey from Libya to Italy or off the coast of Morocco on the way to Spain or off the coast of Sudan on the way to Saudi Arabia or shipwrecked on the Australian coast at the end of the journey from Sri Lanka. These invisible migrants only move into visibility when they die in this way, or when they are arrested by border police or when they suddenly appear in their thousands fleeing war, as in the case of those who fled to the borders of Egypt and Tunisia from Libya in the spring of 2011—or when they are demonized by politicians in election campaigns. Otherwise, they remain as the invisible support system of the economies of Western countries, the Middle East, and elsewhere, hidden in their fugitive illegality or kept separate in workers' compounds, visible only in the fruit and vegetables they have picked that are bought at the supermarket, or the sleek skyscraper that rises on the distant horizon. Invisible until the moment, as imagined in the 2004 film *A Day Without a Mexican*, when the "illegals" suddenly disappear and the whole of California grinds to a halt. How do you make the invisible visible? the film asks. The answer: you take it away.

The problem with *A Day Without a Mexican*, on the other hand, is that it encourages the idea that migration is just a Western issue, whereas the reality is that, of the 43 million displaced people in the world, the great majority find themselves in poorer countries outside the West. From a

Western perspective, these are the really invisible invisible people. Many of them are children. Often without papers or documentation, they are denied the basic rights of the nation-state and are left only with the interminable inaccessibility of the dream of self-emancipation. Whereas migration theorists tend to examine migration issues generated through specific case studies, postcolonial theory can provide a theoretical and historical framework for understanding new phenomena such as the globalization of migration, and for thinking through the question of how to reformulate the emancipatory aims of anticolonial struggle outside the parameters of the nation-state. Today, it is no longer a question of a formal colonizer-colonized relation. That is for the most part over, though versions of it persist in the settler colonies, and its legacy continues to inflect attitudes, assumptions, and cultural norms in the world beyond. What we have instead is something almost more brutal, because there is no longer even a relation, just those countless individuals in so many societies, who are surplus to economic requirements, redundant, remaindered, condemned to the surplusage of lives full of holes, waiting for a future that may never come, forced into the desperate decision to migrate illegally across whole continents in order to survive.[16] The postcolonial question now is how to make the dream of emancipation accessible for all those people who fall outside the needs of contemporary modernity.

II. Unreadable Islam

The second shift in the visible landscape of postcolonial studies involves a comparable transformation, in which the struggles of people who were visible but not seen or taken seriously by global populations in positions of power and their political and cultural leaders have moved into political prominence—with the re-emergence of radical Islam. As with indigenous struggles, this political story goes far back into the colonial era, and it is also one that the fight for national sovereignty, which formally ended the period of colonial rule, left in different ways unresolved. The resurgence of Islam and of indigenous struggles both developed out of remainders, the living-on remnants of the conflicts of the past. The two "new" political issues that postcolonial studies has begun to engage with more actively in recent years are in fact two of the oldest, once regarded as outmoded and finished, but which refused to die. What was repressed and left without resolution has re-emerged, articulated in new forms. And what disconcerts Westerners the most is when it becomes starkly visible: hence the Western obsession with women who choose to assert their beliefs visibly by wearing the veil.

While the question of representing or covering (up) Islam was always central to the work of Edward W. Said, it was not a major preoccupation of postcolonial studies as a whole in its first twenty or so years of existence. If, since its inception in academic form with Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, postcolonial thinking broadly defined has become integrated within dominant cultural and institutional practices, then one reason why it found relatively easy acceptance was because it tended to sideline not only the Israel-Palestine conflict, but also the question of Islam and the role of religion in anticolonial struggle more generally—this despite the fact that *Orientalism* was published just a year before the Iranian revolution of 1979.[17] Postcolonial activism transforming the Eurocentrism and ingrained cultural assumptions of the West and advocating greater tolerance and understanding of people who displayed ethnic and cultural differences received a dramatic setback, however, with the political reactions that followed the 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2001.

At this point, a different history of the twentieth century was thrown into a violent visibility, highlighting not the "world" and "cold" wars, or the anticolonial struggles of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but focusing instead on the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Israel-Palestine conflict, together with related events such as the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The Caribbean model of creolization and hybridity, championed so effectively by postcolonial theorists and adapted without too much difficulty to Britain's own earlier models of integration with respect to the Irish, other Catholics, Jews, and other minorities, or with respect to American hyphenated minority identities, no longer seemed so obviously appropriate as a way forward.[18] The fact that Salman Rushdie, the best-known advocate for the new hybridized cultural model, had come into conflict with Muslims across the world with the controversy around *The Satanic Verses* that erupted in 1989 was transformed from what had at the time seemed like a particular incident epitomizing the clash of artistic and religious values into a symptomatic and indicative marker in this newly visible history.

In retrospect, the arguments around *The Satanic Verses* demonstrate the degree to which the new forms of Islam were effectively unreadable to those in the West. What had been little noticed was that Islam had also been changing—a difference highlighted in the contrast between the Iranian Revolution, which developed into an attempt to transform Iran into a properly Muslim state, and the Rushdie controversy ten years later, which revolutionized traditional configurations of Islamic activism. In so far as both events were precipitated from Iran, many assumed that the Revolution and the fatwa were part of the same Islamic "fundamentalism" that had been identified in the militant Islamic political parties in

Algeria, Egypt, and Pakistan, entirely missing the point that the former were Shiite and the latter Sunni. Despite the amply funded Wahhabi Islamism promoted from Saudi Arabia, the Rushdie controversy was the first moment in the production of a new syncretic configuration of Islam, whose only connection with Wahhabism was its transnationalism, albeit of a rather different kind.[19]

Westerners tend to read all forms of radical Islam as the same, that is, as fundamentalism, itself ironically a Western concept, as is wittily suggested in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* of 2007.[20] The *Satanic Verses* controversy was taken to initiate a conflict between the new Western cultural language of hybridity and the language of the pure, of a fundamentalist Islam. Instead the controversy signaled the appearance of a new hybrid Islam, marked by the fact that the Shia fatwa was supported internationally all over the Muslim world by people and groups whose own ideologies were radically different from each other, including Sunni Wahhabi and fundamentalist groups such as Jamaah al-Islamiyyah of Egypt or the Jamaat-e Islami of Pakistan. As Faisal Devji has persuasively argued, the international reach of the agitation against Rushdie was the first sign of a new globalized form of Islam, whose next major manifestation would be spectacularly launched with 9/11.[21] What Devji calls the "democratic" tendency of Al Qaeda, eschewing all traditional forms of Muslim authority, drawing on an international range of supporters, and employing a heady eclectic mixture of Muslim motifs, often more Shiite than Sunni despite its Sunni identity, marks the emergence of a new heterogeneous Islam whose objective, far from being focused on the traditional takeover of control of the individual nation-state on the Leninist, anticolonialist, or Islamist model, involves the liberation of the "Holy Land" of Islam from a century of Western domination and pins its hope on a transnational utopia created through the return of the Caliphate.

Far from being "fundamentalist," Al Qaeda is a dialectical product of the long-standing interaction of Islam with the West, as eclectic in its ideology as in the provenance of its often Westernized operatives, and for that reason it sees the West as its own intimate enemy and draws on a form of anticolonial rhetoric to establish its objectives, even if these are transnational rather than national. It was hardly surprising, in this context, to discover that Osama Bin Laden spent his time in hiding videotaping himself watching videos of himself on TV. Al Qaeda's political objectives are equally bound to its antagonist, preoccupied as it is with the historical grievance of the history of Western imperialism in the Middle East. In his public statements, Bin Laden explicitly traced the origins of Al Qaeda's grievance back to the dismemberment of the

Ottoman Empire in 1919 and the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the new National Assembly of Atatürk's Turkey on 3 March 1924. Already by 1919, the French and British occupation of Istanbul had produced the "terrorist" or military response of the Khilafat Movement across Asia Minor and, particularly, British India, and in some respects Al Qaeda represents a modern recreation of that extraordinary transnational campaign.[22] Its irreverence for tradition, and its secularization of Islam, suggests that in certain ways Al Qaeda could be seen as one of the many factors that encouraged the Arab Spring of 2011 by breaking the deadlock between Islamic fundamentalism and repressive autocracies operating as Western fiefdoms. While the Arab Spring has remained predominantly national in terms of political objectives, it has also involved an insistent transnationalism in its outlook, with demands for democratic participation arising across almost every nation in the region. We should not be surprised that, as in any history of anticolonial or antiauthoritarian struggle, the results have varied, depending on the particular situation in each country. What is clear, however, is that Islamic cultures are not, and have never been, characterizable according to a singular form of Islam, even if this idea persists in Western perceptions.

While an intense interest in postcolonial theory has developed in Islamic countries, in 2001 Islam was just as unreadable for most postcolonial theorists in the West as for everyone else.[23] The development of Islamism in its diverse configurations as a contemporary oppositional discourse and practice to Western interests in the Middle East caught postcolonial studies off-guard. Developed out of the secular tradition of Marxism, in which religion was deemed to merit little serious attention, postcolonial studies has had comparatively little to say about the diverse modalities of Islamic resistance effected through unorthodox global formations in the present or the past, focusing for the most part on what is presented as the new Western imperialism in Afghanistan and Iraq. On the assumption that Al Qaeda and fundamentalisms of various kinds can all be identified with each other and identified with the return of religion to the sphere of the political, one major response has involved an interest in secularism. Contemporary work on secularism originally developed in the context of the rise of Hindutva ideology in India, and in many ways, India's Shiv Sena can be regarded as the Hindu equivalent of Afghanistan and Pakistan's Taliban. The problem, however, with much work on secularism has been that it begins from a stance that is already committed to secularism itself. This means that it takes a position within the political as well as philosophical spectrum of the very situation that it seeks to resolve, for the separation of the religious from the worldly is exactly what is being contested.[24] What are the alternatives

to a secularism whose claim to stand outside the conditions of belief is seen by some to be partial rather than impartial? What can secularism learn from nonsecular societies, where secular practices may nevertheless still figure in significant ways in an alternative configuration with the religious? One approach has been to interrogate the concept and philosophy of religion, as in the work of Talal Asad.[25] Another would be to re-examine different concepts and practices of social and political toleration within nonsecular societies, for toleration is a concept which, as we shall see, is by no means exclusively identifiable with secularism or the West—indeed Western secularism can itself produce intolerant behavior, such as the banning of the niqab in France. In the face of forms of communalism that in many different countries of the world such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Israel-Palestine, Northern Ireland, may have a fundamentally religious basis, there are limits to what Western secularism, and the liberal forms of toleration that are often assumed to follow from it, can offer. How can populations learn again how to live with each other without the imposition of state secularism? What can be learned from the historical example of nonsecular societies? It is here that a postcolonial interest in alternative cultural forms and in histories that are given limited attention in the West can be constructive. This may need to begin with thinking the unthinkable.

Even though I have spent most of my life writing against imperialism in various ways, it is time for some forms of empire to be re-examined in at least one respect: empire's structure of government was necessarily organized around the accommodation of diversity, albeit according to an imperial hierarchy.[26] Empire was destroyed by the principle of nationalism, the drawback of which was often an intolerant principle of autonomous ethnic or cultural homogeneity that tended to disallow heterogeneity and difference, seeing them as a problem to be resolved or eliminated. The huge (and unbearably costly, in terms of human life) movements of peoples at the times of the institution of the nation-states of Greece and Turkey, India and Pakistan, Israel and Palestine, are all material indicators of the antinomy between the modern concept of the nation and the ability of empires to sustain the diversity that preceded nation formation. An earlier example would be the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims at the time of the *Reconquista* in Spain in 1492.

III. *Convivencia*

What can nations, which represent the modern political form of the state, learn from the empires which they replaced? The initial drive

to homogeneity within many postcolonial nation-states is in many cases only now (if at all) beginning to shift towards the cultivation of heterogeneity and toleration of difference, something that was fundamental to the practice of empire. I am not necessarily thinking of the British empire, though it was certainly a bizarrely heterogeneous institution, negotiating its diversity in the first instance by discounting other differences in favor of rank.[27] Today, in a world in which Islam is automatically connected by those in the West with fundamentalism and terrorism, there is an often-forgotten history that remains particularly relevant as a long-standing achievement of equitable relations between different communities, different people living in the same place, tolerating each other's differences. While Islamic Spain constitutes one of the reference points for Al-Qaeda's unorthodox *longue durée* account of Islamic history—a preoccupation that it shares, uncharacteristically, with Salman Rushdie—in the West it is rarely acknowledged that, prior to the Canadian invention of multiculturalism in the 1970s, the major and historically by far the longest example of successful multiculturalism in Europe was the Islamic state of al-Andalus in the tenth century, during the eight hundred odd years of Muslim rule in Spain. This has never been adequately acknowledged in Western assumptions of the superiority of its recent political systems. It was under the Caliphate of Cordoba (929–1031) that Cordoba became one of the greatest cities of medieval Europe and the Near East, a beacon of learning rivaled in that era only by Baghdad, with the largest library in Europe serving as the effective conduit of Arabic, Greek, and Latin philosophy and science into Renaissance Europe.[28]

What was unusual about Cordoba, certainly compared to other parts of Europe at that time, was that it was a multicultural society comprising Muslims, Jews, and Christians living peaceably together—*Convivencia*—and even engaging with each other convivially, for it was scholars of all religions who facilitated the reception and translation of the great philosophical texts into Arabic and the composition of classic writings such as Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed,* the major text of Kabbalah, the *Zohar*, and the Arabic rhymed prose narrative of Ibn al-Astarkuwi.[29] This intellectual work was the product of the environment created during the rule of Abd-ar-Rahman III (912–961) when, despite wars with the Christian kingdoms to the north, tolerance and freedom of religion was instituted as the marker of Islamic rule. Al-Andalus involved a thriving commercial as well as intellectual culture, one in which Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together in a relative equanimity that would be unparalleled in Christian Europe until the last decades of the twentieth century. This is the world portrayed in the concluding pages of Rushdie's

The Moor's Last Sigh (1995). J. M. Coetzee has commented on what he calls Rushdie's "provocative thesis": "that the Arab penetration of Iberia, like the later Iberian penetration of India, led to a creative mingling of peoples and cultures; that the victory of Christian intolerance in Spain was a tragic turn in history; and that Hindu intolerance in India bodes as ill for the world as did the sixteenth-century Inquisition in Spain."[30] The tolerant society of al-Andalus remains Europe's most sustained and successful experiment in communal living in a pluralistic society; yet, because it occurred under Muslim rule, it merits little discussion among analysts of multiculturalism or toleration today.[31] Similarly, there has been little discussion of contemporary Arab multiculturalism, such as can be found in some of the Gulf States, one of the closest modern equivalents to al-Andalus in political terms in a number of respects (including autocracy as well as tolerance of diversity). States such as Qatar, in which migrant noncitizens make up as much as three-quarters of the population, are producing complex, heterogeneous new cultural formations very different from Western multiculturalisms, even as they struggle to adjust to (or repress) demands for democracy, human and workers' rights. For similar reasons, there has been comparatively little analysis of the Islamic millet system, in which different communities were allowed to rule themselves under their own legal codes, despite the fact that remnants of its legacy lives on today in certain respects in many formerly Ottoman or Muslim countries, including Bangladesh, Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Palestine, and Syria. Once again, we encounter postcolonial remains, hidden beneath the surface of modern national states, but living on, the past persisting in the present, but in what ways (legal, political, and social), with what effects—and with what possibilities for the future?

Although it is hardly the preferred narrative of the BJP, even today one still sometimes hears the claim being made in India that before British rule the different communities lived in harmony together, and that it was the British who destroyed this amicable concord with their divide-and-rule policy. If this were at all true, that time must refer to the Mughal era, when much of India was ruled on the basis of the Islamic *dhimma* system. There is not space here to analyze that institution in any substantial way, and I am certainly not proposing it as a model (but then which models are not imperfect?). The *dhimma* system was hardly a system of equal human rights and citizenship as we would think of them today, and there are many examples of abuses of various sorts in different places, or of limits to the forms and degrees of tolerance that it offered. However, the fact remains that, as even Bernard Lewis remarks, up until the end of Ottoman rule there were no large-scale

massacres of Jews or Christians in Muslim lands comparable to those that took place in Europe.[32] Christians and Jews were not forced to submit to the harsh options of conversion, expulsion, or death offered to Muslims and Jews at the time of the *Reconquista* in Spain 1492. A system of fundamentally tolerant living together in difference obtained. When British Indian troops entered Baghdad in March 1917, there were more Jews living in the city than Arabs. The extraordinary cultural and ethnic heterogeneity of cities such as Alexandria or Smyrna at that time has now been completely lost, but the destruction of those heterogeneous societies has not formed part of postcolonial critique. While Europeans were engaging in a thousand years of internecine strife, with incessant war between states conducted in Europe and beyond, and perennial persecution of religious and racial minorities, the Islamic societies that stretched around the other side of the Mediterranean managed to create a long-lasting system of comparative tolerance of diversity and cultural syncretism that was only destroyed by European imperial greed and the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century.

Wendy Brown has argued that tolerance is less an ethic or a virtue than a structure and discourse of power and a structure of governmentality, as if to expose its hidden flaw.[33] The *dhimma* system never pretended otherwise—it was a form of government—but this did not mean that its tolerance was not based on, or practiced without, a fundamentally ethical structure. Given the politico-religious framework, we might call this system one of dissent—the "absence of collective unanimous opinion"—the very opposite of the typical model of nationalism. It involved a system of coexisting dissenting communities: each community at variance with each other in its opinions, customs, and beliefs, while nevertheless respecting the autonomy of the other. It was not, in the manner of Jacques Rancière, dissensus in the sense of a fissure within the polity.[34] The structure of dissent was the fundamental basis of how the system was organized, not the oppositional form of the political to the juridical. If tolerance of others is a central aspect of communal organization, it would make no sense if there were no conflict, for tolerance means to endure, suffer, put up with, involving an ethics not only of acts, but of restraint, of forbearance in the face of forms of unsettling of the self, the disruptive ethos of being placed in translation.[35] Tolerance implies an active concept of duty as a primary part of any ethical life; its precepts become unreadable within an exclusively individualistic rights-based discourse. If, in practice, tolerance must always be qualified, nevertheless, like forgiveness, tolerance only has meaning if it is imprescriptible, unconditional, and unqualified at the same time.[36] These heterogeneous and aporetic divisions were fundamental to the *dhimma*

system—the Muslims put up with the Christians and Jews, the Christian and Jews suffered the rule of the Muslims. Yet within this unsettling and imperfect cosmopolitan dissensus, tolerance, respect, and a mode of mutual living found its place.

Though we now tend to promote tolerance as a way of solving or avoiding social and political strife, the idea of an underlying conflict was fundamental to the idea of tolerance which forms the basis for the liberal Western tradition that was gradually instituted from the seventeenth century onwards. We find it laid out most notably in John Locke's "Letter Concerning Toleration" of 1689.[37] Locke's letter proposed a radical solution to the question of religious differences and the role of the state. Whereas Thomas Hobbes had taken what we might call, anachronistically, the nationalist perspective and advocated the need for homogeneity of religion for the successful nondisruptive functioning of the state, Locke took the opposite view, and argued that it was more probable that dissent, and a plurality of religious groups, would create stability and prevent civil unrest. Locke argued that any attempt by the state to repress other religions is in fact more likely to produce civil unrest than if it allows them to proliferate. The state becomes stronger through the tolerance of heterogeneity, weaker by repressing it. Giving one church the authority of the state is insufficient. One of the logical paradoxes of Protestantism, Locke argued, is that one church does not possess enough authority to condemn another. His example, significantly, comes from two rival churches residing in Constantinople: "To make things clear by an example, let us imagine two churches at Constantinople, one of Remonstrants, the other of Antiremonstrants. Would anyone say that either church has the right to take away the liberty or property of those who disagree with them (as happens elsewhere), or to punish them with exile or death because they have different doctrines or rituals? The Turks meanwhile say nothing and laugh up their sleeves at the cruelty of Christians beating and killing each other."[38]

In the founding philosophical text on tolerance in English, Locke thus contrasts the forbearing and tolerant behaviour of the Turks with the inhuman cruelty of the intolerant, warring Christian sects. Tolerance is typically considered to be both a Western virtue and a Western invention. But it is significant that two of its greatest theorists, Locke in the seventeenth century, and Voltaire in his entry on toleration in the *Philosophical Dictionary* in the eighteenth,[39] both invoke the Islamic world of their time as an example of the kind of tolerance that they are proposing. Although modern commentators, such as Will Kymlicka, argue that the Islamic and the European traditions comprise two entirely different models, the second was nevertheless developed from knowledge

of the practices of the first.[40] Islam always provided the great example for the Reformation and Enlightenment proponents of tolerance. Can that example be retrieved for today?

IV. The Other

Tolerance requires that there be no "other," that others should not be othered. We could say that there can be others, but there should be no othering of "the other." Critical analysis of subjection to the demeaning experience of being othered by a dominant group has been a long-standing focus for postcolonial studies, initiated by Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).[41] Central to postcolonial critique has been the observation that implicit in the idea of "the other" is a distinction between the modern (the same) and the residue that is nonmodern (the other). Yet people regarded as being outside modernity, or outside the West, are still frequently described and categorized in terms of the concept and the term of "the other."

You can find examples everywhere. Linda Colley, for example, in *Britons: Forging the Nation*, invokes a whole consensual body of late twentieth-century thought when she writes that, "Britishness was superimposed over an array of differences in response to contact with the Other, and above all in response to conflict with the Other."[42] No one, of course, in the nineteenth century talked about people as "Other," with a Sartrean or Lacanian capital O. It is one thing to claim that so-called "Britishness was superimposed over an array of differences." However, when Colley adds "in response to contact with the Other," she conflates the historical event of contact with diverse peoples around the world with a contemporary, late twentieth-century characterization of these diverse peoples as "the Other." Why describe the contact of the British with a vast array of different peoples around the world, made British by virtue of being made subjects of the British Empire, as an encounter with "the Other," a concept that serves to repeat the very perspective that Colley is criticizing?

The casual use of this concept has led to the odd perpetuation of the very category that postcolonial theorists have been challenging for many years—a colonial remainder that resurfaces sometimes even within the rhetoric of the postcolonial. For everywhere we look today we still read or hear about "the other." "This is all very well," commented a member of the audience after a panel discussion on postcolonialism in which I participated in New York, "but where is the other? Hasn't this panel continued to exclude the very others that it is supposed to be champi-

oning?" There were two possible responses to this question. The first would have been to point to the "race" or ethnicity, that is the visible otherness, of various panel members that the questioner had clearly not registered. The other response, which was the one I made, was to point out that there is, or should be, no "other" as such, only individuals or groups who have been, or feel that they have been, othered by society. The idea that there is a category of people, implicitly third-world, visibly different to the casual eye, essentially different, and "other," is itself a product of racial theory, its presuppositions drawn from the discriminatory foundations of modernity.[43] The legacy of this, of course, is the existence of minorities, who struggle for full participation within a society that continues to other them as "the other."

Othering is what the postcolonial should be trying to deconstruct, but the tendency to use the concept remains: the often-posed question of how "we" (implicitly the majority or dominant group) can know "the other," who remains implicitly unknowable and unapproachable, or how "the other" can be encouraged to represent itself in its otherness rather than merely be represented as other, is simply the product of having made the discriminatory conceptual distinction in the first place. It accepts the discriminatory gesture of social and political othering that it appears to contest. The question is not how to come to know "the other," but for majority groups to stop othering minorities altogether, at which point minorities will be able to represent themselves as they are, in their specific forms of difference, rather than as they are othered.

Another way of putting this would be to say that in some theoretical and even historical discourse since the 1980s, there has been an unexamined conflation of two ideas: first, the invention of the "other" as a philosophical category of the philosophy of consciousness from Hegel onwards, in which the other is, in fact, not essentially different but the very means through which the individual becomes aware of him or herself, and vice versa (a formulation developed most actively in recent times by Sartre, Levinas, and Lacan); and second, the category of whole cultural or ethnic groups as "other" which has been the product, as well as the object of, anthropological inquiry, in a formulation that goes back at least to John Beattie's *Other Cultures* (1964).[44] For postcolonial studies an early example was Tzvetan Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* of 1982, followed by his *Nous et les autres* [*On Human Diversity*] of 1989.[45] The founding conference of the field of postcolonial studies, held at the University of Essex in 1984, was programmatically called "Europe and its Others." As the conference title suggests, the philosophical, anthropological, and geographical had by then become conflated. The critical question raised by delegates at the conference

was to what extent that title described a historical situation—the ways in which Europe "othered" non-Europeans—and to what extent it was being used as a description of the present, without implying any critical perspective. Since that time, the term "the other" has come to designate both the individual and the group whose unknown, exotic being remains the object of postcolonial desire—a desire that seeks to reach the very unknowable that it has itself conjured up. To that degree, the concept of "the other" simply continues the founding conceptual framework of modernity, in which a portion of humanity entered modernity towards the end of the eighteenth century, at least in Kant's account, while the rest of humanity was relegated to the status of an immature, primitive, and scarcely human "other."[46]

The concept of the other, in short, simply comprises the modern form of the category of the primitive, notwithstanding the fact that the latter has been critically interrogated for many years by Bruno Latour and others.[47] There have been specific anthropological and philosophical critiques of the idea of the Other, such as Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other* (1983),[48] or Levinas's life-long critique of Hegel, or Derrida's essays on Levinas, but these critiques have not prevented the continuing, often unnuanced, use of this idea even in postcolonial studies—the very field in which the concept has also been thoroughly interrogated and unpicked. Levinas, for example, begins by arguing that in Hegel, even the achievement of knowledge of the other is tainted, because the other then loses its otherness and becomes the same. The result of this line of argument is an extended pursuit of the absolute other, the other that will remain untainted, which Levinas, in a catachrestic gesture, calls "face."[49] Levinas thus offers us the other *plus ultra*, truly othered, respectfully. His idea of the authentic other has been attractive to those who, in a well-meaning way, have been pursuing the attempt to break down modernity's same-other distinction by coming to know or represent the culturally other or by encouraging this other to represent itself. In fact, however, any such attempt ironically only perpetuates the divisive category in which "the other" must always remain incomprehensible. As soon as you have employed the very category of "the other" with respect to other peoples or societies, you are imprisoned in the framework of your own predetermining conceptualization, perpetuating its form of exclusion.

This is the substance of Derrida's 1964 critique of Levinas in "Violence and Metaphysics," where Derrida argues, as Gabriela Basterra puts it, that "if the other is absolutely exterior, if it is separated from the self by an untraversable distance, how does one know that the other exists?"[50] To which the answer is, only by having created the concept in the first place. In *Otherwise than Being* (1972), therefore, Levinas revised his posi-

tion to develop a new way of understanding the relation to the other, for him a question of both ethics and politics, by tracing it through the remains of its derangement of the self, "the restlessness of the same disturbed by the other."[51] "The psyche is the other in the same," Levinas argues, in a move which brings him closer to Hegel as well as Freud.[52] Levinas's move to "auto-heteronomy," a philosophy of the same, but a same that has been heterogenized with the recognition that sameness must be determined and unsettled by the other against which it defines itself, has, however, made little impact on the discourse of postcolonial studies. In philosophical terms, there should be no difference between any of the various "others" who resides outside the domain of individual subjectivity—the politics of recognition is once again a self-fulfilling paradigm that only seeks to cure the illness that it has itself created. There are really two categories here: others whom "we" know or do not know, and others whom "we" do not know at all, those who are not even recognized as strangers but generically classified as *the* other.[53]

The time has come for postcolonial scholars to rethink the category of the other according to Levinas's later positions, or according to the arguments of Jean-Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, and others that alterity is not something produced as a form of exclusion but fundamental to being itself, which must always involve "being singular plural" from the very first. Until people rethink the idea of the other in this way, the most useful thing that Postcolonial Studies could do to achieve its aim of mutual understanding and universal equality would be to abandon the category of "the other" altogether.[54] Not all—if indeed any—forms of difference require the absoluteness of the category of "the other," unless that otherness is chosen by the subject him or herself to describe a situation of historical discrimination which requires challenge, change, and transformation. No one is so different that their very difference makes them unknowable. Othering was a colonial strategy of exclusion: for the postcolonial, there are only other human beings.

New York University

NOTES

I am grateful to Dipesh Chakrabarty, Tanya Fernando, Achille Mbembe, Parvati Nair, and Rita Felski and the editors of *New Literary History*, for comments on the ideas or earlier drafts of this essay.

1 Editor's Column, "'The End of Postcolonial Theory?' A Roundtable with Sunil Agnani, Fernando Coronil, Gaurav Desai, Mamadou Diouf, Simon Gikandi, Susie Tharu, and Jennifer Wenzel," *PMLA* 122, no. 3 (2007): 633–51.

2 Jean-François Bayart, *Les études postcoloniales, un carnaval académique* (Paris: Karthala, 2010). For a response, see Robert J. C. Young, "Bayart's Broken Kettle," *Public Culture* 23, no. 1 (2011): 167–75.

3 The claim that the economic rise of India and China outdates the postcolonial forgets that rapid economic development in Asia is hardly new as a phenomenon: China and India are in fact latecomers, the latest in a long line of countries that have experienced such economic booms—they were preceded in Asia by Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. And yet the postcolonial has hardly become irrelevant to these post-boom "tiger" cultures: indeed, a preoccupation with postcoloniality has only intensified there.

4 See Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

5 Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

6 Cf. Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); Achille Mbembe, *Sortir de la grande nuit. Essai sur l'Afrique décolonisée* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

7 Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (London: John Murray, 2008).

8 Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986); Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, eds., *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004); Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie, eds., *Classics in Postcolonial Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007); Piyel Haldar, *Law, Orientalism, and Postcolonialism: The Jurisdiction of the Lotus Eaters* (London: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007); Lisa Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2010); Cheryl McEwan, *Postcolonialism and Development* (London: Routledge, 2008).

9 For a differentiation between the Gramscian and postcolonial concepts of the subaltern, see Robert J. C. Young, "Il Gramsci meridionale," in *The Postcolonial Gramsci*, ed. Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya (New York: Routledge, 2012), 17–33.

10 Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 222–37.

11 Cf. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

12 Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* [1542], trans. Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin, 1992); UN Declaration: *http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html*.

13 José Carlos Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, trans. Marjory Urquidi (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1971).

14 Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989).

15 Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).

16 Cf. Yto Barrada, *A Life Full of Holes: The Strait Project* (London: Autograph, 2005); Craig Jeffrey, *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010).

17 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).

18 See Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008).

19 Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004).

20 Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (New York: Harcourt, 2007).

21 Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (London: Hurst, 2005).

22 Al Qaeda is not the first globalized or transnational anticolonial campaign: that distinction belongs to the Irish. See Robert J. C. Young, "International Anti-Colonialism: The Fenian Invasions of Canada," in *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture*, ed. Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 75–89.

23 The controversies surrounding Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005) are indicative of the West's difficulties in reading the forms of Islamic belief.
24 Derrida characteristically puts the question more subtly, asking "if this word [secularism] has a meaning other than in the religious tradition that it maintains in claiming to escape it." Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), 46. Cf. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2004), 144.
25 Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003).
26 For an extended discussion of how empires managed difference, see Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011).
27 David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2002).
28 Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Comment philosopher en Islam?* (Paris: Panama, 2008); George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West: With Special Reference to Scholasticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1990).
29 Gil Anidjar, "*Our Place in al-Andalus": Kabbalah, Philosophy, Literature in Arab Jewish Letters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2002). The argument for the *Convivencia* was first proposed in modern times by Américo Castro in *España en su historia. Cristianos, moros y judíos* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1948); for recent more critical views, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1996), and Maya Soifer, "Beyond *Convivencia*: Critical Reflections on the Historiography of Interfaith Relations in Christian Spain," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 19–35. On the role of al-Andalus in the culture of memory of Arab, Jewish, and Hispanic peoples, see Stacy N. Beckwith, ed., *Charting Memory: Recalling Medieval Spain* (New York: Garland, 1999); the prominence of the imagined memory of al-Andalus in the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish is of obvious relevance to the wider implications of my argument. In that context, see also Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2011).
30 J. M. Coetzee, "Palimpsest Regained," review of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, by Salmon Rushdie, *The New York Review of Books*, March 21, 1996, *http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1996/mar/21/palimpsest-regained/?page=1.*
31 Hasan Hanafi, "Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society: A Reflective Islamic Approach" in *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society*, ed. Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), 171–89.
32 Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1998), 127.
33 Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006).
34 Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010).
35 Anidjar, *Our Place in al-Andalus*, 14.
36 Cf. Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 44–45. Space prevents me here from discussing Gandhi's ideas and practice of tolerance.
37 "A Letter Concerning Toleration" (1689) in *John Locke on Toleration*, ed. Richard Vernon (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010).
38 "A Letter," 13–14.
39 Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Theodore Besterman (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1972).

40 Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 82.
41 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
42 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), 6.
43 Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2000).
44 John Beattie, *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology* (London: Cohen & West, 1964).
45 Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); *Nous et les autres: La réflexion française sur la diversité humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), translated as *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993).
46 Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" in *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment?* trans. Lewis White Beck, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Macmillan, 1990).
47 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993); Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* (London: Routledge, 1988); Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1990).
48 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1983).
49 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1969).
50 Gabriela Basterra, "Auto-Heteronomy, or Levinas' Philosophy of the Same," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 31, no. 1 (2010): 114; Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978), 97–192. Derrida makes a similar argument in his critique of Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, "Cogito and the History of Madness," also collected in *Writing and Difference*: if Foucault is speaking on behalf of a madness that he claims has been reduced to silence, Derrida asks, how can he avoid participating in the very structure of exclusion that he is criticizing?
51 Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or, Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981), 25.
52 Levinas, *Otherwise*, 112.
53 Cf. Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-coloniality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 21. Though not questioning the category as such, Ahmed provides a critique of the abstract use of the concept of "the other" by emphasizing the fact that the stranger is always embodied in any encounter.
54 Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993); Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhey (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1991); *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2000).

The Origin of the Work of Art in Material Practice

Henry Staten

This essay lays out a straightforwardly materialist account of *techne*, "art" or "craft" in Greek. My approach is ultimately derived from Plato and Aristotle, but strongly inflected in the direction of Georg Lukács's analysis of the labor process in his final work, *The Ontology of Social Being*. Because this approach clashes sharply with the account of techne currently most influential among literary theorists, that of Heidegger, I will work my way into my argument through a debate with the Heideggerean view.

There are two questions in play in the first part of this essay. On the one hand, what do the Greek texts actually say about techne? And, on the other hand, and more important, what is the objectively most correct analysis of techne? In fact, the thought of Plato and Aristotle has a far more intimate relation to the material and political conditions of existence than is sometimes realized, and this understanding thoroughly informs their shrewd and penetrating theorization of techne. Consequently, the materialist approach corresponds better to both the Greek understanding of techne, and to the phenomenon of techne itself, than do the imperious, and strangely vague, proclamations of Heidegger.[1]

To meditate on the concept of techne in Lukács's way creates the sense of the historical and cultural *depth* of the knowledge that is encoded in any specific techne, a depth equal to, or exceeding, that of the mysteriousness of any individual work of art; the feeling that there is something mysterious or even mystical about artistic creation is, indeed, nothing but our inarticulate feeling of this depth. The quality of mystery has been mistakenly pinned since Romanticism on the soul of the genius artist; but Heidegger's notion of poiesis makes no progress when it ascribes the creative mystery to *physis* instead.

In the absence of an adequate concept of techne, many of the modernist, structuralist, and poststructuralist discourses on art, and more specifically on poetics, have gone astray in crucial ways. I cannot prove this claim here; I can only attempt to provide the missing account.[2]

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 43–64

I

The Greek word techne is generally translated as art or craft, but there is really no adequate equivalent in English. Heidegger's explanation for this inadequacy is that we think of art and craft as "making" or "production"—the deliberate action of a subject who manipulates materials for human purposes—whereas techne, he claims, is the kind of "bringing forth" the Greeks called *poiesis* ("making" or "poetry") which allows something to emerge of itself.[3] In order to understand how this emergence takes place, in some sense independently of human agency, we must look to the creative spontaneity of nature, *physis*. *Physis*, "the being that surges upward, growing of its own accord" (OWA 184), for example in the bursting into bloom of a flower, is the true, original poiesis, "*poiesis* in the highest sense"; the true work of art or craft is also poiesis because it "bursts open" in the maker in the same way, by virtue of the same transcendent power.[4] Both art and craft are ways of bringing something into being, but only art is poiesis because only art is "determined and pervaded by the essence of creation" (OWA 85).[5]

The distinction between art and craft, the notion of nature as the force behind the artist's creativity, and the culminating notion that art is superior to craft because it is "pervaded by the essence of creation" appear to rehash familiar Romantic notions. Yet Heidegger's account is a critique of the turn toward "the subject" of which Romanticism is an expression, and in "The Origin of the Work of Art," intriguingly, we find the theory of creative physis brought together with the anti-Romantic, modernist notion that the artist should be completely effaced in favor of the simple being-there of the work (OWA 190). Art is not made by the active force of genius any more than it is made by the craftsman's exercise of will and intention, but by the artist's disciplined, epiphanic responsiveness to the material of which the artwork is made—what Krzystof Ziarek calls an "action in the middle voice" or "aphesis," a "letting or allowing, but in an active rather than passive sense . . . of accomplishing something by actively letting it come to be rather than by producing or manipulating it." [6]

"The Origin of the Work of Art" thus purports to show the ontological ground of unity that underlies the split between modernism and Romanticism. This unity can be grasped only in terms of what Heidegger expounds as the authentic, primordial senses of techne, poiesis, and physis in Greek thought. According to Heidegger, concepts of art in modernity have misconceived the creative power of nature on the model of a craftsman, having misconceived the power of the craftsman as will, active making, or production. To think beyond this model we must

think physis as the earliest Greek thinkers did, as that which brings the Being of beings to light, bringing them from the darkness of nonbeing into the "unconcealment" of the "clearing of Being" (OWA 197). This action of physis, which allows beings to shine in the truth of their Being, is the true "essence of creation" with which the true work of art is pervaded; it has nothing to with the creativeness of a human producer, not even that of a "genius." In this way the work of art accomplishes the highest of tasks, the work of Truth; for unconcealment of Being is the authentic, original meaning of Truth as the Greeks primordially grasped it. Hence, in one of Heidegger's most widely disseminated claims, the earliest, most authentic meaning of the Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, is a-letheia, un-concealment.

On the basis of this account of the nature of art and truth, Heidegger distinguishes techne from technique, technology, "technics"—that variously named dimension of productive process that is capable of being rationalized and mechanized, and which has become the instrument by which the will to power of humanity has submitted nature to its domination, while humanity itself has been subjected to the logic of technology. Heidegger's critique of technology, which combines a sense of the dehumanization of human beings in the grip of "instrumental reason" with what today we would call a concern for the ecosphere, resonates strongly with enlightened contemporary views. The discourse on the Being of beings on the basis of which this critique is launched can be silently elided, as it is by Ziarek, while the polemic against technics and instrumental reason (perhaps combined with a rejection of capitalism), in favor of something more primordial, and the associated account of authentic techne, are carried forward.[7]

In Heidegger's account, what is at stake in a correct understanding of techne is the choice between, on the one hand, a remorseless subject who manipulates nature for purely instrumental purposes—a path that, Heidegger once suggested, leads to both the Holocaust and the modern mechanized food industry—and, on the other hand, ecstatic openness to Being. And indeed that is how it looks if we approach it from the standpoint of the modern hypertrophy of techne into technology or technics. But what happens if we consider techne from the other end of history, from the time when technai are originally developed as the means by which humanity wrests its survival from the body of nature? Heidegger wants to pare this original instrumentality away from the concept of techne; for him, techne is only truly itself when "great works of art" come into evidence. But Plato and Aristotle did not conceive techne in this way. The first great architectonic elaboration of the concept of techne, Plato's *Republic*, posits technai fundamentally as the skills by

which a human society is able to produce its material subsistence, and the "fine arts" (a concept unknown to the Greeks) as continuous with these; and Aristotle faithfully followed Plato on this course.[8] No doubt the arrogance of the modern subject as master of technics is rooted in the instrumental success of techne in early humanity's unequal struggle with nature; but it would be merely superstitious to throw the anathema we want to pronounce on this contemporary arrogance back onto the "deliberate action" of a preindustrial "subject" who chips away at stone arrowheads.

One's view of techne will inevitably be skewed if the leap is made to the antithesis between great art and modern technology, without first clarifying the primitive form of techne. Heidegger's account mystifies the sense in which techne is aphetic by turning it into one grand submission to one transcendent power. This grand move blocks off the approach to a detailed analysis, one that would take into account the way in which, in every moment of every action of every techne, the intrinsic powers of physical nature are both submitted to, and brought into line with, human purposes of an intensely practical sort, while yet the will and consciousness of the subject are subordinated to transindividual—but not transcendent—forces, forces that are as much social and historical as they are natural.

II

Heidegger's account of the meaning of techne is questionable along various fronts, beginning with his claim that the authentic meaning of aletheia, "truth," to the Greeks was a-letheia, understood as un-concealment. As Paul Friedländer already showed in the 1950s, the etymological explanation of the initial "a" as privative is at best questionable, and the philological evidence against understanding aletheia as unconcealment is very strong.[9] And in fact, despite the continued life of Heidegger's original claims, Friedländer's arguments convinced Heidegger himself late in his life to concede that aletheia does *not*, in its "original" Greek sense, mean a-letheia, un-concealment, either in its "natural concept" or "in the philosophy of the Greeks." [10]

Heidegger nevertheless continued to maintain that, whatever the Greeks themselves might have consciously thought or said, aletheia properly, authentically means unconcealment, which presumably implies that he would have adhered to his earlier account of techne; but these claims, by his own admission, cannot be confidently referred to the Greek evidence. What is called for, thus, in order to provide a fresh start on the question of techne, is a fresh look at that evidence.

The foremost Greek theorist of techne, the thinker who culminated Greek thought on this topic, is Aristotle, and Aristotle's fullest and clearest clarification of techne is in *Generation of Animals* 730b–740b. These passages are rarely considered in relation to techne, probably because they are not primarily about techne but about biological generation. The passage cited below focuses on how in the act of biological generation *kinesis* ("motion") and *eidos* ("form") are transmitted from the male to the female, who provides the "material" of the new creation. But Aristotle presents techne here as the intellectual model on the basis of which this act of transmission should be understood. Natural generation is like technical production in that it, too, generates *kinesis* ("physical motion") through the mediation of an *organon* ("instrument, tool"). Here is how Aristotle develops his analogy:

> The male does not emit semen at all in some animals, and where he does this is no part of the resulting embryo; just so no material part comes from the carpenter to the material, i.e. the wood in which he works, nor does any part of the carpenter's techne exist within what he makes, but the *morphe* ("shape") and the *eidos* ("form") are imparted from him to the material by means of the *kinesis* he sets up. It is his hands that move his *organoi* ("tools"), his tools that move the material; it is his knowledge of his techne, and his soul, in which is the eidos, that move his hands or any other part of him with a kinesis of some definite kind, a kinesis varying with the varying nature of the object made. In like manner, in the male of those animals which emit semen, *nature uses the semen as a tool and as possessing kinesis* in a fully actualized state, *just as tools are used in the products of any art, for in the tools lies in a certain sense the kinesis of the techne* [italics added]. Such, then, is the way in which these males contribute to generation. (*GA* 730b 10–25)[11]

Aristotle takes the action of techne to be intellectually transparent, and thus capable of illuminating the more obscure way in which semen transmits motion: the craftsman moves the tools, the motion of the tools imparts the intended form to the artifact, and semen operates in the same way, as a kind of tool that has been set in motion. What is not necessarily transparent to us in this picture is Aristotle's notion that the motion imparted to the tools originates not in the craftsman, but rather *in the techne* that the craftsman practices; the techne itself is the *arkhe* ("principle, origin") of the object to be produced (*GA* 740b). The craftsman moves his hands to move his tools because his techne is a *logos* ("rational procedure") that dictates the appropriate motions (*GA* 734a 1–4); the motion of the tools is the *energeia* ("actuality") of a physical motion that exists in a potential state in the techne itself ("nature uses the semen as a tool and as possessing kinesis in a fully actualized state, just as . . . in the tools lies . . . the motion of the techne").

In these pages of *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle provides the detailed account that lies behind what he says elsewhere about techne, for example in *Physics*—where he says that "it is accidental to the sculptor that he is Polyclitus."[12] Polyclitus qua Polyclitus is the human being as individual, existing entity; but Polyclitus qua the sculptor is Polyclitus strictly as one who has incorporated the knowledge of the techne of sculpture. Since the craftsman as biological individual, and thus as principle of will and desire—that desiring, willing subject that Heidegger criticizes—is nowhere evident in this picture, we could say that the techne-action described by Aristotle is indeed a kind of aphesis; but this aphesis has little to do with the spontaneous bursting into bloom of a natural object, and much to do with the working of materials by a workman who knows effective ways to move his tools.

The only place in which Aristotle does suggest that one techne at least, that of poetry, is essentially and directly an expression of physis is *Poetics*, in which he treats poetry as an independently subsisting natural growth, one to which the contributions of individual poets are tributary, and which has stopped developing because it has already attained the perfection of its intrinsic *physis* ("nature").

We should grant its full weight to this aspect of *Poetics*. As Stephen Halliwell explains in his superb commentary on *Poetics*, this remark implies "that the history of tragedy has to be comprehended ultimately in terms not of contingent human choices and tradition, but of natural teleology mediated through, or channelled into, acts of human discovery of what was there to be found. . . . [N]ot only do human productive activities form an analogue to the generative and purposive patterns of nature, but their individual histories evolve in accordance with intrinsic seeds of natural potential."[13]

Halliwell's comments here can easily be misread as seconding Heidegger's account of poietic bringing-forth, especially when he says that for Aristotle tragedy emerges from "natural teleology mediated through, or channeled into, acts of human discovery." But Halliwell is merely acknowledging the well-known fact that natural teleology—a teleology that Heidegger jettisons from his own account of physis—is foundational to all of Aristotle's thought. Given the natural teleology behind the evolution of poetry, the question remains whether the techne of poetry must therefore be conceived on the other side of a metaphysical dichotomy from instrumental action and thus from "technics" in the modern sense.

Nothing about *Poetics* encourages us to think so. There is a sense in which craftsmen can only discover what is given to them to find by the evolution of the crafts into which they are initiated; and the craft itself, because it is the interaction of a natural being with nature, must in some

sense have a natural (or, as we would say today, a historical) genesis. But this does not mean that it is by an upsurge of pure Being that the techne develops, and even less that an *individual work* could be the product of such an upsurge. The discoveries of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are no less *technical* discoveries, nor is *Poetics* any less a technical treatise, for their "natural" grounding. What interests Aristotle in *Poetics* is not the pure naturalness of the poietic techne but its constitution, like any other techne, as an objectively existing social fact—as a historically accumulated collection of what Daniel Dennett calls "good moves in design space."[14] As Halliwell explains, "Aristotle's acceptance of the framework of *techne* for the interpretation of poetry and related practices imports an inescapably objectivist element, as well as a naturalistic teleology, which is alien to the belief in creative imagination that has grown in strength since the Renaissance, and that has dominated Romantic and later aesthetic thinking. In Aristotle's system, the mimetic artist is devoted to the realization of aims which are determined independently of him by the natural development of his art, and by the objective principles which emerge from this development."[15] For Heidegger, the Romantic theory is wrong because it privileges the will and desire of the individual subject over the spontaneous bursting forth of physis; for Halliwell it is wrong primarily because it ignores the "objective principles" that emerge from the natural development of this techne, and which constitute it as the techne that it is.

The significance of these objective principles for Aristotle must be understood in light of the fact that whereas Heidegger wanted to exorcise the machine principle from techne, Aristotle had no dread of the machine or mechanism. At *Generation of Animals* 734b, Aristotle develops his comparison of semen to a tool into a comparison with certain "miraculous" puppets (*automata*) that are endowed with an "innate motion" (*enousa kinesis*) that can unfold as a sequence of new motions once it is given an initial push by an external agency.[16] As Klaus Bartels argued in a trenchant 1965 essay, this notion can easily be developed into that of an automaton driven by a program.[17] The notion that semen operates according to a principle of motion that is like, or perhaps the same as, that of a tool or machine, shows that Aristotle does not draw a line of essence between the human body and technology. Bartels argues that Aristotle treats parts of the body as differing from ordinary tools only in the way that an undetachable tool differs from a detachable tool—an assimilation facilitated by the fact that the Greek word organon means both "tool" and "biological organ." In *Nicomachean Ethics*, thus, Aristotle draws a line not between the human body on one side and tools on the other but between soul on one side and both the body and tools on the

other, comparing the soul-body relation to the craftsman-tool relation (1161a).[18] But, as the passages from *Generation of Animals* 730–740 that I considered above show, it is not *soul* per se, as an ideal substance, that moves the hand and the tools; the true moving principle, the *arkhe*, is techne; and techne is the rational plan of organization of a sequence of physical actions that are known to produce a specific worldly effect. Techne, on Aristotle's analysis, is thus a kind of spiritual mechanism, a machine principle within the soul of the skilled craftsman; and this too is entirely *natural* for Aristotle. For even if there is an essential line that runs between the soul with its techne knowledge on one side and the body and tools on the other, tools are not a merely contingent add-on to the human essence. As Bartels notes, Aristotle singles out one attached organon, the prehensile hand, as the distinctive marker of the human species. Nature has given hands of precisely this type (which Aristotle analyzes in close detail) to human beings because they are the only species that has the intelligence to learn the most diverse technai, hence the only one capable of the use for which the hand is adapted *by nature*, as "a tool for grasping tools."[19] For Aristotle, that is to say, the hand is the first prosthesis, given by nature, and human beings are in their essence what, post-Derrida, we could call an essentially prosthetic animal.[20]

III

Techne, and human biology itself, as conceived by Aristotle, contain the possibility of modern universal technicity. It may in some sense be, as Jacques Ellul, whose penetrating critique of technology owes nothing to Heidegger, wrote, that the machine "represents the ideal toward which technique strives"—*all* technique, including that which we call art.[21] On an Aristotelian, as on a Derridean, account, however, that techne should contain this possibility is not a violation of some pristine essence of creative *physis*. The tool and the instrumental relation to worldly beings and forces are not as such something baleful; they are the very condition of the existence of human culture. The only thing that is baleful about them is their utterly *worldly* character, a character that is beset by all the stresses and contradictions of human life as that of embodied, natural beings that inevitably live in political communities. The hypertrophy of techne into modern world-threatening technology is a product of this condition, and not of some essence of antinatural willfulness intrinsic to the instrumentality of techne. Heidegger's doctrine of poiesis and physis is ultimately motivated by a revulsion from this mere *worldliness* of Dasein; that is why he both excises the political

from Aristotle's account of praxis and condemns Nietzsche's "reinscription" of humanity "within the text of nature" as the last convulsion of the metaphysics of the subject.

This revulsion is echoed by Giorgio Agamben in *The Man Without Content*, where he repeats Heidegger's doctrine of poietic techne more or less verbatim, and with a comparable air of authority (though, oddly, without mentioning Heidegger).[22] Agamben's version of the Heideggerean doctrine is worth noting here because it introduces, by way of a nod to Hannah Arendt, the question of the value of labor in modern thought, and specifically in Marx. Agamben takes for granted that techne is poiesis and a-letheia, and argues that in Greek thought the antithesis of poietic bringing-forth is *praxis*. Poiesis brings beings forth into unconcealment, but praxis manifests only the will of a doer that finds "immediate expression in an act" (68–69) and thus "brings only itself into presence" (76).[23] The Greek distinction between these two modes of doing has been gradually effaced in the course of history, until in modernity even techne itself has been reduced to an immediate expression of the will, a form of praxis, and praxis has been conflated with labor. This conflation "reaches its peak" with Marx; "At this point, all human 'doing' is interpreted as praxis, as concrete productive activity . . . and praxis is conceived in turn as starting from labor" (70), labor being activity that is devoted to "bare biological existence" (69).[24] All production, even that of art, becomes the mere physical activity of a "living being" moved by will and vital impulse (75); even when it makes something, it brings only itself into presence.

Agamben's concept of praxis sharpens the Heideggerean attack on action as "the voluntary production of an effect" (70), and his introduction of the notion of *labor* opens a dimension of the question of techne that is central to my own investigation. The distaste Agamben expresses here for merely natural, biological being, reminds us that what is most deeply at stake in the Heideggerean critique of technology is the question of transcendence. Heidegger, Agamben, and Arendt as well are afraid that human life might be reduced to mere organic being, unredeemed from what Arendt calls the "essential futility" of life.[25] Arendt, to her credit, sees the sphere of transcendence in classical fashion, as a purely earthly thing: the sphere of political action and speech. Heidegger and Agamben (at least in *The Man Without Content*), by contrast, seek the enchantment of an "authentic" and "original" status (102) that, in their view, primordially belongs to humanity as its authentic state.[26]

Heidegger and Agamben are correct when they distinguish the Greek concept of techne from the Romantic and modern notion of creativity as a product of individual impulse, will, and power. But they make it

impossible to make any headway with this distinction because of the mistaken account they give of Greek techne, on the basis of which it is possible to assimilate their attack on Romanticism with a depreciation of what Agamben calls the mere "concrete productive activity" (70) and "manual making" (72) of the human being as merely "*natural* being" (85) in "immediate relation to the biological process of life" (69). Heidegger is more evasive on this point, but everything he says supports Agamben's interpretation. He ambiguously speaks at times of craft as well as art; but it is clear that his theory is fully at home only when he speaks, as he does in "Origin," of "great art."[27]

IV

Lukács, by contrast, recognizes the fundamentally Aristotelian character of the teleologically oriented theories of labor of Hegel and Marx that he develops further, and treats Aristotle's account of techne as a theory of the labor process. This move is not unproblematic. Strikingly, he substitutes, without comment, *labor* for *techne* in his account of Aristotle's doctrine, a move that points toward the fact that Lukács did not grasp essential aspects of Aristotle's account. Nevertheless, he develops this account in ways that are crucial for a contemporary materialist appropriation of the theory of techne.

In *The Ontology of Social Being*, Lukács argued that Marx and Engels had conceived a "new materialism," one that, unlike the old materialism, was not based on the passivity of matter but on what Marx calls "sensuous human activity, practice."[28] Pre-Marxist materialism treated social being "after the model of pure natural necessity"; conversely, idealist thinking dealt only with the "most spiritualized and subtle forms" of appearance of ontological relationships, ignoring their "real genesis" in the struggle for survival (68). Like idealism, dialectical materialism understands the ontology of social being in terms of the specific categories of being that are dominant within it and which distinguish it, as a "newly arising level of being" (30), from the inorganic and biological levels from which it emerges. But, in contrast with idealism, dialectical materialism defines these categories not in their most ethereal forms but on the basis of their evolutionary beginnings and transitions, discerning them at the precise point of their emergence by natural processes from the inorganic and organic levels of being. This point of emergence is what Marx called the "metabolism between man and nature"—the labor process by which humanity wrests its means of existence from material reality. The labor process, as the "organ" (40) of the metabolism between man and na-

ture, is the ontological kernel of social being, the first specifically social category and "original phenomenon" of social being (iv–v).

Other animals, of course, are "social" in a variety of ways; but their sociality is not founded on the labor process in the technical sense that Lukács defines. What is ontologically distinctive about the labor process is that it is the only complex of being in which a "teleological positing" is actualized in material reality (54). Aristotle and Hegel wrongly attributed ontological status to teleology when they projected it into nature; but in the labor process human goals are intellectually posited in a way that makes possible the manipulation of material reality, such that the teleological positing of a goal is transformed by labor into an *ontological* positing, a really existing something, materially realized in nature, that embodies a human purpose.

This positing is ontological (rather than merely intellectual or epistemological) because in the primitive labor process there is an ineluctable confrontation with the reality of the real. The labor process "must correctly come to grips with its object" (13), or fail: "Each individual movement in the process of sharpening, grinding, etc. must be considered correctly (i.e., must be based on a correct reflection of reality), be correctly oriented to the posited goal, correctly carried out by hand, etc." (33). "The acts by which causality is posited in labour are those most purely governed by the antithesis of true and false, for . . . any mistake in the process of positing about the causality that inherently exists, must inevitably lead to the failure of the entire labour process" (56; trans. emended). In this hands-on way, human purposes are slowly woven into the structure of natural being in such a way as to satisfy human needs, at the price of painstaking submission to the patterns of natural causality. Thus the realm of natural causality is intertwined with that of human purposes, giving rise to the distinctive ontological status of social being.[29]

Lukács derives the notion of teleological positing from Aristotle's division of the techne process in *Metaphysics* 10, vii into two phases, that of *noesis*, which for present purposes can be rendered as "intellectual positing," and that of *poiesis*, or "production, bringing about." "The former serves to posit the goal and to investigate the means of its realization, while the latter serves to attain the realization of the goal thus posited."[30] In treating the noetic, intellectual preliminary to the actual work process as an integral part of what he calls "labor," Lukács treats the notion of labor in a way that contrasts starkly with its usual sense, and with its treatment by Arendt or Agamben. In Greek society of Aristotle's period, labor was strictly set apart as the responsibility of slaves, and noetic activity reserved for their rulers; Lukács goes against the grain of both Aristotle's time and ours in defining labor as Aristotle defines techne.

But Lukács is not writing social history, nor is he interpreting Aristotle for the sake of Aristotle. He is trying to define the specific nature of the founding structures of social being. The fact that the Greeks, and we, make a sharp distinction between intellectual work and labor says nothing about the essential nature of the labor process itself in its totality, and in fact obscures this nature. A subordinate workman who hauls bricks to a building site performs merely physical labor; but he hauls just this building material to just this place in accordance with a plan—a plan made by someone else, and of which the workman might be entirely ignorant, but which inhabits the prescribed labor as its logic and motive. In fact, the notion that *anyone at all*, in any kind of work at any stage of history, encompasses the labor—or techne—process in the entirety of its two phases is false; we might call this the "Robinson Crusoe fallacy." The total structure of noesis-poiesis can be divided up among any number of actors, but the structure in itself remains the same. Whatever the situation in any given individual case, structurally there is no poiesis without an antecedent noesis. The purpose of returning to the earliest origins of the labor process, as Lukács does, is to gain a view of the nature of this process in its earliest, most undivided stage.

There are, recall, two moments in the first, noetic phase of poeisis: the positing of the goal, and the investigation of the means. What is crucial to the present investigation of techne is the social character of the *second* moment of noesis, the investigation of the means. This is the process of diagnosis through which the causal chains constituting the pathways toward the goal are intellectually posited ("let's see what the problem is here . . ."). The posited knowledge then will guide the workman's actions in the labor process, which involves a constant choice between alternative possibilities of action.

The crucial advance Lukács makes on Aristotle's account of this process is to bring out its essentially *social* character. "An alternative . . . in labour . . . is a concrete selection between ways to realize a goal that has not been produced by a subject deciding for himself, but rather by the social being in which he lives and acts. It is only out of this complex of being that exists and is determined independently of him that the subject can rise through these determined possibilities to the object of the goal he posits, to his alternative" (38). "[E]ven the positing of causal series is ultimately determined by social being itself" (40). Aristotle already understood that not the individual qua individual, but the individual qua bearer of a specific techne, is the agent of action in techne: not Polyclitus, but the sculptor who happens to be Polyclitus makes the sculpture. And everything that Aristotle says implies that the techne that empowers the individual is itself a socially accumulated and instituted knowledge. But

Lukács takes the further step of making this aspect of techne explicit. By doing this, Lukács opens a new path for elaboration of the concept of techne in its social and historical dimension, so that the evolution of a given techne can be conceived otherwise than as Aristotle conceives it.

Lukács, working from the model of Darwinism, thinks back to the origins of techne in primitive labor, and imagines its "natural" evolution entirely in social and historical terms. His account enables us to envision how across generations knowledge accumulates about the fracture lines in reality along which the workman can most effectively exert force, bringing natural chains of causality into the service of human purposes, such that a labor practice can gradually "congeal" out of a series of such discoveries. First someone affixes a sharp stone to an arrow; then the group learns to sharpen these stones; then the best kinds of stone for this purpose are discerned; then better tools for chipping the arrowheads are developed; and so forth, with the knowledge passed down by the craftsmen of each generation to their successors.

Although Lukács does not seem to be aware of it, this way of conceptualizing the "investigation of the means" differs from Aristotle's in a fundamental way. Aristotle expounds the noesis-poesis structure in *Metaphysics* 1032b by means of the example of a physician diagnosing an illness; techne here thus means the actual production process, a specific instance of a technites putting a techne to work, and the investigation of the means is the physician's diagnosis of a specific illness to determine which of the techniques known to him should be applied, and how. Lukács, by contrast, while he also speaks of the actual production process in such cases, is primarily concerned with labor processes "in their historical continuity and development within the real complexes of social being"—the historical process by means of which techne-knowledge is acquired in the first place. Thus, without calling attention to the radicality of his revision of Aristotle, Lukács shifts from speaking of the "investigation of the means" as the skilled application by a knowledgeable workman of a preexisting technical knowledge in the diagnosis of a specific case, to the antecedent "investigation of nature" that is required for the "elaboration of means" by which such knowledge is historically established in a given social group, and thus made available to individual practitioners (15). Aristotle's overall account implies both of these senses of investigation of the means, but not in the passage to which Lukács refers; Lukács's sense of the term must be inferred from Aristotle's text, in a way that Lukács does not explain but which I am now bringing to light.

Durably established knowledge of how-to of the kind implied in Lukács's account is, precisely, *techne* in the most rigorous and fundamental

sense of the term. Yet, because he fails to grasp this concept as distinct from that of labor, Lukács does not develop his insight into techne beyond its barest initial sketch. The crucial moment at which he turns away from the concept of techne occurs when, following Hegel, he identifies the objective, socially enduring element of the labor process not as the established knowledge of means (that is, techne) but as the *tool* (16). The tool, according to Hegel, is "a mediating category of decisive importance, as the result of which the individual act of labour goes beyond its individuality and is itself erected into a moment of social continuity" (86). The tool is of course the enduring element of the labor process in the bare sense that its physical existence persists beyond the individual acts that are accomplished with it, and beyond the immediate needs that are satisfied with its aid; but as such it is nothing. A tool is an enduring element of the labor process only as tributary to the enduring of the primary element, the techne of which the tool is an implement. If we do not know how and for what a tool was used, we do not know what tool it is, or even, perhaps, whether it is a tool at all.[31] The correct analysis is Aristotle's, in the passages of *Generation of Animals* that I considered above, where he treats the tool as subordinate to techne-knowledge. It is, in the first instance, techne, and not, as Hegel claims, tools, by means of which humanity acquires "power over nature."

The notion of techne is contained in suspension in Lukács's account, dispersed among various elements of his analysis that never quite solidify into it. Yet the social objectivity of the knowledge encoded in the labor process cannot be properly conceived without this concept, and Lukács's account suffers from this deficiency.

Consider his use of Aristotle's notion that "a builder, even when he is not building, still remains an architect in potentiality *(dynamis)*" (27). In Aristotle's account, the power to build remains a dynamis or dormant power in the builder who is not actually building because he has incorporated the techne of building in himself as a *hexis* or acquired disposition. Lukács attempts to transfer Aristotle's argument about the builder to the unemployed worker, arguing that, from the standpoint of the ontology of social being, the unemployed worker "remains by his *dynamis* a worker, as a result of his upbringing, his former activity and experience," and is therefore able to take up his work again when it becomes available (28). This claim about the worker points strictly back to the techne that the individual has incorporated as the source of his *dynamis*;[32] but because techne is missing from Lukács's account, it lacks its conceptual underpinning. As a result of this lack, Lukács goes on to gloss the worker's dynamis as a mere "property": "We could even say . . . that the required skills of the unemployed worker remain properties

of his as much as do other properties of any other existing thing" (28). But a dynamis derived from the incorporation of a techne is not a "property" such as "any existing thing" might have; it is a dormant power of productive action of a specifically human, social kind. Lukács uncharacteristically reifies the worker when he reduces the worker's dynamis to a property.

Techne is historically accumulated and socially instituted know-how, of whatever kind; all individual workmen, and all individual acts of putting-to-work of techne, presuppose the existence "in themselves" of the specific technai that have been learned and are being put to work—just as the uttering of a sentence presupposes an established system of language. And, again like a language, a techne is a historically evolved social objectivity. Although he does not command a truly historical understanding of this prior process, Aristotle does thoroughly understand what Lukács never quite gets clear, that the process of implementation of techne requires the pre-existence of a techne "in itself." This is the sense of techne evoked in *Generation of Animals*, according to which techne itself is the origin of the motion that the workman applies. Techne in this sense is the missing piece that is needed to complete Lukács's account of the nature and evolution of the labor process.

V

Aristotle says that the techne process transmits form from the soul of the workman to the work; but form is the keystone of Greek idealism, the very element of the ideal. To conceive techne merely as the transmission of form from the soul into matter seems, consequently, to involve imagining the technical giving of form as the imprinting on matter of some ideal and unchanging essential outline.

Heidegger of course rejects the notion of making as the imprinting of form on matter, but in the 1955 "Question Concerning Technology" he describes poietic "revealing" in a way that is difficult to distinguish from the strictly idealist conception of form, as "what is gathered in advance" with a view to the "completed thing": "Whoever builds . . . reveals what is to be brought forth. . . . [T]his revealing gathers together in advance the aspect and the matter of ship or house, with a view to the finished thing envisioned as completed, and from this gathering determines the manner of its construction. Thus what is decisive in *techne* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing."[33] Heidegger's revulsion from human agency as "manipulating" and "the using of means" here leads him to

a teleology that is even stronger than Aristotle's, since here what is envisioned in advance auto-determines the product. Yet, as we have seen, Aristotle does not have Heidegger's disdain for the "manipulation of tools," and in his comments on such using can be found the elements by which, with the aid of Lukács, the idealism of his own account can be deconstructed.

The form is in the techne before it is in the workman, but it got into the techne, we can now say, by means of a historical process of exploration of the chains of causality that were immediately connected with the purpose toward which the originators of the practice were striving; and it got into the "soul" of the workman by a process of training and practice that depended on the social institution of the knowledge gained from the historical process of exploration. Then, before it gets from the soul of the workman to the work, the techne knowledge that has been trained into the workman by instruction and practice must be transmitted to his hands, and from his hands to the tools. The whole thing is a material process, one in which the intellect plays an important part (though not necessarily at the moment of production), but one that is dialectically intertwined with material reality at every moment.

Bartels lucidly articulates the way in which the form is "encoded" in the movements of the tools by which the workman shapes the work: "If the form emerges with all of its specifics through the action of the tool during the process of actualization, then the form must be somehow contained, over the entire span of the actualization, within the action of the tool. Clearly, the form is not immediately discernable during this process, as it is initially in the preliminary design and again in the end product. It appears rather in another representation whose distinctive mark is its extension in time. We can say that the form appears clearly in the beginning and in the end—that is, in the preliminary design and in the final product—but in between, it is encoded within the action of the tool."[34] As we have learned from Derrida, form in any real world process is never simply repeated, it is always *iterated*, repeated with a difference that, as Derrida says, "sets it adrift" from its point of origin, while yet maintaining a kind of essential relation to that origin, by means of what Derrida calls a "minimum of idealization." The techne process in its materiality as described by Aristotle is, necessarily, iterative in this sense, and a techne, any techne, is always in greater or lesser measure adrift. In its most mechanical forms, those in which the workman aims at exact replication of a model, the deviation from ideal form will be very minimal; but it is easy to think of the moment in which form makes its passage through the movement of the tool in modernist terms, as the moment at which, for the craftsman who is open to its intimations,

the materiality of the process can react back onto the formal intention in such a way as to create the drift of which Derrida speaks and, consequently, issue in new forms.[35]

My purpose here is not, however, to explain how innovation happens in the techne process, but only to argue for the Aristotelian conception of techne as the source of the kinesis of labor activity, and for the Lukácsian conception of the concrete social reality of the embodied techne knowledge that moves the worker's limbs. The materialist theory of techne proposes that we cannot properly conceive the work of the artist in all its sophistication if we do not have as a basis for this conception a fully articulated sense of the techne process in its elemental forms; for example, the skill of driving a nail into a two-by-four. A skilled carpenter drives the nail all the way home in three short, rhythmic strokes; then rhythmically puts another nail in place and repeats the process, over and over. This is not a sophisticated skill, yet the same task executed by someone who has not been trained to it will waste much frustrating effort in trying not to bend the nail as it goes in—and some of us never learn how to do it right. The power to do the task skillfully, with the least waste of time and effort, is the power contained within the techne knowledge that is socially inscribed in and as the practice of already trained practitioners, and is, within each practitioner, a power *delegated* from the techne as social possession. Only a resolutely idealist theory of art, of the type that, moreoever, has existed only since the eighteenth century, can resist acknowledging that the painter or poet has the same relation to her techne, *at this level of analysis*, as the carpenter.

The same depth of impersonal, socially accumulated knowledge that is present in art is present in any other highly developed techne, beginning with language itself. As J. L. Austin pointed out, "our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon—the most favoured alternative method."[36] Apart from the unfortunate reference to survival of the fittest, this passage evokes the dynamis of ordinary language in a way that is strictly parallel to what I have been saying about techne. Language is a technique, as Wittgenstein says in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and when we use language we are skilled operators of this technique, which accomplishes the most marvelous things on our behalf, generally without our having to think about it. One could argue that there is a mystery here (Heidegger, of course,

does so), for no one can say how someone spontaneously produces an ordinary utterance in one's native language, any more than one can say how someone produces a new poem; yet hardly anyone today proposes a mysterious faculty of spirit, much less nature itself (unless nature is synonymous with the process of evolution) as the source of our ability to speak.

The account of techne I have presented is an alternative to Heidegger's notion that techne merely allows physis to do its own thing. The source of the power that techne delegates to the individual is not physis but techne itself, as the historical product of the dialectical interaction of human collectivities with nature in the evolution of the labor process. Richard Rorty used to enjoy heaping scorn on Socrates' notion that our epistemic maps can "carve reality at the joints"; but even he could not have doubted that a butcher (the source of Socrates' analogy) must know the best places to carve an animal carcass or risk losing his job. There are fracture lines in reality, not absolutely, perhaps, but certainly relative to human purposes as these are configured in culturally specific ways; the motion of the carver's muscles "flows" to the degree that his physical effort is knowledgeably guided into the most readily yielding spots in the meat. Techne knowledge takes its orientation from the actualization at which it aims and which gives rise to it, not because it is the transmission of some ideal "form," but because what is fixed as knowledge in techne is the a posteriori conscious determination of *what has in fact succeeded in the past*, and the beauty of it is that each of us does not have to individually rediscover it. Homely examples like carving meat and driving a nail exemplify in a concrete, extremely humble, but essential way what is always at work in the application of techne: the actualization of the potential power (dynamis) that has been accumulated in the techne as a social possession, a power by means of which, as Marx says, humanity "develops the potentialities slumbering within nature."[37] I have been focusing narrowly on the techne-informed motor skills that are brought to bear in these examples, but a skill like driving a nail into a board actualizes the power not only of such skills, but of the entire cultural ensemble that makes the existence of such skills possible—the entire historical process through which the know-how has evolved for producing boards, nails, and hammers, as well as the architectural and design knowledge that guides the building process as a whole, and the cultural "discipline" by which human beings are turned into effective and productive workers, along the lines first identified by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[38]

Every action of every techne, no matter how sophisticated—for example, the production of the work of art—has the same fundamental

nature as this. The moving principle of poiesis is always in its *origin* that of the associated techne.[39] Anyone afflicted with mysterianism about art is likely to feel that accounts of art as a historical growth and as a social practice are superficial, external to the essence of art, a flattening of the depth and richness of art into "tradition," "convention," "mere rules," or "mere technique." But there is nothing shallow or flat about techne; the shallowness is in our perception of it, a perception that has not grasped it in a social and historical perspective, as a millennial growth, and also as a phenomenon that is not essentially walled off, either conceptually or concretely, from the entire ensemble of technai that constitutes its culture of origin.

University of Washington

NOTES

1 Heidegger is known for his extremely detailed, if suppositious, readings of Greek texts; yet his claims about techne as aletheia are given very thin textual support.

2 Modernists who did do important work on the theory of techne include Paul Valéry and the Russian Formalists. See Henry Staten, "The Wrong Turn of Aesthetics," in *Theory After 'Theory'*, ed. Jane Elliott and Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 2011).

3 "The Origin of the Work of Art" (in *Basic Writings: From "Being and Time" [1927] to "The Task of Thinking" [1964]*, rev. ed., trans. David Farrell Krell [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993], 139–212) is the crucial source for Heidegger's views on techne (hereafter cited in text as OWA), but also important are *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* trans. Ralph Manheim (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1959) and "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Michael Gendre (New York: Harper Colophon, 1977), 3–35. Jacques Taminiaux's *Heidegger's Project of Fundamental Ontology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991) is essential reading for understanding the place of "Origin" in the development of Heidegger's thought, both internally and in its relation to its historical context. The *Introduction* and the first version of "Origin" date from 1935, a moment at which Heidegger was struggling both with his relation to Nazism and beginning the "turn" from the fundamental ontology of *Being and Time*. The *Introduction* presents practically the same definition of techne as the "Origin" (p. 134), but as Taminiaux notes, in the *Introduction* there is still present the "Promethean stance" (presumably formulated with Hitler in mind) which would have precluded "a confrontation with the essence of technology." Examining the relation between the 1935 and the final, 1936 versions of "Origin," Taminiaux concludes that in the changes Heidegger made in 1936 is detectible the collapse of this stance (224–25). "The Question," which dates from 1955, differs in a subtle but important way from "Origin" in its account of techne (see note 5).

4 Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 10–11.

5 "Origin" makes clear that what he really means by techne is what he calls "great art," stipulating that "only such art is under consideration here" (166). I do not know how this exclusive focus on great art in "Origin" is to be squared with the explication of techne in the 1955 "Question Concerning Technology," which explicitly includes "craft" as part of the meaning of techne, adducing as examples of what poiesis brings forth "a house or a ship or a silver chalice" (13). I will say more about this in the final section of this essay.

6 Krzysztof Ziarek, *The Force of Art* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2004), 50.

7 Ziarek follows Heidegger in rejecting making as "a type of relation in which a dominant active force shapes, produces, or subjugates either a passive material or a weaker force," (10–11), a relation that he associates with "the operations of capital and modern social praxis" (48). But he discards the notion that art lets the Being of beings burst forth in favor of a Nietzschean-Deleuzian notion that it allows "an alternative, nonviolent disposition of forces" to constitute itself (42).

8 The notion of a techne in itself is introduced in Bk I of *Republic* by Thrasymachus, but eagerly appropriated by Socrates, who then uses it to destroy Thrasymachus's thesis about justice. At the end of Bk I, the conversation turns to the specific functions of tools and bodily organs—a discussion that had a deep influence on Aristotle, as can be seen by the echoes of it in *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 7. Then, in Bk II, the hypothesis about the ideal polis begins as the question of how many technai, and which ones, would be minimally necessary for the survival of this polis (sec. 369–70). The rest of *Republic* grows rigorously out of this beginning, always threaded on the question of techne; philosophy itself is explained as the supreme techne.

9 Paul Friedländer, *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (1954; New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 221–29.

10 "The End of Philosophy," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), 447. "We must acknowledge," Heidegger adds, "that *aletheia* . . . was originally experienced . . . only as the correctness of representations and statements" (447). That Heidegger was responding directly to Friedländer is suggested in Karsten Harries' exhaustive commentary on "Origin," *Art Matters* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009). Marcel Detienne marshals recent research in early Greek political and religious culture against the claim that aletheia means unconcealment in *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*, trans. Janet Lloyd (New York: Zone Books; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

11 Aristotle then goes on to say that, whereas nature acts like a carpenter in semen-emitting males, it acts like a modeler in clay in males that do not emit semen, "for she does not touch the work she is forming by means of something not herself, but by using parts of herself" (730b 30–32). Here and throughout I have relied on the Revised Oxford Translation of *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), *Generation of Animals* (hereafter cited in text as *GA*). I have modified the translations by inserting the Greek words for the key concepts, such as techne, eidos, and kinesis, that I am trying to elucidate.

12 Aristotle, *Physics*, 195a.

13 Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986), 49–50.

14 The notion of "design space" and of the "good moves" that are "hidden" within it is elaborated by Dennett in his great book *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1995). These notions are essential for the contemporary elaboration of the materialist theory of techne beyond the point to which I take it in this essay.

15 Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics*, 51.

16 Aristotle's understanding of mechanism in his reference to the "automata" is not, of course, identical with the post-Cartesian conception; but it nevertheless remains authentically *mechanical,* while being integrated into his own richer account in terms of the four causes and the notion of *dynamis*. See Jean de Groot, "*Dunamis* and the Science of Mechanics: Aristotle on Animal Motion," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 46, no. 1 (2008): 43–68.

17 Klaus Bartels, "Der Begriff Techne bei Aristoteles," in *Synusia*, ed. Hellmut Flashar and Konrad Gaiser (Pfullingen: Verlag Gunther Neske, 1965), 275–87.

18 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1161a.

19 Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, 687a9–24.

20 Bartels's analysis is contemporary with the earliest stirrings of deconstruction in Derrida's work, and anticipates in nuce the Derridean critique of Heidegger made by Bernard Stiegler in *Technics and Time*, I, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998). See esp. 136–42, 179 in Stiegler.
21 Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964), 4.
22 Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999) (hereafter cited in text).
23 Agamben wrongly claims that energeia has "nothing directly to do with action" but only with "presence" (70). As Arendt explains, in a book Agamben cites, "insistence on the living deed and the spoken word as the greatest achievements of which human beings are capable . . . was conceptualized in Aristotle's notion of *energeia* ('actuality'), with which he designated all activities that . . . exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself"; *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1984), 206. For the place of praxis in Heidegger's thought, see Taminiaux, esp. 122–37.
24 The English version of *The Man Without Content* mistranslates Agamben's *lavoro* as *work*. Lavoro can also mean work, but in this context *labor* is clearly the intended sense.
25 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 173.
26 The question of how Agamben's Heideggerean streak is related to his notion of "bare life" is outside the scope of this essay.
27 See note 2, above.
28 All references to Lukács are to *The Ontology of Social Being, Volume 3: Labour*, trans. David Fernbach (London: Merlin, 1980) (hereafter cited in text). This volume is a translation of the first chapter of Part Two of Lukács's final work, *Toward the Ontology of Social Being* (*Zur Ontologie der gesellschaftlichen Seins*) [Neuwied; Berlin: Luchterhand, 1985], Werke 14, band 2).
29 Lukács emphasizes that in the course of history, the abstract, scientific understanding of reality becomes more and more detached from the labor process, and less and less immediately bound to the immediate material constraints of the real.
30 Lukács, *Ontology*, 10.
31 Because all the primitive forms of techne are well-known, anthropologists can immediately identify most tools, and can, as Lukács notes, reconstruct quite extensive pictures of a cultural context on the basis of its tools—but only because they do already know the techne associated with the tool. The reference to such reconstruction, in any case, obscures what is centrally at issue—not mere physical enduring, but the enduring of an element as an ongoing concern in a *living* culture; and this *socially* (and not archaeologically) enduring element is clearly techne.
32 Lukács presses this "ontological" point as a way of pushing back against the actualism that would strip the individual's labor power, his worker-being, of its reality in the absence of the objective social possibility of its being actualized.
33 Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology," 319.
34 Bartels, "Der Begriff Techne bei Aristoteles," 282, my translation.
35 A first-rate contemporary instance of this way of creating art is the work, and theory, of the painter Joseph Marioni, who is one of the central figures of Michael Fried's recently published book, *Four Honest Outlaws: Sala, Ray, Marioni, Gordon* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2011). I have developed the theory of techne in terms of Marioni's work in an essay, "Clement Greenberg, Radical Painting, and the Logic of Modernism," *Angelaki: journal of the theoretical humanities* 7, no. 1 (2002): 73–88.
36 J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, 3rd ed.(Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), 182.
37 Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1976), 283.

38 Beyond the question of the type of disciplining of the worker specific to capitalism, there is the deeper question raised by Lukács about the relation between the techne process and the very origins of human moral being.

39 The present essay is concerned only to establish the origins and basis of art in techne, not to fully explain the purported "mystery" of invention in art. I say more about the relation between artistic invention and techne in "A Critique of Will to Power," in *A Companion to Nietzsche*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), and in "The Wrong Turn of Aesthetics" (cited earlier).

What Theory Can Learn from New Directions in Contemporary American Poetry

Charles Altieri

We rest on deep rhetorics
—Lisa Robertson, *The Weather*

I think there may be a major shift emerging in our understanding of poetry, at least if one takes seriously the efforts of some poets trained in the experimental or "innovative" tradition to find traction for their lyrical voices by identifying with rhetorical ideals condemned by that same tradition. These rhetorical ideals serve as a means of challenging the notion of the poem as aesthetic object that has governed both traditional and experimental views of literature for almost a century.[1] Now recent poetic work suggests that the constitutive role given the "aesthetic" binds poets too closely to the nonverbal arts and does not sufficiently foreground how the poet utilizes the resources of rhetoric that enable poetry to engage social forces. But we have to be careful in characterizing the significance of such a turn, because the new ideals of rhetoric also transform what they inherit: there is a desire to align rhetoric with conversation rather than with oratory, with participation and witness rather than masterful eloquence, and with the power to build communities rather than to construct perfect isolated works of exemplary craft.[2] The rhetor idealized in the new poetry is no longer a master persuader or master craftsperson, but someone willing to risk renouncing an emphasis on "artefactuality" or aesthetic finish in favor of speaking positions that invite the audience to take responsibility for such witness.[3]

My claims about the return to rhetoric are based on a previous essay about recent work by Julianna Spahr and Jennifer Moxley,[4] buttressed by my sense that poets as various as Ben Lerner, Lisa Robertson, Karen Volkman, and Geoffrey O'Brien also make rhetorical resources and stances basic to their work, usually with more ironic play than is present in Spahr or Moxley, but still with a visible commitment to differentiating themselves from the idea of poems as primarily aesthetic objects. Here I will not so much argue the case as presume upon it in order to test

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 65–87

how this return to rhetoric might have significant consequences for our general understanding of how to best read the entire scope of American poetry, even poetry avowedly resistant to rhetoricity in any form. For once we turn to rhetorical ideals, we may be able to recast our view of how poetry makes plausible claims to foster consequences beyond the pleasures of aesthetic contemplation. In particular I will invoke this interest in rhetoric as a reason to revisit speech act theory for an account of what kind of actions poems can be expected to perform, while at the same time honoring the presentational, antimimetic ideals fundamental to modernist values. I will base this account on the argument that J. L. Austin's notion of the performative has taken on too many layers and contradictions to be of much use for literary theory. Instead I propose an analogous notion of "demonstrative speech acts" as a way of capturing the force of those same presentational ideals while placing them within the domain of rhetorical concerns.

I

I need first to account for the hostility to rhetoric in modernist theory during the second decade of the twentieth century, when young poets subscribing to modernism were attempting to elaborate a poetics that would enable them to ally with the experimental spirit in the other arts. This hostility was more prevalent in the poets' own rhetoric about their art than in their practice, and it did not last into the later phases of their careers (*Four Quartets* and *Paterson* are intensely rhetorical poems). But it shaped what later poets inherited as modernist poetics. And now younger poets feel that they have to confront this rhetoric about rhetoric in order to make space for a more overt poetry of social responsibility than they felt their immediate heritage afforded.

The historical story of how literature ties itself to the aesthetic can be told in many ways—the most recent of which is Jacques Rancière's account of the undoing of "a regime of representation" that had dominated classical and Enlightenment thinking about art until it was replaced by a quite different regime based on philosophical aesthetics.[5] I think the discipline of rhetoric served as a point of fusion in that regime because it could correlate what Rancière claims are its three basic structural features—"a poesis or way of doing, an aesthesis or way of sensing, and a way of interpreting the interplay of these two as a demonstration of something exemplary about human nature" (7). Those correlations unravelled under the pressure of an emerging aesthetic regime with its constant tension between making and sensing, "without the mediation

of any legislative function beyond the individual work of art" (8). This new regime idealized aesthetic free play and thus denied any common human nature to which a discursive art like that of rhetoric could appeal. There was now only the individual structure of sensations trying to establish its own authority by the sublimity it could produce rather than the sense of common humanity it could reproduce in new ways.

Staging the history of art in this way brings out how modernist ideas gathered a good deal of their energy and focus by fostering hostility toward principles of rhetoric, which became emblems of all that seemed outdated and corrupt in cultural practices tied to regimes of representation. By the second half of the nineteenth century, rhetoric in poetry had come to seem an embarrassing mark of relying on old authorities and conventional agreements rather than forging new constellations of sensation that emphasized the suggestiveness of shifting internal relationships. Ideals of establishing rhetorical purposes for texts were replaced by a conception of art that treated language as a medium which, as in the other arts, had the power to achieve an independent existence or end in itself, apart from any cognitive or moral function.[6]

This emphasis on the aesthetic status of the poem allowed poetry to draw on structures and strategies used by the visual and aural arts. Pound spoke in his first draft of three Cantos of an ideal of "writing to paint" and his vorticist work treated syntax and sound as if they were brush strokes constitutive of the vitality of a modernist painting. Loy and Stein linked writing to painting even more seriously in their fascination with cubist effects, and Williams relished the opportunity to present a verbal analogue to the bold surface assertiveness of Charles Demuth's *The Figure Five in Gold*. Such work was not interested in classical ekphrasis, in which words took on the task of recreating visual appearances as they might be represented in a painting. Rather the new poetics wanted to parallel painterly uses of brush stroke and color harmonies by syntactic effects with the work of aural structures.

This poetics emphasized the conjunction of four traits that modernists took to represent a substantial break from what they inherited: an insistence on the primacy of developing the material properties of its linguistic medium, an emphasis on the disruption of standard syntactic "meaning," a call for ideogrammic method or other juxtapositional modes that replace conceptual connections with structures organized by the play of feeling and sensation, and, as a consequence of the work of these structures, a celebration of experience (rather than understanding) as the domain in which a presentational art takes on significance.[7] Such commitment to verbal equivalents for the sensuous materials basic to the expressive purposes of the other arts also created a situation in

which poets often minimized the discursive components of their work, because of their fear that such components would disfigure the fullness of immediate experience.

Rhetoric could not compete with this cult of presentational immediacy as exemplified in the form of the image or vorticism's "masses in relation" or Eliot's "objective correlative."[8] Verlaine's expression of his desire "to wring the neck of rhetoric" was not a casual remark. His generation of poets saw in presentational ideals a means of opposing the cultural vices for which they held rhetoric responsible. Hence Yeats's assertion, "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry. Unlike the rhetoricians, who get a confident voice from remembering the crowd they have won or may win, we sing amid our uncertainty."[9] T. E. Hulme offered a more philosophically acute contrast between a typical writing that used language as if it were attuned to the preformed models used by architects and the artist's ideal of engaging experience by means of a precisely contoured spring mechanism. And then there was Pound's lively historical account in which he fleshed out his statement that rhetoric was the art of the "advertising agent for a new soap" (LE 144).[10] Pound saw that an age of increasing consumer culture could advertise anything except its own naked interest in turning even cultural authority into a commodity.

II

Now we cannot avoid the question of how the ideal of the poem as aesthetic object and its attendant poetics of presentation rather than representation might be vulnerable to critique from the inside—that is to say, not just by opponents of the aesthetic ideology, but by writers needing to reinterpret the practical resources available to them for making significant poetry. This tale of poets responding to the modernist aesthetization of poetry has two significant moments—the sharpening and hardening of modernist principles in the poetics of Language Writing, and then the critical reactions by younger writers whose early work was shaped by those principles. For shorthand I will use statements by Charles Bernstein and Lyn Hejinian to represent what I think are narrower versions of three basic features of modernist poetics. These arguments became increasingly influential in replacing New Critical versions of what the stakes were in modernist experiments. Then I will simply mention some of the signs that very talented younger poets are seeking a new direction that involves a rethinking of the place of rhetoric in poetics.

1) Ideas of presence previously associated with the modernist notion of image or the objective correlative have gradually been sliding into an emphasis on the poetic object as a unique kind of internally intricate system, where our observation of how its particular rules unfold becomes a condition for experiencing the work. The materials afforded by the medium, primarily rhythmic and vocalic effects, are joined under pressure with the force of the poet's images to produce what Charles Bernstein calls "anti-absorptive effects," setting the integrity of the object against the reader's desire to become immersed in it. And the poet is not Wordsworth's man speaking to other men, but the lonely exile from public language trying to redeem aspects of experience for the solitary reader by rendering a sense of the world in the form of an objective structure. As Bernstein puts it, quoting Niklas Luhmann, poetry forms "a perceptual system distinct from a social system," just as visual art does[11]—this from the poet who has gone furthest amongst his contemporaries in developing Wordsworth's ideal of a poet speaking to other people in a common language. But the more poetry becomes an internal system, the more difficult it becomes to specify how it might affect life beyond the poem, even though it seems to have more resources than sharpened attention to the material properties of words and images.

2) Because poets cannot trust discursive understanding and because the poem is primarily an object that establishes a play of imaginative energies, the primary modality of reception for the audience is not one of understanding an object held in common as a structure of meanings, but rather experiencing subjective intensities sparked by the object. Here the best contemporary spokesperson is Lyn Hejinian, who relies on resistance to rhetoric to ground her emphases on readerly experience. The epitome of the rhetorical is the closed, "coercive, epiphanic mode . . . with its smug pretension to universality and its tendency to cast the poet as guardian to Truth."[12] The open text, on the other hand, strives to bring all the elements of the work to maximum excitement and so "invites participation, rejects the authority of the writer over the reader" by relinquishing "total control" and challenging "authority as a principle and control as a motive" (43). "Poetry," declares Hejinian, ". . . takes as its premise that language is a medium for experiencing experience." Its focus is on the movement of thinking as it forges linkages, and its goal is bringing an audience to discover "the reality of *being in time*, of taking *one's chance*, of *becoming another*, all with the implicit understanding that *this is happening*" (3).[13] As in much contemporary visual art, the complex of happening and experiencing drives out ideals of responsiveness to authorial purposiveness.

3) Hejinian's model denies any authority or exemplary quality to the work as an authorial act. It locates the impact of the work in the states of experience it elicits in a reader, as the reader invests in what the text seems to make possible. Ironically, it is at her most radical that Hejinian's claims come closest to a parallel claim from the conservative tradition. The Eliotic and New Critical stress on embodiment within this tradition also needs a way to distinguish incarnation from anything reducible to communication, and so it also generates an emphasis on what we might call a "this is happening effect": poems do not convince us so much as move us in unpredictable ways. Thus honoring the aesthetic power of the work becomes a matter of talking about the states of being that are produced rather than about "meaningfulness" in any way that might smack of argument or John Crowe Ransom's concept of "logical structure." The ideal that "a poem should not mean but be" still affords a plausible figure for what poetry does in the world.

I find Wayne Dodd's formulation of this goal especially eloquent. In his view poetry strives "to make something present" that is, and that "participates in being so that this participation in presence becomes what is 'experienced'"[14]: "The fact that a poem does not 'refer' to a reality outside itself, that it does not 'point,' does not mean that, its gaze being fixed clearly on the page, it is about itself instead of about the world. Rather it means that the physical fact of the poem—the words as physical events, the lines and the grouping of lines, the shapes and patterns both visible and auditory, which develop *on the page*—all this is inextricably entangled in the reality that the poem both explores and is" (50).

III

These are plausible accounts of possible ends for poetry. But I am bothered by the way such formulations subordinate the poet to the poem, meaning to experience, and the domain of historical being to sheer ontology or to states of immediate presentation that ignore the terms of interpersonal social and psychological relations. It is not as if poets in the experimental tradition were ignorant of how rhetoric might address these problems. There is, for example, the fascination with rhetoric that pervades the poetry of John Ashbery and the demoticizing of rhetorical energy in Frank O'Hara's work. And both Bernstein and Bob Perelman make social uses of rhetoric central to their enterprise. But there is a big difference between embodying various aspects of social uses of rhetoric in one's poetry and shaping one's poetry in accord with a project of recovering and transforming ideals of rhetoric.

In the poets I have just mentioned, it seems impossible not to take up ironic or distanced or enigmatic stances toward the rhetorical activity that fascinates them. In Bernstein's "Let's Just Say" (Girly Man, 10–12), for example, there are representations of strikingly complex relations between the pain of incomplete expressiveness and the satisfaction of having opened up possible routes for the articulation of feeling even in that very failure.[15] Bernstein can do a brilliant job of getting his audience to hear rhetorical gestures and to indicate the fault lines where these gestures are likely to come apart. What he cannot do consistently within his poetics, although he often succeeds in his recent practice, is transpose the satirical deconstruction of rhetoric into a register that can take seriously not only the ideas in the rhetorical processes but the idea of what is at stake in the processes themselves. I will argue that only an explicit sense of purposive activity can fully engage the world in a way that addresses the density of our sense of the event-making poetic powers that have an impact on history, albeit usually local versions of history. We need an understanding of rhetoric that sponsors the poetic, without being absorbed into what remains, in Bernstein, the dominant logic of the aesthetic.

This is where I take hope from the younger poets I have mentioned. I don't think one can quite call their work a systematic effort to recover rhetorical principles. But there are certainly clear rejections of Bernstein and Hejinian's versions of the aesthetic. And there are pronounced efforts to restore the Wordsworthian ideal of the poet as a person talking to other persons. So I will try to abstract from these efforts to indicate how these poets are exploring different conceptions of the role of the author, the relation of meaning to experience, and the relation of states of immediacy to states of something like understanding of the world. It is clear to these writers that they cannot simply go back to classical rhetoric, because that tradition requires a willingness to submit to the mastery of craft that seems problematic because of our deeply ingrained sense of democratic privilege. But they can explore alternative ways of dealing with the ethos that marks authorial presence, so that we might understand persuasion as a condition of participation rather than of imposed conviction. Opening up these possibilities could restore the sense that rhetoric is not just the art of persuasion, but the domain for studying the resources language makes available for a variety of purposes, among which is the art of persuasion.

We can dramatize the significance of this project by turning to a remarkable passage by Allen Tate in the 1940s that also tried to acknowledge the limitations of the modernist poetics that he was trying to embrace. He asked how poetics can continue to honor rhetoric while

also decrying rhetoricians: "How can rhetoric, or the arts of language, be taught today? We are not likely *to* begin teaching something in which we do not believe: we do not believe in the uses of rhetoric because we do not believe that the full language of the human situation can be the vehicle of truth."[16]

Thematically, Tate is singing the same old modernist song: science has replaced faith in God with a disenchanted world where truth consistently opposes "the full language of the human situation." But suppose that we locate the importance of this full language in a way that need not engage traditional questions about truth. Tate is right in the sense that a world bound to science will, for the foreseeable future, stand in an ironic relationship to what seems to satisfy human imaginings. Yet there are other locales, other domains of experience, where this full language of the human situation remains crucial even for cognitive purposes, so long as we distinguish among modes of cognition and do not let ideals of scientific description and hypothesis testing dominate our discussion. The world of motives and sympathies, for example, can be as challenging as the world of physics.

The younger poets I am treating as exemplary share Tate's concern for characterizing the resources and means by which poetry gives a sense of pursuing "the full language of the human situation." They turn to an implicit rhetorical theory of poetry in order to develop what kind of authorial positions can best realize this goal. This involves not simply pointing to what ethos can do, but also treating the author's position as a testing ground for aligning the maker with the audience's potential experience of being troubled and moved by various situations. The urgency of such testing does not license us to ignore how classical rhetoric has become the stuff of political stump speeches and advertising copy. But poetry's relation to rhetoric need not be subordinated to such parodic reduction—in social fact or in poetic theorizing. It might be possible to honor the spirit of modernist critiques of rhetoric, while developing both a less imperious view of the rhetorician's role and a more generous model of how rhetorical interests might be compatible with an emphasis on sensuous presentation.

Geoffrey O'Brien, for example, in "D'Haussonville" turns to visual art not primarily for how writing can mine experimental modes of emphasizing the semantic force possible by manipulating line and fractured pictorial syntax, but for the sheer appreciation of how paint becomes for Ingres a vehicle for staging complex social relations:

> Where Ingres invented the entre-nous
> As a repopulated network of the glance

Figured also in the interior monolog
The surface of her body causes.

Ben Lerner devotes an entire volume to recuperating the possibility of offering a convincing statement of love for his new wife, playing on and modulating the ever-present demands of irony inescapable in our literary culture:

Her breathing was
a rustling of tenses, underground
Movements have become
Citable in all their moments
With my non-dominant hand
I want to give
In a minor key
The broadest sense.

And there is Julianna Spahr's triumphant recovery of Whitman through Stein as the climax of her efforts to elaborate how "we" hovers around our first-person singular intensities:

The light is we. The prism is the
space known for its romantic
associations where things
grow around and into each other. The
list of we is the prism of light.

We examine the light we have
written and are confused because
we can't see the singular in it and
then we realize there is no personal
story without we.

Or if we can see a singular story
it is only for a moment as it
appears in the periphery of our
vision as a mirage while our eyes
attempt to separate the light into
its separateness and fail. (83)[17]

All these writers seem to think that modernism's turn to treating poems primarily as aesthetic objects risked making poetry significantly less capacious than the major statements of poetics in Western culture had envisioned it. Sydney and Dennis and Wordsworth and Coleridge and

Arnold did not confine poetry to the role of an aesthetic object that is distinguished by internal relations and that cannot be accommodated to practical or cognitive ends. All their emphasis is on the character of the poet's imagination as a force for influencing how audiences pay attention to the world and project paths through it. The traditional canon emphasizes in various ways the importance of beauty, and so literature's difference from philosophy and history, but it usually located that beauty in qualities of artifice, understanding, and structural elegance that can be enhancements and intensifications of practical life. So, from the perspective of that classical canon, modernist poetics made a kind of devil's bargain. By denying the importance of rhetoric and by focusing on the materiality of the aesthetic object, it could substantially expand another set of possibilities, allowing poetry to borrow organizing principles and affective structures that had been distinctive to the visual and the oral arts. This was exhilarating at the time, but for how long could that sense of new worlds to conquer produce a vital poetry and poetics? From the perspective I am trying to articulate, that domain of possibility seems increasingly exhausted. Its pursuit demands increasing abstraction and intensified yet problematic claims for a sublimity based almost solely on internal relations sustained by lyric artefacts.

This worry certainly drives Spahr's writings on poetics. Instead of the isolated maker of verbal artefacts, she idealizes the rhetor careful to find available means of persuasion that will seduce an audience. At the core of her vision is the demand to reconsider the Romantic ideal of expression as the effort to give material presence to the intricacies of an inner life. For Spahr, there is no need for a rich psychology: a thin psychology will suffice, so long as the poet can articulate why, in a given situation, the roles of reporting or describing seem insufficient for the emotional life that is being invoked. The author seeks common grounds with an audience, developing a sense of urgency and intensity that take us beyond description toward testing what social bonds can be activated. Then poetry is free to call attention to itself as a mode of labor that pursues the capacity to delight, move, and instruct the audience. We thereby preserve the significance of making, even as we try to recast the aesthetic emphasis on the poetic object in terms of the rhetorical emphasis on the technical choices available to the author. Poets will seek beauty or enargia or shifts in perspective or intricate aural effects or integrative form not just because these are aesthetic values, but because they are also aspects of the work poets do in rendering distinctive particulars that are capable of engaging the emotions of readers.

IV

Forty years ago, it seemed that speech act theory had the capacity to challenge the view that poems were primarily aesthetic objects. It emphasized the need to imagine authors and characters as being responsible for linguistic properties, and it stressed how audiences were engaged in various kinds of actions as they brought their social knowledge to bear in reading. That promise did not pan out, for at least one reason I will discuss in a moment. But I think an effort to develop a rhetorical perspective on the lyric has an ally in aspects of speech act theory that should be acknowledged. One might even say that speech act theory is, or should be, the heir of classical rhetorical theory.[18] Like rhetoric, speech act theory is not concerned with the ontology of the literary object, but with the social relationships that it fosters and depends upon. However any use of this theory creates immense difficulties, because the linchpin of speech act theory, the idea of the performative, is now so clotted with contradictory meanings that it is probably impossible to reconcile them. If we want to use a speech act perspective, we will probably have to limit the concept of the "performative" and to delineate carefully any alternative terms that we project as taking up the slack.

My problem with the concept of the performative is that, although it does one job very well, Austin found it very difficult to specify terms for defining that job without them bleeding over into other possible uses of language. And then, as Jonathan Culler elaborates in a masterful essay, the concept of the performative was developed in ways utterly opposed to Austin's original intention.[19] That intention was, we may recall, to specify how some utterances could do significant work in society, even though they did not refer to or describe states of affairs. Rather than describing something that was going on outside language, speakers could perform specific tasks simply by speaking, as if an utterance contained an implicit "hereby." In other words, I can promise simply by making the assertion that I am making a promise; or I can make a bet or perform a marriage ceremony by speaking certain words, provided I meet appropriate social conditions. But I cannot make a true statement just by asserting "I hereby make a true statement": here there are conditions beyond the linguistic act that support or deny the assertion.

For Austin, the primary task was to reorient philosophy by showing that language did not have to refer to something in order to accomplish social tasks. He was not concerned with exploring conditions of agency. In fact, when Austin's performatives work—that is, when they meet "felicity conditions"—the agent's psychology does not matter at all. If I say "I marry you," or "I promise to pay you" and all the social condi-

tions are appropriate (that is, one is not already married), it is simply irrelevant what one's intention is, or whether one is ambivalent. But when Austin tried to draw strict boundaries between the performative and the constative (that is, sentences that assert propositions), he realized that there is a dimension of performativity simply in the asserting of those propositions. The conditions of the speaking will affect how the proposition is understood—for example, "this tree is malformed" seems very different when spoken by an arborist and a linguist. Austin could not quite escape psychology. Yet he could avoid this issue in the limited domain of social performatives by relying on two kinds of criteria. Where felicity conditions are visible and effective, he argued, we can specify how performatives do their social work. And Austin could narrow the field of relevant performatives by insisting that his theory did not hold for any functions of language that were "parasitic" on its normal use in social contexts.[20] In the case of irony or complex literary purposes, for example, there can be no clear felicity conditions.

Austin's difficulty in setting fixed boundaries for the performative did bother Jacques Derrida, at least if we can talk about a pain that becomes instantly converted into the pleasure of arguing that this constitutive dichotomy between performative and constative was inherently unstable. So Derrida fostered a range of speculations on the performative that, as Culler argues, began an intellectual process that would virtually reverse Austin's original intentions (517). Here I can only briefly mention the chain of such transformations: Derrida's appropriating the performative as an index of the "general self-reflective character of language" (508) as well as a name for the kinds of inaugural acts that apply both to political constitutions and to works of genius; de Man's insistence on the constitutive tension between performative and constative that haunts all language; and Judith Butler's emphasis on the iterability of social performatives that sustain problematic notions of gender and race.

The deeper problem may be that "performative" was perhaps too metaphysical a term: it can refer both to a kind of statement that simply invokes social implications and to a kind of action that produces its own self-conscious response to the social conditions producing these implications. (One can say "I make this promise," and one can also alter the terms of the promise by performing it ironically or call attention to its being made under duress.) To clean up this potential ambiguity, I propose that we rename Austin's concern with felicity conditions the "social performative"; then we can produce a different rubric for what the performative has come to stand for after Derrida. My own alternative is tepid in the sense that it accounts neither for major events nor for oppressive forms of social iteration. But if we develop the concept of a

"demonstrative," we can capture the specific speech act qualities of a wide range of behaviors that present situations through language rather than asking language to point to what stands outside. And in accounting for these features, we may be able to synthesize the modernist desire for direct presence in the text with rhetoric's concern for the relations between authors and audiences. Treating poetry as a demonstrative speech act acknowledges expressive motives, calls for the realization of these motives through concrete formal means that offer direct presentations of experience, and enables us to cast that concreteness as a form of exemplification.

We see these functions in three distinct kinds of speech act that comprise the range of demonstratives. The first is closest to traditional rhetoric, and to a common sense understanding of what performance involves. It occurs when speakers display various stylistic or psychological traits that constitute an ethos with which they want to be identified by their audience. The second type is also fundamentally expressive, but with a very different valence. It calls attention to expressive states intended to solicit or engage the affective engagements of others—for example, as statements of care or as bids for sympathy. We try to find verbal equivalents for what we are feeling or attending to, in order to invite an audience into our own intimate space. Cries of pain are not cries about pain. These indices are, at times, under the control of the speaking agent, while at other times, like all expressive activity, they betray forces working on the subject that are repressed or of which he or she is not aware. Third, there is a pedagogical demonstrative that displays a refreshing disinterest in subjective states, but that is no less central in characterizing what we do with language. I refer to our efforts to show concretely how something can be done, even though it is difficult or impossible to describe the principles involved. The most basic example is teaching someone how to ride a bicycle—very difficult to explain but fairly simple to show, especially if the person doing the showing fully engages the experience of how the tutee feels his or her body and develops ways of maintaining balance. I think it evident that there is a wide range of such cases—from the intimate processes by which a spouse teaches a partner to pick up cues by exhibiting behaviors to the act of learning to wield the now current art form of the public apology.

These three kinds of speech act not only perform what they refer to, but they perform it in such a way that what is displayed carries substantial semantic force. Consider the following examples:

> "The task can be done like this" (followed by a specific demonstration)

"Try to recite the poem by emphasizing these variations in pacing . . ."
"Why do you want to make me as worried as I am evidently becoming?"
"This is what I can do when I get a chance to speak in public."
"I am angry enough to justify behaving like such a cad."
"This is how a good husband would deal with my anger . . ."

All these sentences reflect the fact that we often find ourselves relying on modes of display, because what we feel or what we want to accomplish in speaking will be more effective if we are able to show what is involved rather than characterize it in discursive terms. Here each speech act not only triggers conventions but expresses something particular that the audience must identify with (or see into) if it is to take the utterance seriously. Affectively, one demonstrates what one is feeling; semantically, one provides a model for how some aspect of the language can operate; and stylistically one exemplifies the possible powers of a medium in intensifying how the speaker can participate in what compels his or her attention. Moreover, each aspect of the demonstrative need not be isolated from the others. In fact the literary might be that mode of discourse in which our cultural training leads us to combine all these activities: how the world seems is inseparable from how the artwork stages itself and orients us to combine pleasure with instruction. What Kant called "purposivenesss" and Croce "intuition" seems to involve just this complex relational field.

V

There are two specific advantages to treating the demonstrative as the basis for a rhetorical approach to poetry. First, it affords a dynamic and dramatic sense of authorial activity—as making and as emotionally engaged thinking. We are not dealing only with texts but with kinds of actions presented through texts. As actions, texts involve situations that require addressing, and the addressing involves a series of decisions that account for the shape of the action. Literary criticism becomes the description and the contextualizing of these projected decisions. Then, because the action is fleshed out, there are clear paths to treating what is displayed as exemplifying socially significant features. The action can be representative of certain possible paths for treating the imagined situation, and it can indicate problems with such treatments.

This model of authorial activity requires us to bring into play a language of motives that goes well beyond the standard goals of rhetorical persuasion. Such motives encompass other possibilities, like modes of

witnessing or seeking to have one's feelings understood as distinctive. And the sense that the poem is primarily a mode of activity provides an alternative account of the labor that lies behind beauty, form, and the intricacy of internal relationships. The poetic object, then, is best characterized as a formally dynamic means of presenting and framing speech acts. Trained readers typically respond to these acts as offering and inviting conditions of awareness that awaken our capacities to see into imagined actions and events in a way that animates their details and engages our emotions.[21] On this basis we can further justify the claim made earlier that we can emphasize how a work highlights internal relations without our having to treat the poem as an aesthetic object. We can envision the author as testing the rhetorical force that enables a text to look outward by marshalling the powers garnered by looking inward to dense sets of figural and syntactic patterns. And then we can treat style not just as a property objects display but as a direct result of the orientation toward the world that the writer takes up.[22] Literary history, then, becomes in part the tracing of how authors establish styles as examples by modifying previous examples and trusting to their own technical innovations, which take their place in what I am calling cultural repertoires. William Carlos Williams, for example, invites our seeing the many ways in which he approaches landscape so differently from Wordsworth.

My second argument is not against an aesthetic focus, but against its limited capacity to develop the possible significance of what it sees. Because the demonstrative puts a rhetorical frame on how we read, it is capable of establishing richer and more precise connections between poems and the world beyond these poems than is possible within the language of aesthetics, especially within the language of aesthetics in literary discourse since the late nineteenth century. Treating texts as demonstratives allows us to describe the differences poems can make in our understanding of experience, even though they cannot regularly satisfy any of the epistemic demands we usually adapt for cognitive claims. The demonstrative must be appreciated for what is accomplished in the singular performance and what can be accomplished as a result of attending to the performance. When we ask what we have experienced, we can characterize the poem as providing exemplary authorial and dramatic attitudes. Authorial attitudes give shape to possible motives for the writing; dramatic attitudes give shape to expressive features whereby the poem develops affective stances in relation to its subject matter. Poems realize what language can do in making certain states articulate, and that realization in turn gives the imagination access to provisional identifications we can try to adapt to our own circumstances—not as a

condition of experiencing the text but as a condition of adapting that experience to the world by testing for the similarities and differences it allows us to specify. Examples have the power to affect how agents sort the world according to degrees of relevance and possibility.[23]

Think of Nelson Goodman's discussion of various kinds of example; he distinguishes using a swatch of red to test whether the color example matches the shade of another object from using the swatch of red to pick out other possible matches in a pile of sweaters. I call the first an example as instance of a category, and the second an example as a singular event enabling us to sort for possible matches in various degrees of correspondence. Rhetoric then becomes the art that tries to engage and modify what will attribute urgency and relevance to our sortings of the world. Poetry becomes that aspect of rhetoric that makes it possible to sort those features of the world that depend on intricate verbal articulation and imaginative sensuous engagement. Just as rhetoric stresses ethos and makes argument largely a matter of appeals to the audience's sense of who they can become by certain paths of action, so poetry stresses various aspects of provisional identification with what can be accomplished by exemplary linguistic acts.

The role of the exemplar is clearest if we recall the now almost forgotten practice of memorizing poems. Such memorizing offers considerably more than an upper-class party game skill. Readers have idealized memorization because it makes possible precise and intricate sortings of the world in terms of its possible degrees of fit with the specific language of particular passages. And once we recall this function, it is tempting to project the use of articulate examples far beyond the practice of quotation. Once we have experienced the text, we can use our imaginations to test what we can do with what we remember engaging or with what we might take to be possible because of the example rendered. We cannot be sure Shakespeare's play gives us an accurate picture of any actual Hamlet, but we can use a Hamlet picture developed from the play in order to speculate on what agents become in certain melancholic states. Or we can use the example to refine distinctions about how a case is different from Hamlet's situation. The richer the reading of *Hamlet*, the richer the seeing-in, the greater the range of exemplifications—from simple equations with a condition of melancholy to intricate images of what it means for an alienated young man to have to live in a world mastered by Claudius.

VI

Some readers will not share my Kantian distrust of giving examples for theoretical concepts (even concepts of exemplification), but there seems no escaping the ritual, if only because examples can stabilize concepts. Poems self-consciously engaged in rhetorical exercises do not make the best examples, because they don't cover enough of the field, whether they are traditional poems enacting their sense of cultural possibilities or contemporary ones challenging received understandings of those cultural possibilities. So I choose Williams's "By the Road to the Contagious Hospital," because it emerges out of the modernist hatred of rhetoric and does most of its work by concretely rendering an immediate state of mind. I will treat this poem as an exemplary modernist use of a rhetorical range of demonstratives in the service of testing how poetry can replace traditional models of eloquence. In my view, the social power of Williams's poem consists in its ability to muster imaginative significance while repudiating the energizing verbal expansiveness by which Wordsworth makes landscape speak in "Tintern Abbey."

The reading of the poem will not differ very much from traditional close reading, since close reading has always been part of rhetorical training. But my argument about rhetoric has the role of justifying close reading and basing it on efforts to clarify why the poet foregrounds decisions about how language is deployed. Now close reading is not based simply on texts or aesthetic attitudes, but on the appreciation of what a specific set of human actions can produce. This focus on action (literal action, not Burke's symbolic action) then allows us to emphasize how those decisions serve exemplary purposes in establishing possible ways of addressing what resources we have that might make us capable of reconfiguring the desperate state of feeling with which the poem begins. More generally, I close read aspects of this poem because I want to show how attending to the concerns of the younger poets I cite allows us to approach our modernist heritage somewhat differently: we can examine for their rhetorical force even the decisions sponsored by the efforts to purify the rhetoric of the tribe.[24]

"Spring and All" makes a good test case for the theory of the demonstrative because the poem seems so stripped of efforts at eloquence. What has to pass as an alternative to traditional eloquence will emerge only by the mind's effort to attune itself to the landscape and rely on figures based primarily on syntax rather than on semantics. It is as if syntax can be tied to the qualities of the poem presenting an objective event, while semantic figures emphasize the poet's explicit interpretive powers to bring significance to the event. Here significance seems to

emerge out of the scene as a perennial feature open to anyone's attention, rather than the poet's meditating on what the scene can mean for him—hence there is no Wordsworthian memory or his desperate use of his sister as an emblem of an open future. The scene itself makes articulate how we might connect the three registers of the demonstrative I have been talking about—the sense of how the poet takes on an ethos of attentive care, how the participation in the scene effects the poet's grief, and how there might be pedagogical force in the poet's performance of that participation:

> By the road to the contagious hospital
> under the surge of the blue
> mottled clouds driven from the
>
> northeast—a cold wind. Beyond, the
> waste of broad, muddy fields
> brown with dried weeds standing and fallen
>
> patches of standing water
> the scattering of tall trees
>
> all along the road the reddish
> purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy
> stuff of bushes and small trees
> with dead, brown leaves under them
> leafless vines—
>
> Lifeless in appearance, sluggish
> dazed spring approaches—
>
> They enter the new world naked,
> cold, uncertain of all
> save that they enter. All about them
> the cold familiar wind—
>
> Now the grass, tomorrow
> the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf
>
> One by one objects are defined—
> It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf
>
> But now the stark dignity of
> entrance—Still, the profound change
> has come upon them: rooted, they
> grip down and begin to awaken[25]

The most striking feature of this poem is its capacity to make what looks like simple description stabilize an expressive movement from despair to a hopefulness that is embedded in the seasonal cycle and thus not dependent on the speaker's will or its staged eloquence. Apparently stripped bare of the impulse to emote over the scene, the writing can concentrate on the forceful countereloquence established by how the details get staged. The setting is cinematic—moving from clouds and wind framing a panorama of despair to a close focus on the buds of the bushes set off by the background of dead leaves. But the cinematic can bear complex analogies, in this case between the unfolding landscape and the children who face another version of that cold familiar wind and, indeed, that apparently inevitable despair.

Under the pressure of this analogy, consciousness moves from space to time, and hence to a "Now" sensed through an awareness that "it quickens," with "it" providing the only possible comprehensive term for the expanse of physical and psychological landscapes. That "it" becomes a marvelous demonstration of how stripping the world to its elements provides the richest possible vocabulary for synthesizing the effects of spring. Then the poem has to accept the task of fleshing out this "it" by absorbing it into what language can bring to the scene without distorting it. "The stark dignity of entrance" affords one phrase almost orchestrally celebrating how the mind can match in abstraction what demands its expanding attention to emergent concrete phenomena. And then, as the speaker's vision turns to close focus, the poem honors the shifting sense of what has become present by elaborating a series of active verbs that contrast to the first fifteen lines of verb-free spatial details. Notice, too, the sequencing of the verbs as the last three stanzas make change palpable and intellectually resonant. We move from the passive verb "are defined" that encompasses the entire scene to the pure universal present of "quickens," to the lovely touch of "now the stark dignity of entrance" where the verbal function is carried by the manner in which objects appear. "Still" extends that same verbal function to two adverbial functions—one suggesting duration and another the quality of persistent quiet.

Then the final two lines outdo the rest for intricacy and affective power, as if the scene could now itself function as a demonstrative of what spring can entail. At first the past participle "rooted" seems completely out of place in this celebration of emergence. But it beautifully captures the fact that what emerges has roots in the scene: this openness to the passive composes a sense of time allowing the initial bleakness to serve as a necessary feature of this transformation. And only at this point do we encounter fully active verbs that in effect celebrate what

rootedness allows. Again this emergence is given a complex temporality by the decision to not just add "awaken" to "grip down," but to bestow a finer attention on what is only beginning to change. By narrowing the space of the poem's attention to this beginning, the poet can expand the time of the poem to a duration capable of stabilizing its quickening and making its fluid state seem also substantial.

There is not much to add about a specifically performative display of artifice in this poem, because it is so woven into the affective force of how Williams handles description. But we should note how, from the start, he indicates the intensifying force of poetry by playing with insistent enjambment, as if the scene's unfolding were under significant pressure, probably created by the mind's initial hesitations at giving way to the mode of attention the poem is enacting. Lifelessness and desire seem contrary pulls built into the very process by which the scene takes on substance. Then there is that insistent structure of the flat verblessness of the setting against the intricacy of the verbs that emerge—a crucial feature because the poem demands an especially careful intelligence at the very moment that it risks the prototypical sentimental move of invoking spring. That one sees spring emerge is a stock way of resolving depression. That one sees the emergence of the power of specific verbs is both a distinctive interpretation of spring and the articulation of a compelling parallel between the energies of nature and the energies of mind.

The play of verbs brings us to the pedagogical or exemplary role of the demonstrative. There are as many levels of exemplification here as there are plausible identifications and projections leading beyond the text. We can begin at the most general level—the effort to recuperate traditionally sentimental forces by locating them in what takes a sense of craft and intelligence to recognize as well as to produce. This poem offers a way of closely focusing on what spring involves, as well as correlating possible relief from both winter and the suffering of the contagious hospital. The poem also exemplifies the possibility of turning from a Romantic focus on the subject's sense of expansiveness as it reflects nature to the locating of subjectivity as close as possible to the life of objects. Here the discipline of close attention offers the reward of aligning us with the most elemental transformations shaping affective change. And finally this poem exemplifies how the mind can use the intricacy of tenses to modify the intimate ways of honoring what "rooted" can entail.

VII

Rhetoric is the art of exemplification. Rhetors typically ask audiences to identify with the ethos they demonstrate in order to establish ways of thinking through problems or performing the work of praising or blaming. Poetry is that aspect of rhetorical practice that invites us to "see in" to the minute particulars of expressive activity: the language used becomes at least as significant a source of identifications as the thoughts presented or character demonstrated. This "seeing-in" then offers the capacity of trying on particular modes of feeling, thinking, and speaking that provide a possible repertoire of responses to various kinds of situations. Therefore taking up a rhetorical perspective toward what poems offer affords the possibility of making more supple, more intricate, and more intense our repertories for engaging, understanding, and shaping experience in the world beyond the text. Education into "seeing-in" enriches our possibilities for "seeing-as," and thus for sorting what matters to us in the circumstances we deem relevant.

University of California–Berkeley

NOTES

1 "Conservative" understandings of poetry were largely shaped by how the New Critics mediated Eliot into the universities. Poets committed to the spirit of "innovation" turned instead to variants of the objectivist model of a concrete presentational art driven by elaborate juxtapositional musicality that was the ultimate measure of compositional power.

2 I do not mean to denigrate these approaches to rhetoric, from which I have learned a great deal—especially from Kenneth Burke, from Elder Olson's unfairly neglected work on the relation of Aristotelian rhetoric to poetry, and from Walter Jost's often brilliant analyses of Robert Frost. The shift in sensibility I find in younger poets is compatible with new definitions of rhetoric that stress the distinctiveness of situations rather than the bids for power of its practictioners. The best statements of this occasion-driven, and therefore pragmatic and antitheoretical practice, are the essays and introduction to Walter Jost and Michael Hyde, *Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Our Time: A Reader* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1997), especially "Humanism and the Resistance to Theory" by Victoria Kahn.

3 Oren Izenberg brilliantly traces the extent to which contemporary poets will go to escape the artefactual in his *Being Numerous: Poetry and the Ground of Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011).

4 "The Place of Rhetoric in Contemporary American Poetics: Jennifer Moxley and Juliana Spahr," *Chicago Review* 56, no. 2–3 (2011): 127–45.

5 Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 29.

6 I make this argument at great length in my *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989).

7 The importance of the second and the third points was brought home to me by Robert von Hallberg's fine book, *Lyric Powers* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008), 129–41,

219. I also want here to acknowledge three extraordinarily helpful readings of this essay by three extraordinary friends—Geoffrey O'Brien, Ayon Roy, and Charles Molesworth.

8 I have tried to spell out modernist critiques of traditional ideas of rhetoric in two essays: "Rhetoric and Poetics: How to Use the Inevitable Return of the Repressed," in *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Jost and Wendy Olmstead (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004): 473–93, and "The Fate of the Imaginary in Twentieth-Century American Poetry," *American Literary History* 17 (2005): 70–94.

9 William Butler Yeats, *Mythologies* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 331.

10 Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 144.

11 Charles Bernstein, "The Task of Poetics, the Fate of Innovation, and the Aesthetics of Criticism," in *The Consequences of Innovation: 21st-Century Poetics*, ed. Craig Dworkin (New York: Roof Books, 2008), 90.

12 Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2000), 4.

13 This is a good place to acknowledge the significance of Walter Benn Michaels's argument in his *The Shape of the Signifier* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004) that modernist poetics inspired an emphasis on experience rather than meaning. That argument is then subsumed under a claim that logically the cult of experience has to align itself with identity politics. Once writers and critics deny the objectivity available as "meaning," the force of the work gets located in the opportunities it gives for realizing further who one is in the experiencing. And in a world distrustful of idealization, who one is is a matter of the identity shaped by race, class, and location. So Michaels's thesis would find considerable support in Hejinian's claims. But in fact her view of experience does not devolve into identity politics, largely because she retains the modernist ideal of transpersonality: the art object allows all of us to experience something about the world that need not reinforce abstractions about personal identity. I think we can use principles of rhetoric to defend this modernist value and extend it by linking it to the objective grammar of language, which contains patterns of feeling as well as speaking and writing. This is one reaon I think Michaels is wrong to insist on a sharp binary opposition that has "meaning" determined by attributing intentions while "experience" depends on the empirical factors that invite speaking about cultural identities. From what I am calling a grammatical perspective there is no such thing as "experience" in itself. There are only modes of experience as critic or mourner, etc., that situate the experience in relation to some kind of activity, and the activity is in principle open to imaginative participation by a range of identity positions. This observation suggests also that there is no good reason to treat meaning and experience as occupying the same plane and therefore as subject to an either-or on pain of contradiction. Meanings can themselves take on properties of events that are experienced because they become articulate under specific conditions. Think, for example, of how we develop coherent attitudes as we read so that we can identify with texts rather than force on them our ideas about our identity. And think of how eloquence itself becomes a vehicle for experience in a poem like "In Memoriam A. H. H.," as the mind registers the expansive potential of spirit embedded in how it builds on nature.

14 Wayne Dodd, *Toward the End of the Century: Essays into Poetry* (Iowa City: Univ. of Iowa Press, 1992), 86–87.

15 Charles Bernstein, *Girly Man*, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 10–12.

16 Allen Tate, *Essay of Four Decades* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1968), 39.

17 O'Brien, "D'Haussonville," *Lana Turner: A Journal of Poetry and Opinion* 4 (2011): 97–100; Lerner in *Mean Free Path* (Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon, 2010), 66; and Spahr in *Fuck you-Aloha-I Love You* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 2001), 83.

18 This point is made repeatedly in Dauber and Jost, eds.

19 Culler, "Philosophy and Literature: The Fortunes of the Performative," *Poetics Today* 21, no. 3 (2000): 503–19 (hereafter cited in text). Culler does not repudiate the term because of these difficulties but finds the problems themselves a provocation for the analysis of language and literature.

20 J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), 22.

21 I am indebted to Richard Wollheim's *Painting as an Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987) for the notion of "seeing-in."

22 Here I think there are substantial analogues between my arguments and Henry Staten's work on "techne," for example in "Art as Techne, or the Intentional Fallacy and the Unfinished Project of Formalism," in Gary Hagberg and Walter Jost, eds., *A Companion to the Philosophy of Literature* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 420–35, because for Staten techne involves a much broader category than modern aesthetics and provides the basis for reading the authorial presence in the constant decision making that produces significant imaginative writing.

23 In my assertions about exemplification I rely on my "Exemplification and Expression," in Hagberg and Jost, eds., *Companion to the Philosophy of Literature*, 491–506, which also adapts the work of Nelson Goodman on example for literary purposes.

24 In offering this reading, I am also honoring the fact that, while the modernists despised public rhetoric, they were probably the last generation to have the benefit of an education steeped in rhetorical training. That shows even in their ways of mobilizing criticisms of rhetoric.

25 William Carlos William, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*, ed. A. Walton Litz and Christopher MacGowan (New York: New Directions, 1986), 183. In the larger context of *Spring and All* this opening poem also provides by its performance the sense of root and direction that enables the volume to stop wandering. Before this poem chapter numbers are jumbled; after it there is only chapter one because the world is continually beginning again.

On the Distinctiveness of Poetic Language

Shoshana Benjamin

Poetic language has not fared too well these past few decades. Since the 1970s, when speech act theory and generative grammar revised and greatly energized thinking about language, support for the idea of poetic language as a distinctive medium of expression has been on the decline. Although nothing in linguistic theory necessitated it, the notion that poetic language could be dispensed with began to take root in literary circles. With the growing recognition that the ordinary language of everyday life is rich in metaphor, irony, and other elements traditionally classified as poetic, the poetic/ordinary language distinction came to be regarded as superfluous and misleading.

When we examine the case against poetic language, we discover that it is based on two interrelated assumptions and one main finding. The first assumption is that the way to go about determining whether there is such a thing as poetic language is by comparing literary texts and nonliterary discourse. Thus, for example, theoreticians have compared the stories we tell in common everyday situations with literary narratives in novels and short stories, looking for similarities and differences. The second assumption is that distinctive feature analysis is a valid yardstick for judging the outcome of such comparisons. If no features distinctive of literature are found, then it would seem there should be no reason to posit a separate language for literature. The main finding derived by such analysis is that there are indeed no intrinsic differences between *literature* and *nonliterature*, to use the terminology of the debate; as a consequence, the notion of poetic language is rendered superfluous.

The methodology by which this conclusion was reached has escaped criticism, largely because it was taken for granted. For what could be more natural than comparing literary texts and nonliterary discourse to resolve the issue? And what tool other than distinctive feature analysis could be used to adjudicate? If poetic language is indeed a distinctive mode of expression, that difference should show up in a distinctive feature-based comparative analysis.

Given its central role in the debate, I will be taking a critical look at the distinctive feature approach, particularly as used by Mary Louise Pratt to argue her case against poetic language. I also wish to propose

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 89–111

an alternative: instead of *distinctive* features, I suggest we make *typical* features our yardstick.

More broadly, I believe that we need an approach to poetic language that does something beyond looking at features, one that can also explain why certain features stand out as typical of literature even though they can be discovered in other contexts as well (where they tend to be labeled "literary" or "poetic" nonetheless). In answer to that need, I propose a generative approach that inquires into the means by which literary texts are produced and interpreted.

The term *generative* is of course borrowed from generative linguistics, but the approach I develop is indebted to an entirely different domain—namely, Freud's theory of the dream, which deals with both the production and the interpretation of dreams. What interests me most in the Freudian model is first, the description of the structural makeup of the dream, from which I derive a set of features which typify not only the dream but also the poetic text; and second, the method developed by Freud to interpret dreams, which is broadly applicable to poetic texts. I borrow from Freud selectively, without committing myself to his view of the dream as wish fulfillment or of dream content as largely consisting of disguised libidinous thoughts.

My case for poetic language also owes much to the work of Samuel Beckett, to the novels *Murphy* and *Watt* in particular, from which I originally derived my chief argument: that the poetic text emanates from a system of mind different from that responsible for the production of ordinary language discourse. (I assume it is the same system as that which produces the dream.)

In view of the fact that my aim is to make a case for poetic language, I think it important to clarify what I mean by "poetic language." The term itself has engendered great misunderstanding, as it implies that poetic language is a language on the order of ordinary language, while being different from it in some way. I understand "poetic language" to be a metaphorical term that refers to the means by which authors create works of literature. It is a metaphor in the same way as "dream language," which refers to the means by which the unconscious creates dreams, is a metaphor. Both are systems of expression. Both make use of language, poetic language to a much larger extent, but neither one is a linguistic system in the restricted sense intended by linguists.

An example of nonlinguistic poetic means is pictorial expression, which serves the communicative function of enabling the reader to picture scenes in his or her mind. Kafka uses it with exacting precision, every word in his "wordpaintings" being subservient to the visual artistic goal he seeks to achieve. It might be said, however, that pictorial expression

is also a feature of ordinary language discourse. That is quite true. The means used to create nonliterary discourse include pictorial expression and much else that falls outside the bounds of standard linguistic definitions of language, and to the extent that we refer to such means as language, we are speaking metaphorically. The case against poetic language is in fact largely based on demonstrations of the communality of means that are not in the main linguistic. Additional examples of commonly investigated nonlinguistic features are narrative structure and fictionality.

To reformulate the issue so as to accommodate its metaphorical status, we need to ask: is there is any significant difference between the means used to create works of literature (also known as "poetic language") and those used to create nonliterary types of discourse (also known as "ordinary language")?

The Comparative Approach

By far, the most important work on the poetic/ordinary language distinction is Mary Louise Pratt's 1977 *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, which vigorously opposes the idea of poetic language. Stanley Fish's earlier essay "How Ordinary is Ordinary Language?" seems to have paved the way for Pratt, but Fish stopped short of calling for the dismissal of poetic language.[1] His essay did, however, narrow the gap between the two languages by showing that properties commonly assumed to belong to literature exclusively were shared by ordinary language discourse. Other early works that tended to blur the poetic/ordinary language boundary include the 1980 *Metaphors We Live By*.[2] Its authors, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, rose above the poetic/ordinary language distinction by calling attention to the pervasiveness of metaphor in ordinary life and language and, most significantly, by treating metaphor as a mechanism of mind, one that structures human—not solely or specifically poetic—perception and understanding. I choose to focus on Pratt's book, however, as having greatest relevance for my discussion: it presents a direct attack on poetic language; it does not restrict itself to metaphor but considers a range of features commonly associated with poetic language; and it addresses the views of the most ardent and articulate supporters of poetic language.

The views were those held by poeticians, primarily the Russian Formalists and members of the Prague School, by poets, including Rilke, Valéry, and Mallarmé, and by critics, mainly from the school of New Criticism. Linguists, particularly structural linguists, are placed by Pratt

in the poetic language camp as well. A double thread binds the poets, poeticians, and critics together: one is the view that literature constitutes a distinct category that excludes all that is not literature; the other is the perception that literature is superior to ordinary language discourse. Pratt sees an intimate relation between the two: "For the past century at least, the belief that literature is intrinsically distinct from and opposed to all the other things we do with language has had at its heart the belief that literature is somehow intrinsically superior to them."[3] In the scandalously discriminatory view of the poets and their comrades-in-arms, literature was both different from and better than nonliterature. That, in a nutshell, is the position Pratt so vehemently objects to.

Pratt employs a comparative method that relies on the use of distinctive features, a system of analysis borrowed from phonology. She reaches the radical position that literature has *no* distinctive linguistic features, hence the concept of literature as constituting a discrete category collapses, and with it, poetic language. The supporters of poetic language were, she says, mistaken in their belief "that literature is linguistically autonomous, that is, possessed of intrinsic linguistic properties which distinguish it from all other kinds of discourse."[4]

I do not wish to argue with Pratt on the terms she has established. Instead, I take issue with her basic premise that literature must necessarily be defined by distinctive features. I consider that assumption unsound. What counts, what enables us to determine whether a given item is a work of literature is not, or should not be, whether it has features not shared by other types of discourse, but whether those features that it does possess are *typical* of works we recognize as literature. The gold standard should be *typicality*, as opposed to *exclusivity*. For example, fictionality may be a shared property of literature and nonliterature, but it is far more typical of literature than it is of most kinds of ordinary language discourse, such as everyday conversation, journalism, academic lectures, or computer manuals. Prose fiction, a category so named because it is made up of works of fiction, stands as a literary category regardless of the fact that there are nonliterary forms of fictional discourse, such as hypothetical examples, fabricated tales told to the judge in real-life courtrooms, and the like. Similarly, ordinary language does not have to be devoid of rhythm for verse to be classified as a literary category. The insistent demand that literature justify its claim to existence by demonstrating that it has absolutely unique qualities, shared by no other form of discourse, is to my mind the primary and fatal fault in Pratt's argument.

Another important point is that what we generally look for in order to decide whether something is or is not a literary text is not one discernable property, but rather *clusters* of properties that appear in varying

combinations in works of literature. Thus, when we find a combination of a) narrativity, b) fictionality, c) symbolic language, d) rhyme scheme (of a certain kind), and e) rhythmic pattern (of a certain type), we legitimately conclude that the item is not a news report but, perhaps, a ballad, maybe a lyrical ballad. That would be the case if the object to be classified was *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It is worth noting, moreover, that the point I am making about clusters of typical features is relevant not only for establishing that there is such a thing as literature, but also for classifying individual works by type and genre.

My answer to Pratt's principal argument, then, is to replace the use of distinctive features, which works well for phonology, with typical features, which works well for literature. Having addressed her major argument, let me now comment on some lesser but nonetheless significant issues.

Within the framework of her polemic, Pratt presents a selection of quotations from poets and poeticians that help illuminate the nature of poetic language. A fine example is the following insightful and important statement made in 1927 by Osip Brik about the distinctive quality of verse. His point is that the ordinary rules of grammar do not produce verse; verse requires the application of something above and beyond the rules available to ordinary language. (Though why he did not refer to phonological rules is not clear to me.) Brik writes:

> Syntax is the system of word combination in ordinary speech. Inasmuch as verse language is still subject to the basic laws of prose syntax, the laws of word combination are laws of rhythm. And these rhythmic laws complicate the syntactic nature of verse. . . . Verse is regulated not simply by the laws of syntax, but by the laws of rhythmic syntax, that is, a syntax in which the usual syntactic laws are complicated by rhythmic requirements. . . . The very fact that a certain number of words coexist with two sets of laws constitutes the peculiarity of poetry.[5]

Pratt's purpose in quoting Brik is to file a complaint about how poeticians go about determining the distinctiveness of poetic language. Brik has resorted to an objectionable, even "illegitimate," argument, she says, because it assumes rhythmic organization to be "alien to nonliterary discourse and can thus be taken as a distinctive feature of the poetic language."[6] As a matter of fact, Brik's statement makes no such assumption. It locates the distinctiveness of poetic language not in rhythmic organization *per se*, but in a second set of laws (or rules) that coexists with the primary set that produces the sound patterns of ordinary language.

Elsewhere, however, Pratt does acknowledge that there is something distinctive about verse, but she tries to neutralize its distinctiveness by pointing out that there also are nonpoetic forms of verse, "applied verse," such as "Thirty days hath September." Not exactly an overwhelming ob-

jection, it is easily overcome as soon as we substitute typical features for distinctive features. Typical features are resistant to counterexamples, or, to put it more strongly, there is no such thing as a counterexample in the typical feature framework. The fictional anecdote told by my neighbor poses no threat to the integrity of the category of prose fiction. Taking typical features for our standard of judgment thus has the extra advantage of rendering counterexamples irrelevant for issues of clarification and distinctiveness. This is important because the main tactic of the ordinary language camp has been to produce counterexamples to falsify, as it were, all claims made for the distinctiveness of literature and poetic language.

Another and final point to be addressed is the alleged superiority of poetic language over ordinary language. Here, I suggest, the question to ask is not whether poetic language is better than ordinary language, but rather what is poetic language better *for*? Surely not for ordering pizza or giving traffic directions or writing academic papers or doing any of the many things we use language for, in virtually any context apart from one, and that is creating art. But even there, we don't value and treasure works of literary art because they are better than other types of discourse, but because they are good in and of themselves. Literature is appreciated as painting or music is appreciated, in and for itself, without reference to any opposing category.

In *Wittgenstein's Ladder: The Strangeness of Ordinary Language* (1996), Marjorie Perloff bases her one-language position on Wittgenstein, whom she believes to have demonstrated that there is "*no* material difference" between the language of literature and ordinary language discourse and that "the *use* to which we put language varies so much that words and sentences become, as it were, unfamiliar when they reappear in a new context."[7] Whether Wittgenstein actually demonstrated this is not my concern, but I should point out that Perloff's attempt to claim strangeness for ordinary language constitutes a perhaps unwitting attempt to steal it away from the Russian Formalists, who singled out unfamiliarity or estrangement as the quality most distinctive of "literariness."

Another important figure for the issue of poetic language is Mark Turner.[8] In an interesting twist that reorders the relation of the literary to the nonliterary, as traditionally conceived, Turner has argued for the primacy and universality of what he calls "the literary mind," by which he means the mind of man and not the particular mind of the poet. Thus, he writes, "the literary mind is not a separate kind of mind. It is our mind. The literary mind is the fundamental mind."[9] His principal argument is based on the ubiquity of story and parable in everyday life. Whereas Pratt and Perloff assimilate all language use to the category of

the ordinary, Turner regards poetic expression as the linguistic norm. The upshot is, however, the same: a one-language linguistic model since, for Turner, the literary mind is not only the fundamental mind; it is the only mind we have.

Since we are now speaking of mind and not only of texts and properties, let me restate my position as follows: where the conceptions of language presented by Pratt, Perloff, and Turner presuppose a one-system model of mind that produces *all* types of discourse, I propose a two-system model that differentially generates ordinary language discourse and poetic texts. I also identify the system that produces the poetic text with the system that produces dreams.

I do not mean to suggest, however, that only one system may be operative in the actual process by which literary and nonliterary artifacts are created. *Kubla Khan*, for example, is probably the exception rather than the rule in that it emerged as the full blown product of the poet's dream consciousness. If the conscious intellect played any role in its production, it was minimal. At the same time, the example does show that some system other than that responsible for the production of ordinary language utterances is operative in the creation of at least some literary works. It is that system that I am concerned with.

The extent to which that system can be credited, wholly or partially, with the production of the vast number of works belonging to the category of literature is an open question. Many works commonly classified as literature probably owe more to the ordinary language system than to the poetic. But there are some that draw on the resources of the poetic/dream system to a very high degree. The works of Joyce, Beckett, Kafka, Poe, Keats, Carroll, Wilde, Yeats, Dante, and Homer are particularly rich in dream-type features. For my purpose, which is to show that there is such a thing as poetic language, they are among the best specimens we have. The fact that some or perhaps many authors make less use of the poetic system in no way damages the claim that there is such a thing.

Two Minds Are Better Than One

In this section I point out features that poetic texts share with dreams. It is worth looking at them as a set of typical features—an impressively large set, it emerges.

Strangeness, the feature of the dream that often impresses us most upon waking, is an outstanding quality of poetic literature. To wake up from a night of uneasy dreams and find oneself transformed into a gigantic insect is, in a sense, not to awaken at all. On occasion, the

ordinary world may also present itself as strange, especially when we encounter new and unfamiliar situations, but it is the newness of the situation rather than anything intrinsically strange about it, like finding oneself encased in an insect body, that gives it that character. Strangeness, however, is a matter of degree and not necessarily manifested with the extremity of the Kafka example, though other extreme examples, like being buried alive, as in Poe, come easily to mind. An example of a poetic text with a low strangeness quotient is "The Purloined Letter." Dreams themselves are not always strange; some are so realistic that we wake up amazed to find that we have been dreaming, but strangeness is nonetheless a typical feature.

A typical response to works that have a high strangeness quotient is "the willing suspension of disbelief." Interestingly, suspension of disbelief is normative for the dream experience as well, though it would be a misnomer to call it *willing* suspension. During the course of the dream, we believe that what is happening is really happening, which is why we feel such powerful emotions—intense fear, for example, in the case of nightmares.

Other dream features are symbolic expression, pictorial representation, multivalence, ambiguity, and the use of allusion, all of which have equivalents in the literary work. Another feature is combinatorial composition, the bringing together and fusing of disparate elements within a single frame.

For a more holistic characterization of the dream, it is worth noting the following definition given by Andrea Rock: "The creation of hallucinatory narratives complete with characters and a discernable plotline that occurs primarily during that period of rest known as rapid eye movement (REM) sleep."[10] If we pare that down to "narratives complete with characters and a discernable plotline," we get a definition of the dream that captures the qualities of prose fiction and narrative poetry. That dreams are fictional constructs also needs to be mentioned.

Having noted that dreams are narratives, I would now like to return to Mark Turner's thesis of the literary mind, which focuses on narrative constructs—parable and story—in particular.

In light of my foregoing discussion, I suggest that the presence of story and parable in both literary and nonliterary contexts is best accounted for within the framework of a two-system model of mind. There is, in the first place, the likelihood that the ability to tell a story or devise a parable is wired into separate systems, the poetic and the ordinary alike. *Prima facie* evidence for this is the dream—for example, Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat and seven lean cows, which has narrative structure and, like parable, symbolic meaning, but is not produced by the mind that

produces everyday discourse, even if we choose to call it the *poetic* or the *literary mind*.

Another possibility is that both systems may be drawing on a narrative capacity that is rooted in a more basic level of mind, a third system that underlies the two. A story that is channeled through the ordinary system might be realized as a conversational item; channeled through the poetic system it would or could emerge as a literary artifact. The two systems could even produce separate stories with the same essential meaning, though they might bear little or no outward resemblance to each other, owing to the differences in the expressive means and mental modalities utilized by the systems.

Let me illustrate the two-system (or three-system) possibility with one of the remarkable examples that Freud got from his friend and colleague Hans Silberer, who made a practice of observing what was happening in his mind during twilight states between waking and sleep.[11] They are of particular value because they illustrate an operation basic to dream production, as understood by Freud, which is to *transform thoughts into pictures*. Another virtue is that unlike the classic dream, which cannot be understood without interpretation, Silberer's twilight dreams come with their meaning attached. They represent transformations into symbolic images of the thoughts that he had just been entertaining in the waking state. Note that apart from the expression "I saw myself," which is not wholly consistent with ordinary contexts, this could be taken for an ordinary language utterance: "*I saw myself planing a piece of wood.*"[12]

Moments before the image entered his mind, Silberer had been thinking of *having to revise an essay*. The dream system replaced that thought with the image of planing a piece of wood, having seized on an element common to both: rough spots that need to be smoothed out. An alternate image could have been ironing a shirt; shirts and essays, or unironed shirts and unfinished essays, have wrinkles that need to be ironed out.

The Silberer example provides good evidence for a two-system model of mind. It also demonstrates that different systems employing diverse means can produce narratives, embryonic ones in the present case, which convey the same meaning (a thought concerning an essay) in radically different form (planing a piece of wood, as opposed to revising an essay).

To account for the novel metaphors, puns and other innovative varieties of language identified by Freud as common dream elements but which also crop up in ordinary language contexts, we need to assume that the two systems are not "watertight." If we equip the model with permeable or passable borders or with a connecting structure, such as a bridge, then nonordinary modes of expression could enter the ordinary language system whenever the need or occasion arose. This

is likely to happen instantaneously and without conscious effort, as is the case with Freudian slips and witty retorts that sometimes leave even the speaker surprised. "I have nothing to declare but my genius," Oscar Wilde reputedly said when he went through U.S. Customs. Whenever said, then or later, it is an example of spontaneous wit. On the other hand, in scientific or academic work we sometimes struggle to find a good analogy. But when the right metaphor does come along, it often seems to have come from nowhere. These examples suggest that, like good friends and colleagues, the two systems are capable of working in cooperative collaboration (though Freudian slips suggest occasional sabotage).

A final comment about Turner's notion that the human mind is a literary mind: if all minds were truly endowed with poetic capacities, we would expect many more of us to be publishing stories and not just telling them. But the fact is that the vast majority of language users are incapable of recruiting their "literary minds" for out-and-out literary purposes. Most people do not write and are not capable of writing poems, plays, or novels, and so we are left with the idea of a literary mind hopelessly deficient in the one area it should perform well in, if not excel. In a word, Turner's literary mind lacks literary competence.

A Poetic Mind

In this section I examine the picture of mind presented in Beckett's novel *Murphy*, which offers an unparalleled insider's view of the poetic mind, or rather, of *a* poetic mind. Though nowhere called that, it is hard to see Murphy's mind as anything but the mind of a poet. It is, moreover, one of two minds, which are also referred to as *systems*. One is called "the big world of the body," the other, "the little world of the mind." The latter is the poetic mind.

Some clarification of what is meant by *mind* and by *body* in the context of *Murphy* is called for, as these familiar terms are not used by Beckett in any familiar sense. The mind/body dichotomy has in fact been seriously misconstrued.

Quite naturally, philosophical interest has gravitated to the novel's sixth chapter, which is wholly devoted to the topic of Murphy's mind. The question that dominates much discussion concerns influence: who did Beckett draw on for his conception? The logically prior question—what exactly *is* that conception?—has not been probed with the same intensity; hence, the widespread misconception that has enabled critics, including, among many others, Samuel I. Mintz (1959), Hugh Kenner

(1961), Edouard Morot-Sir (1976), and Richard Begam (1996), to align Murphy's mind with Descartes.[13] In addition, Spinoza has been staked out as an influence by P. J. Murphy (1994).[14]

To cut through half a century of critical discourse: Murphy's mind cannot be associated with either philosopher, for the simple reason that his is not a rational mind. The rational Cartesian (or Spinozan) mind belongs in fact on the physical side of the mind/body divide. Contrary to what is suggested by the expression "world of the body," that world is not one of pure physicality: Murphy operates on a day to day basis as a body that not only walks but also thinks and talks. As the narrator states, "Murphy could think and know after a fashion with his body up (so to speak) and about, with a kind of mental *tic douloureux* sufficient for his parody of rational behaviour. But that was not what he understood by consciousness."[15]

The distinction to be made is between states of mind: between the waking state and hypnotic trance. Unlike the cogitating Cartesian, Murphy does not retreat into a world of rational thought; to the contrary, he immerses himself in an imaginative sphere where he is free of rational constraint. In order to enter that sphere, he first has to put his body to sleep, employing recognizable trance-inducing procedures: repeated rhythmic movement and eye fixation. Rocking back and forth, naked and bound to his rocking chair, Murphy's eyes fix on one spot: "The eyes, cold and unwavering as a gull's, stared up at an iridescence splashed over the cornice moulding, shrinking and fading" (*M* 2). As the procedure continues, Murphy disconnects from the outside world and comes alive in what is variously called *the microcosm*, *the inner world*, *the mental world*, and *the little world of the mind*.

In keeping with the notion of trance, the world of the mind is the arena of visual hallucination. The examples of what goes on in two of the three zones of Murphy's mind specify visual experience. In the one, Murphy creates a grotesque scene out of elements from his outer world experience, rearranged and incongruously combined: two characters who have nothing to do with each other in reality, the one a homosexual poet and the other a landlady advanced in years, coupling; in the other he contemplates a scene from Dante, seen from the perspective of the character Belacqua, crouched on his shelf, watching the dawn break. These examples are significant not only for what they tell us about the content of Murphy's imaginings, but also for what they reveal about the source of the material which they incorporate: the outside world, in the one example, and the world of art, in the other. Elements liberated from their original context, impressions and memories of virtually anything previously encountered, read, or seen, join together to form a

new reality—for Murphy, one more gratifying than anything experienced in the ordinary world.

From other sections of the novel, we learn that Murphy not only sees visions but also hears voices. Extrapolating from the later novel *Watt*, we can say that all the senses, taste and smell included, participate in the inner experience, as is consistent with the possibilities offered by hallucinatory experience. As described by William James, a hallucination is "a strictly sensational form of consciousness, as good and true a sensation as if there were a real object there. *The object happens not to be there, that is all.*"[16]

There is but a short distance between the trance state and dreaming, the link that connects my poetic language thesis to the notion of a mental system that operates separately from that which produces ordinary language.

There are two main types of dreams, lucid and nonlucid, both of which fit the context of Murphy's mental life. Lucid dreams are characterized by the fact that the dreamer knows he is dreaming.[17] They tend to be intentionally induced and managed, though they may take off in unanticipated directions and proceed without volition. Another feature of the lucid dream is that its thematic content may be chosen in advance and preserved over repeated immersions in the dream state. Thus, for example, the scene from Dante could be revisited and developed along different lines in subsequent trance periods. Murphy's mental life appears to be primarily of the lucid type. The nonlucid type is the classic nocturnal dream, spontaneously generated, not subject to conscious control, and not repeatable. Some of Murphy's experiences, including the nightmarish episode that follows his game of chess with the psychotic Mr. Endon, are of this kind. Conscious willed control is definitively absent from his experience of the third zone of his mind, where he does not stage scenarios or contemplate the elements that rise and fall in his mind; there, in this darkest of zones, he is carried along in a flux of sensation.

Murphy's mind is also referred to as an *asylum*, which has two relevant meanings: a place to retreat to and a home for the insane. Beckett exploits the potential of this dual meaning by constructing a full-scale model of an insane asylum in his own scenario. One implication to be derived from this is that the poetic mind is a kind of madhouse, a notion encouraged by Beckett.

The depiction of one particular inmate, Mr. Endon, the self-absorbed schizophrenic to whom Murphy is drawn, "as Narcissus to his fountain" (*M* 186), offers additional insight into the world of the mind. Endon, whose name means *within* in Greek, lives in a hallucinatory world, but

he also exhibits—in his game of chess and his singular mode of operating the asylum's lighting system—a love of form and pattern making, and a penchant for play. These attributes are reflected in Beckett's own artistry. Endon's inner voice is described as "unobtrusive and melodious, a gentle continuo in the whole consort of his hallucinations" (*M* 186). It hardly needs saying that musicality is an outstanding property of Beckett's language and of verse and poetic prose in general.

Beckett is drawing on a long established connection between madness and the poetic mind, made familiar to us from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (note the key word—*dream*):

> Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
> Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.
> The lunatic, the lover and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.[18]

There is also a close connection between the dreamer and the madman, as Freud points out in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where he describes the madman as a waking dreamer. He also provides some useful references to other thinkers, including Kant and Schopenhauer, who share the same view.[19] One might also want to connect the madman with the strangeness of the poetic text, but I think it best to go on now to the topic of interpretation.

To conclude this section: it is known that Beckett, like his protagonist, made a practice of disconnecting from the outer world, not just for the pleasure of the inner experience, as was the case with Murphy, but as part of a work program, so to speak. The critic Lawrence Harvey tells us that "when asked during a conversation in 1961 to describe his manner of setting about writing, Beckett said that he would sit down at his table sometimes for two or three hours without putting down a word, trying to 'descend into the darkness.'"[20]

Interpreting Dreams and Interpreting Literature

One of the strongest indicators pointing to the distinctiveness of poetic language is the method of interpretation it calls for, which is clearly and significantly different from that used to understand ordinary language texts. Correspondingly, there are remarkable similarities between literary interpretation and dream interpretation, which is precisely what the two-system model would predict.

Consider the Freudian method, which consists of two techniques: interpreting symbols, which involves a figuring out process, and practicing free association, which is dependent on memory. Freud would first divide the dream into its constituent elements and then apply the two techniques in succession, using free association first and then treating the remaining elements, those yielding nothing by way of association, as symbols. Both techniques are as vital for the interpretation of literary texts as they are for dreams, though they are differently applied. For example, the use of association in literary interpretation does not conform to the "free" type; it is not based on immediate and spontaneous associative response to textual elements (though such response may occur). Nor do we fragment the literary text and conduct a systematic inquiry into each element, beginning with association first, and so on. But we do interpret symbols and we do trace allusions to their source.

Another important feature shared by dream and literary interpretation is the difficulty of the enterprise. Where ordinary language texts are normally understood straightaway, poetic texts tend to give us pause and may indeed cause us to deliberate at length over what things mean. One can spend untold hours trying to grasp the meaning of an obscure passage or just one word of an elusive text, with no guarantee of success. That is certainly true of Beckett's novel *Watt*, which I consider in this section. The question is: what makes its interpretation so difficult?

There are in fact a number of factors, some of which pertain to the cryptic rather than the specifically poetic nature of the work. But what is at once a poetic property and, at the same time, a major source of difficulty is *symbolic language*, a typical if not definitive feature of the dream. According to Freud, the symbolic language of the dream is wholly *foreign* to ordinary waking consciousness. In a striking metaphor, he writes: "The dreamer has a symbolic mode of expression at his disposal which he does not know in waking life and does not recognize. This is as extraordinary as if you were to discover that your housemaid understood Sanskrit, though you know that she was born in a Bohemian village and never learnt it."[21] Freud's metaphor is meant to account for the astonishing fact that we awake from dreams baffled and puzzled by the images that are presumably of our own making.

Most interestingly, Beckett also employs a foreign language metaphor to characterize the difficulty his characters have understanding each other. "These were sounds that at first, though we walked glued together, were so much Irish to me," Sam says.[22] Moreover, the language of Mr. Knott, the head of the household that is referred to, significantly, as "the little world of Mr Knott's establishment" (*W* 84–85), is as foreign to Watt as Watt's language is to Sam, the words of his songs being "either

without meaning, or derived from an idiom with which Watt, a very fair linguist, had no acquaintance" (*W* 209).

These statements suggest that the language spoken by the characters in the novel is symbolic language. It is certainly the language of the novel itself. A broad smiling hint to that effect is planted in the strategically placed last line of *Watt*: "No symbols where none intended" (*W* 254). Not to belabor the obvious, the double negative—no/none—entails the affirmative: yes, there are symbols in this work, intentionally deployed, wherever and whenever they are deployed.

A. Three Types of Symbolic Language

Examples of symbolic language could be drawn from virtually any page of *Watt*, but for my first example I have chosen a passage that has three qualities that make it useful: it is a clear example; it is not enormously difficult; and it has signal importance for the thesis that *Watt* is a self-reflexive work that discourses on the artistic processes involved in its own making, as argued by Benjamin.[23] The passage I have chosen belongs to a longer section on the making of Mr. Knott's food; it is preceded by a list of the many and varied ingredients called for by the ancient household recipe:

> All these things, and many others too numerous to mention, were well mixed together in the famous pot and boiled for four hours, until the consistence of a mess, or poss, was obtained, and all the good things to eat, and all the good things to drink, and all the good things to take for the good of the health were inextricably mingled and transformed into a single good thing that was neither food, nor drink, nor physic, but quite a new good thing, and of which the tiniest spoonful at once opened the appetite and closed it, excited and stilled the thirst, compromised and stimulated the body's vital functions, and went pleasantly to the head. (*W* 87)

The second example represents a very different type.

> Dead calm, then a murmur, a name, a murmured name, in doubt, in fear, in doubt, wind of winter in the black boughs, cold calm sea whitening whispering to the shore, stealing, hastening, swelling, passing, dying, from naught come, to naught gone. (*W* 248)

The third example is something of a cross between the first and second. It too has major import for reading the novel as a self-reflexive text.

> Mr Hackett resumed his hold on the armrests. Pulling himself forward, and letting himself fall back, several times in rapid succession, he scratched the crest of his hunch against the backboard. He looked towards the horizon that he had come out to see, of which he had seen so little. Now it was quite dark. Yes, now the western sky was as the eastern, which was as the southern, which was as the northern. (W 24)

To explain the difference between these passages, I adopt the distinction made by W. B. Yeats between *emotional symbols*, which "evoke emotions alone" and *intellectual symbols*, which "evoke ideas alone or ideas mingled with emotions."[24] I think it worth dividing the category of intellectual symbols into two, those that evoke ideas alone and those that evoke ideas mingled with emotions, which gives us three types of symbols, each represented by one example. The food-making passage offers a clear case of intellectual symbolism not mingled with emotion; the dead calm passage, emotional symbolism; and the Hackett passage an idea mingled with emotion.

Intellectual symbols have determinate meaning. *Food* has a meaning that can be expressed in ordinary language; so too the component parts, *the pot* in which it is made, *the ingredients* and the method of preparation—*the mixing* and *the boiling*. For present purposes, it is enough to assign an overall meaning to the whole.

As *Watt* and many kindred works are combinatorial compositions which are capable of affecting the reader in a manner like that described, it stands to reason that *making food* means *making a work of art*. The fact that the recipe is of ancient origin is significant in that it suggests a tradition of art-making where knowledge and craft are passed down from generation to generation.

Mr. Knott's food provides nourishment for the mind and soul, a notion made familiar to us by the metaphor *food for thought*, listed by Lakoff and Johnson as one of the metaphors we live by. It goes very far back in time. In *The Guide for the Perplexed*, the Rambam (Moses Maimonides) cites numerous biblical instances of *food* and *drink*, and then makes a point that sounds familiar to the contemporary ear: "The figurative meaning of these expressions has been so general and common, that it was almost considered as its primitive significance."[25] This type of metaphor is now called a *conventional metaphor*, but there is nothing conventional about the way Beckett turns the old phrase into something fresh and new, something indeed to relish.

The recipe used to make the food was employed, among others, by James Joyce, who incorporated a vast number of sources into his work, by Edgar Allan Poe, who was accused of plagiarism for the same practice, and by Oscar Wilde. According to Richard Aldington and Stanley Wein-

traub, Wilde "openly took materials from many sources and put them together in the confident belief that he was making a new synthesis, that his unique personality would transform them into something fresh and attractive."[26] Beckett's work is itself a treasure house of source materials and has been treated as such from the early days of Beckett criticism. For the poetic language/dream system connection, the fact that dreams are themselves combinatorial compositions is clearly important.

The dead calm passage exemplifies wholly emotional symbolism. It cannot be interpreted along Freudian lines because it conveys no concrete idea. Nor can it be paraphrased, there being no equivalent language to express what these specific words and phrases mean. At best, one can identify the feeling or the mood it engenders. The mesmerizing haunting voice—*from naught come, to naught gone*—seems to emanate from some unworldly far-off place, from beyond the grave, almost.

I identify the third passage, depicting Mr. Hackett in the fading light of the day, as a cross between the first two because it combines the intellectual with the emotional symbol; in Yeats's terminology, it evokes an idea mingled with emotion. But in contrast to the food-making passage, one has to be something of a Beckett reader to grasp the idea, and even then one has to ponder. It is worth dividing the passage into separate parts and then relating to the individual components as *cause* and *effect*, with a *link* connecting the two. Note the difference in tone and cadence between the cause segment and the effect. Here is the cause:

> Mr Hackett resumed his hold on the armrests. Pulling himself forward, and letting himself fall back, several times in rapid succession, he scratched the crest of his hunch against the backboard.

The connecting link is:

> He looked towards the horizon that he had come out to see, of which he had seen so little.

Here is the effect:

> Now it was quite dark. Yes, now the western sky was as the eastern, which was as the southern, which was as the northern. (*W* 24)

What we have in the cause segment is a subtle recapitulation of the rocking motion used by Murphy to enter the world of his mind. Hackett, small and hunchbacked, is inducing trance by his succession of back and forth movements, performed, as is greatly stressed in the *Murphy* context, with rapidity. The effect, conveyed by the mesmerizing description of

the darkening sky, is the fading out of the outer world, suggesting that Mr. Hackett, now alone, occupying the seat that he thought of as his, is about to be immersed in the world of his mind.

The seat is no ordinary seat, as one may gather from the focused position the word *seat* holds in the critically important first sentence of the novel, which sets the stage for what is to come: "Mr Hackett turned the corner and saw, in the failing light, at some little distance, his seat" (*W* 7). To linguistically focus the item *seat* in the sentence is to make it thematically dominant in the opening section.[27] Why *seat* is given pride of place becomes clear only if we read it as a symbol, alluding in the first place to Murphy's rocking chair, which is not so much a piece of furniture as a symbolic prop, its function being to enable entry into the world of the mind. By metonymic association, seat also comes to stand for mind, as indeed is suggested by the expression *seat of consciousness*. As the name Hackett obviously associates with Beckett, the image of Hackett on his seat gives us an analog of Beckett descending into the darkness.[28]

In a passage from his essay "The Symbolism of Poetry," Yeats unites the topics of *rhythmic movement*, *trance*, and *symbolic language* in an illuminating synthesis: "The purpose of rhythm, it has always seemed to me, is to prolong the moment of contemplation, the moment when we are both asleep and awake, which is the one moment of creation, by hushing us with an alluring monotony, while it holds us waking by variety, to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols." What Yeats means by "rhythm" and "trance" is made clear in the continuation of the passage: "If certain sensitive persons listen persistently to the ticking of a watch, or gaze persistently on the monotonous flashing of a light, they fall into the hypnotic trance." Rhythm and eye-fixation are mechanisms that induce hypnotic trance, and trance the state that enables symbols to flow outward—in "the one moment of creation."[29]

B. Association

Working with association is a much more unruly affair than interpreting symbols (of the intellectual variety), which demands a kind of scientific exactitude, but it can be extremely fertile. Ideas beget ideas which beget ideas and there is no saying where they may lead. In view of the widespread practice of interpreting Beckett's texts by investigating allusions, I would like to draw attention to only one of the many good things that have gone into the making of *Watt*: choice fragments from Lewis Carroll.[30]

I believe an important intertextual study of Carrollian themes in Beckett's work is waiting to be written, so strong is their presence. One striking example is Beckett's incorporation of the game of chess in *Murphy*. The idea of using chess for literary purposes was first Carroll's and then Beckett's.[31] The two-world dichotomy is also a basic feature of the *Alice* books. Though Alice does not have to face the dilemma of living a two-world life, she knows both worlds and, like Beckett's hero, has no doubt as to which is the better one. After having passed through the looking glass, Alice gazes back at the world she has left and notices "that what could be seen from the old room was quite common and uninteresting, but that all the rest was as different as possible."[32] Later on, she meets Humpty Dumpty, who explicates the language of *Jabberwocky*, which had totally mystified her, as Watt's language mystified Sam, and as Beckett's language mystifies us.

The idea that there are two different worlds with two different languages is to be found in these "children's" books. Beckett would have made acquaintance with the parallel two-world/two-language dichotomies as a child, possibly even as a very small child on his mother's lap, she reading to him and he looking at the pictures.

Correspondences between the enchanted *Alice* worlds and the strange world of *Watt* range from details, such as the knot/not pun, to large, bold borrowings. One such borrowing, taken from the pages of *Through the Looking Glass,* is the theme of inversion, dramatically manifested in Watt's backward walking and talking (his inverted speech). Counterpart *Looking Glass* reversals for these are Alice walking backwards to approach the Red Queen and *Jabberwocky*, printed in a book—in mirror script. There is in fact endless play on inversion in Carroll's writings, but one image to take home is Alice turning over the leaves of that very *strange* book, "to find some part that she could read, '—for it's all in some language I don't know,' she said to herself.'"[33]

Conclusion

My purpose in this essay has been to reinstate poetic language as a distinctive mode of expression. As an initial step, I proposed abandoning the use of distinctive features as a means of seeking qualities characteristic of poetic language and argued for using typical features instead. This shift was intended to render the ordinary language argument (that there are no distinctive poetic features and hence no such thing as poetic language) irrelevant, but it also served to open up an avenue of inquiry into matters concerning typical features, including

the most fruitful question of why certain features are more typical of literary texts than of nonliterary discourse. Guided by the further observation that those features most typical of literature also typify dreams, I offered a *generative approach* to poetic language based on a framework of ideas borrowed in large part from dream theory. The central thesis argued for within that framework is that literary texts are generated by a poetic/dream system of mind that is separate and different from the ordinary system which produces ordinary language discourse. Having come upon this idea in my reading of the novels of Samuel Beckett, which postulate a two-system model of mind, I found it natural to make recourse to *Murphy* for information about the poetic system and to *Watt* for examples of poetic language. The examples were meant to serve as a platform for demonstrating the nonordinary means required for interpreting poetic language and, at the same time, to give concrete substance to the abstraction we call poetic language, thus making it less easy to knock or mock.

Production and interpretation constitute reverse sides of the same coin in generative frameworks. My discussion of *Murphy* focused on the *where*, and to some extent, the *how* of production. My section on interpretation demonstrated the applicability of Freud's method of dream interpretation for the interpretation of literature. Approached from both directions—production and interpretation—poetic language emerges as a form of expression that implicates a system of mind distinct from that used to generate ordinary language.

My case for poetic language included a critique of the one-system conceptions of mind advanced by ordinary language advocates and cognitive linguists. To put it briefly: The basic fact that there are different mental systems with different functions and specializations, one active when the other goes into neutral, as per the *Murphy* scheme and the dream situation, leaves little doubt that the attempt to build a one-system model to account for both ordinary and poetic language is misguided. Were there no such thing as the dream, and were the correspondences between literature and dreams less striking, some ground for squeezing poetic and nonpoetic language into a single model might be found. But as the mind does in any case work with two separate systems, the day system of the waking mind and the night system of the dreamer, it makes sense to extend the range of the dream system to the poetic field. Accordingly, to postulate a two-system model that differentially generates ordinary language discourse and poetic texts is not to burden the conception of mind and language with new apparatus but to utilize what is already there.

Finally, I should point out that I have not tried to integrate the many valuable ideas and insights of the Russian Formalists, members of the Prague school, and other proponents of poetic language into my discussion, mainly because I was pursuing a self-sufficient line of thought that needed to unfold on its own terms. It would have been compositionally awkward to accommodate outside sources. For similar reasons, I have also made no reference to the trail-blazing research of the new school of neuropsychological experimentation, in particular, the work of Miriam Faust, Nira Mashal, and Mark Jung-Beeman, whose investigations of differential brain activity in the processing of poetic and nonpoetic elements of discourse support a two-system model of mind of some kind.[34] It is clear to me that the study of poetic language has much to gain from the contributions of neuroscience and, more broadly, from cognitive studies of poetic discourse. Indeed, it would be most interesting to hear what these disciplines have to say about the dream/poetry nexus. My studies of Beckett and Yeats have also revealed the importance of consulting the poets themselves, both in their theoretical writings and their art work, so as to benefit from their introspective findings and theoretical speculations. With these varied sources at hand to complement the two-system thesis presented here, I foresee a bright future for the study of poetic language.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

NOTES

1 Stanley Fish, "How Ordinary is Ordinary Language?" *New Literary History* 5, no. 3 (1973): 41–54.

2 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980).

3 Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1977), xvi.

4 Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory*, xii.

5 Quoted in Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory*, 12–13. There is a problem of formulation in the second sentence. The sentence should read: "Inasmuch as verse language is still subject to the basic laws of prose syntax, *the laws of rhythm are laws of word combination*," instead of "the laws of word combination are laws of rhythm."

6 Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory*, 13.

7 Marjorie Perloff, *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), 19–20.

8 I single out Mark Turner from the group of researchers exploring the cognitive implications of the poetic dimensions of language because of the radical boldness of his position.

9 Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), v.

10 Andrea Rock, *The Mind at Night: The New Science of How and Why We Dream* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), viii. An alternate definition, preferred by Rock since it is not restricted

to REM sleep, is "a mental experience during sleep that can be described during waking consciousness" (viii–ix).

11 Examples from Silberer are presented in two different sections: Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey, (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1976), 460–61, 645–49.

12 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 460.

13 Samuel I. Mintz, "Beckett's *Murphy*: A Cartesian Novel," *Perspective* 2, no. 3 (1959): 156–65; Hugh Kenner, *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study* (New York: Grove, 1961); Edouard Morot-Sir, "Samuel Beckett and Cartesian Emblems," in *Samuel Beckett: The Art of Rhetoric*, ed. Edouard Morot-Sir, Howard Harper, and Dougald McMillan (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1976), 25–104; Richard Begam, *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996).

14 P. J. Murphy, "Beckett and the Philosophers," in *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, ed. John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 17–42.

15 Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (1938; New York: Grove, 1957), 110 (hereafter cited in text as *M*).

16 William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890; New York: Dover Publications, 1950), 2:115, author's emphasis.

17 For a first-hand account of lucid dreaming, see Stephen LaBerge and Donald J. DeGracia, "Varieties of Lucid Dreaming Experience," in *Individual Differences in Conscious Experience*, ed. Robert Kunzendorf and Benjamin Wallace (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2000): 269–307.

18 Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold E. Brooks (London: Methuen, 1979), Act 5, Scene 1.

19 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 162.

20 Lawrence E. Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), 243.

21 Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Pelican Books, 1973), 199–200.

22 Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (1953; New York: Grove, 1959), 169 (hereafter cited in text as *W*).

23 Shoshana Benjamin, "What's *Watt*," *Poetics Today* 18, no 3. (1997): 366, 383.

24 W. B. Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," in *Symbolism: An Anthology*, ed. T. G. West (1900; London: Methuen, 1980), 20.

25 Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. Michael Friedländer (New York: Dover, 1956), 6–7.

26 Richard Aldington and Stanley Weintraub, "Introduction" in *The Portable Oscar Wilde*, ed. Aldington and Weintraub (1946; New York: Viking Penguin, 1981), 31.

27 For the notion of linguistic focus and what determines it see, among others, Nomi Erteschik-Shir, *The Dynamics of Focus Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997).

28 The scene of Mr. Hackett rocking comes at the end of the introductory part of the novel and is followed by a section break, after which the formerly shadowy figure of the protagonist Watt emerges in clear focus and the story proper begins. Hackett is never mentioned again. The implication is that the ensuing narrative is one long dream that took place in Mr. Hackett's/Mr. Beckett's head.

29 Yeats, "The Symbolism of Poetry," 19.

30 Allusions to Lewis Carroll have not been previously noted in Beckett criticism.

31 Whether Beckett used chess not only to construct one particularly dramatic scene (Murphy and Mr. Endon play a fateful game), but also as a device for structuring the entire narrative, as Carroll did in *Through the Looking Glass*, certainly calls for investigation. The frequent *moves* and *changes of place*, plotted out from the word *go*—starting with the

opening paragraph of *Murphy*—together with the division of the characters into opposing camps, suggest he did.

32 Lewis Carroll, *The Annotated Alice: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, ed. Martin Gardner (1865 and 1871; New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 185–86.

33 Carroll, *The Annotated Alice*, 190.

34 See, for example, N. Mashal and M. Faust, "Right Hemisphere Sensitivity to Novel Metaphoric Relations: Application of the Signal Detection Theory," *Brain and Language* 104, no. 2 (2008): 103–112.

The Common Reader and the Archival Classroom: Disciplinary History for the Twenty-First Century

Rachel Sagner Buurma and Laura Heffernan

In the new millennium a new figure beckons to the literary critic: the figure of the common reader. We see her out of the corner of our collective eye outside the classroom window or walking away from the back of the lecture hall; glimpsed in the public library stacks, but never in "the archive," she leaves her traces in blog comments and Amazon reviews. Her authority derives from her lack of credentials; neither scholar nor critic, student nor expert, she is defined largely by her undisciplinary and undisciplined reading practices. At times, she appears in her historical guise as a nineteenth-century reader of novels and newspapers, happily situated before the rise of English and its professional modes of interpretation. More often, she is called forth from these historical origins to remind contemporary literary critics that alternate engagements with literature lie just outside, or perhaps dormant within, our discipline.

And how does this common reader read? In Nicholas Dames's account, her reading is "tied to the rhythms of the body"; rapt or diffuse attention and discontinuous comprehension, rather than transcendental or final interpretation, are the essence of her reading practice.[1] In David Kurnick's telling, she is a novel reader who cares little about closure or formal structures, preferring to immerse herself in the "details and complications" to be found in novels' "middles."[2] In other accounts she reads more referentially than her professional counterparts; instead of seeking the organic unity of the work, she is attentive, according to Mary Poovey, to how the work "use[s] language in a referential manner to invoke the world outside its pages."[3] For Elaine Freedgood, the Victorian novel reader is singular in her awareness of the metonymies that link the commodities in novels to the worldly contexts of their productions.[4] For John Guillory, the "lay reader" abandons the cleric's "ritual orientation to the text." Where the clerisy reads intensively—slowly and repetitively with the goal of verbatim memorization—the lay reader of novels and newspapers reads "extensively."[5] For Rita Felski, lay readers

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 113–135

value experiences of recognition, enchantment, shock, and knowledge ("modes of engagement" that, Felski argues, scholarly readers share but often disavow).[6]

As these descriptions suggest, the common reader emerges not as a member of a sociological demographic but rather as a mascot, muse, or model for critics who have become impatient with what they see as the routinized protocols of professional reading in English. In this sense, we can see shades of the common reader in Sharon Marcus and Steven Best's "surface reading," a style of reading that strategically adopts a naïve stance in its dedication to "literal readings that take texts at face value," or in Franco Moretti's chastening of hermeneutic modes of professional reading via his own model of "distant reading" (and even, perhaps, in his own charmingly casual writing style).[7] The common reader, presiding over nearly all methodologically minded interventions of recent years, seems to offer license to us professionals to abandon our training, take a page out of her book, and then read it: referentially, nonsuspiciously, with affect, and only until we become distracted or bored.

Such a widespread celebration of deprofessionalized reading practices should lead us to ask: how have we become so down on our professional practices? Or, perhaps more to the point, how have our reading practices come to seem *merely* professional—meaningful only in relation to our institutional positions and professional desires? Someone taking stock of recent work on methodology might feel that ideology critique and aesthetic formalism are the only two interpretive modes that scholars have to offer, and further that such interpretive practices are gestures solely designed to give life to the profession. Thus Marjorie Levinson's assessment of recent "new formalist" work sees such interventions as more concerned with "prestige" than "praxis"; Jim English sees theories of literary form as attempts to "create and consolidate an institutional place for literary study."[8] Ideology critique, too, has come to seem more self-serving than broadly interventionist: Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best argue that Fredric Jameson's symptomatic reading practices achieved prominence because they "presented professional literary criticism as a strenuous and heroic endeavor, one more akin to activism and labor than to leisure, and therefore fully deserving of remuneration."[9] This hardened connection between institutions and interpretive practices is usually regarded as a problem, but it sometimes appears as a wish, as when Jane Gallop argues that "close reading" is "the most valuable thing English ever had to offer . . . the very thing that made us a discipline, that transformed us from cultured gentlemen into a profession."[10]

Such disciplinary autocritiques are voiced from a strange, somewhat faraway place. The vantage point they occupy is outside the discipline—it

is, quite often, the vantage point of the sociologist who sees the pedagogical and scholarly practices of English as symptoms of something far more concrete: the social facts of institutions and their competition in wider fields for various kinds of capital. (Indeed, if we are in the position of the sociologist, that sociologist is probably Pierre Bourdieu, for whom intellectual arguments and practices should always be understood, at least in part, as struggles for legitimacy and recognition). The power of such sociologically savvy accounts of our discipline seems to grow in proportion to their lack of interest in the histories of the objects and theories of English.

In such a claustrophobic atmosphere, one in which the most authoritative accounts of our interpretive practices see them as meaningful only in relation to our own professional desires, the allure of the common reader becomes clear: her reading practices cannot be ascribed to any such institutional determinants. Positioned neither with the sociologist nor the literary critic, she proffers the possibility of reconnecting with the everyday life of literary engagement. Where our interpretive models seem to tell stories only about ourselves, she stands for the possibility that literature might be about something other than us. Accounts of her reading practices therefore emphasize their glorious referentiality: where our interpretations ensconce texts in ivory towers, hers connect texts to the world. Where disciplinary self-critique drains our interpretive practices of their value, her reading practices suggest that literary texts accrue value through their myriad connections with a world beyond the canon.

Perhaps most powerfully, the common reader reminds us that we are not only practitioners of a discipline, but people in the world. Bruno Latour, addressing the impasse of disciplinary critique, offers a similar reminder that inside each sophisticated skeptic lies a person with values and interests. While critique, Latour argues, simply debunks facts you don't believe in (literary interpretation, for instance) with appeals to those you do believe in (institutional prestige), you remain "a perfectly healthy sturdy realist for what you really cherish—and of course it might be criticism itself, but also painting, bird-watching, Shakespeare, baboons, proteins, and so on."[11] Latour invites critics to bridge the divide between their interested, everyday selves and their debunking, professional selves in order to reimagine the critical urge as one that "adds" rather than subtracts "reality to matters of fact."[12] In a similar vein, Eve Sedgwick substitutes a "reparative" reading practice for a "paranoid" reading practice; while the latter confirms its own knowing distance from the world, the former seeks, through addition and accretion, to "confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self."[13]

Latour and Sedgwick describe a new spirit of inquiry that does not proceed from or create such sharp divisions between facts and values, professional readers and common readers, things we create knowledge about and things we need or love. Indeed, considered this way, Latour and Sedgwick lead us to ask: why must we create a common reader at all—a figure who refigures oppositions that beg to be dismissed? Is it not one further sign that we have fallen out of love with our discipline? That we have failed to view our own everyday practices of teaching and research as resources with which to build new and exciting ways to value and study literature?[14]

In what follows, we perform a reparative disciplinary history. We propose to treat this history as a resource rather than an embarrassment, and we turn to the most unloved and understudied aspect of our discipline's history: the classroom. The classroom is admittedly a counterintuitive place to begin in order to deemphasize the opposition between professional and common readers. Indeed, we professors of literature think of the classroom as the place where our professional practice—literally, the difference we make—is performed for students and imprinted upon them. Here we are not interested, however, in these moments of disciplinary justification, transformation, or pure enjoyment. Instead, we look to the downtimes in the classroom hour, the tangents of discussion, the undertheorized moments of interpretation or historical conjecture, and the value bestowed simply by paying attention, finding in them a set of paths not so much not taken, as never mapped. Together, they form a new topography of the everyday life of our disciplinary practices; such practices might be revalued and theorized as we look forward to our discipline's future.

To begin to chart such a topography, we reconstruct the midcentury classrooms of Cleanth Brooks and Edmund Wilson through a study of previously unexamined archival materials stored in the Beinecke Library at Yale. From a disciplinary standpoint these two teachers seem quite opposed: Brooks a formalist, Wilson a historicist; Brooks a critic with a special relationship to disciplinarity, Wilson a critic with a special relationship to journalism and common readers. If the classroom, as a figure, often presides over such oppositions, the materials of Brooks's and Wilson's classrooms—their syllabi, course descriptions, lecture transcripts and notes, handouts, graded papers, and scholarly publications—call into question our habitual distinctions between literary critics and common readers, formalist teaching and historicist research.

Readers might imagine that they already know what Brooks's classroom looked like, for even to mention the New Critical classroom evokes familiar images: rows of desks filled with GI Bill students, mimeographed

poems on a single page, a charismatic-democratic teacher intent upon clearing away all of the "specialized rubbish . . . standing between the reader of a poem and the poem."[15] Above all, the New Critical classroom is remembered, with loathing or longing, as the place where close reading provided literary critics with a powerful account of both their specialization and their wider appeal. And indeed, we found in Brooks's archive a story of how he built this strong theory that designated literature as a disciplinary object of study and a rarified aesthetic experience with public value, in part by figuring the classroom, in his published writing, as paradoxically both professional and public. Yet, in the temporal, participatory space of Brooks's actual classroom, this strong theory comes to seem a more fragile and uncertain thing. Alongside moments in Brooks's teaching when his close readings capture the distinctiveness and value of the literary appear other low-key, untheorized practices of discernment and evaluation. We examine the uneven methods of Brooks's seminar not to debunk New Critical formalism, but to explore the making of this theory as well as the ways that this strong theory—still held by many as equivalent to literary pedagogy then and now—fails to incorporate so many other kinds of attention, reading, historical imagination, and textuality at work in that same space.

One of Brooks's main contentions was that formalist pedagogy would provide an account of literary value that historicist scholars had failed to develop. However, turning to Wilson's classroom materials, we see how Wilson's historicist research provides its own aesthetic and mode of value—one that links texts to life experience rather than sanctifying them within a rarified canon, one that sees literary value accrue to texts as they are read and interpreted over time by varying readerships. Where Brooks operates from a center of literariness and canonicity that he himself builds, Wilson is most interested in the moments in which unliterary texts become literary (or vice versa), and the moments in which research takes its life from pedagogy as much as from publication. Ironically, with its more flexible sense of the location of literariness and its understanding of research as an investment of time and energy that conveys value upon its objects of study, Wilson's classroom lives Brooks's figure, connecting professional practices with public ones, research methodologies with evaluative judgments.

In bringing our own scholarly research to bear on the classroom (and in teaching this same material, for this article began life as jointly organized seminars at Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania) we hope to model the ways that—as evidenced in Wilson's teaching—historicism creates value. Indeed, to imagine that it doesn't—that it produces only knowledge, that it creates facts rather than values—is to

reproduce the logic that distinguishes between research and teaching, disciplinary spaces and public ones, skeptical critics and invested common readers. Exploring, like Wilson, a historicism that is critical and yet not only critical, in turn, allows us to evade the deadening impasse of disciplinary autocritique without reinstating a formalist vision of our practice that must ignore the ways that we connect students, publics, texts, and histories in our everyday professional lives. In so doing we hope to foster methodologies that are *not yet* literary, methodologies that will sustain us in the present by imagining possible futures for our discipline.

Mid-Century Classroom #1: Cleanth Brooks at Yale University

> To the members of English 300-K (Summer Session of 1942, University of Michigan) who discussed the problems with me and helped me work out some of the analyses
>
> —Dedication to Cleanth Brooks's *The Well Wrought Urn*

In his published writing, Brooks figures the classroom as a space at once disciplinary and public, where the close reading of a poem helps the discipline make a sharp distinction between literary language (its stated object of study) and nonliterary language, while also helping students, who stand in a metonymic relation to a wider public, experience the rarified value of the literary. The classroom's productively paradoxical status is apparent in a text like "The Language of Paradox," the first chapter from *The Well Wrought Urn*. The essay is peopled by students who have "the greatest difficulty in accounting for" the "goodness" of poems; scholars for whom poems are significant only in terms of "'facts,' biological, sociological, and economic"; and the Brooks-narrator who performs a close reading of Donne's "The Canonization." Brooks's reading introduces a distinction between richly connotative poetic language and the denotative language of "the scientist . . . purged of every trace of paradox." Brooks suggests that the scholars who research poems mistake themselves for scientists—blind to the metaphor of Donne's phoenix, they instead "test" its ashes "for their chemical content."[16] These scholars read all poems referentially. Because they fail to recognize the literariness of poetic language, they cannot help their students develop what the students already sense intuitively on their own: the value or "goodness" of good poems.[17]

Meanwhile, the wider world's growing reverence for facts (of which quasi-scientific scholars of literature are a symptom) places poetry's value into relief: poetry alone can restore to the world all that rationalism

has drained from it. In *The Well Wrought Urn*, poetry's value increases as it becomes more marginal within modern society; in a sense, poetry's confinement to the classroom actually confirms its value. Like the "pretty rooms" that Donne's speaker and his lover build in "The Canonization" to escape the world, only to discover they have "gained the world in each other, now a more intense, more meaningful world," the classroom protects poetry's rarified value and, in doing so, becomes worldly: "The unworldly . . . become the most 'worldly' of all" (as Brooks says of Donne's lovers).[18]

Given the many unifications (disciplinarity and publicness, marginality and worldliness) offered by Brooks's figuration of the classroom, what—we wondered—would be gathered within the space of his actual classrooms? Brooks's archive, housed at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, includes reserve lists, syllabi, and gradebooks from courses Brooks offered at Yale from 1947 to 1975, including English 71: Modern Poetry; English 150 on Wordsworth and Coleridge; and English 160: Twentieth-Century Literature. At the heart of the "Classroom Materials" section of the Brooks collection are a set of transcriptions of Brooks's lectures from English 71: Modern Poetry. Brooks offered "Modern Poetry" in the spring of 1963, and the lectures were recorded in preparation for publication with Bantam Books.[19] The transcriptions seem almost verbatim and include student questions and responses.

English 71—a year-long course—covered poems by Hardy, Housman, Hopkins, Yeats, Lowell, H. D., Fletcher, Lawrence, Masters, Lindsay, Robinson, Frost, Masefield, Brooke, Pound, Eliot, and Stevens in the first term, and poems by cummings, MacLeish, Moore, Bishop, Crane, Jeffers, Ransom, Bogan, Adams, and Graves in the second. Both terms featured selections from Robert Stallman's critical anthology *Critiques and Essays in Criticism, 1920-1948*, including essays by Hulme, Rickword, Spender, Eliot, Penn Warren, Wellek, and Wimsatt and Beardsley. The Yale Course Critique for 1963 (written for students by students) reports that Brooks's lectures are "centered around individual poems," and that a final exam tests students' understanding of the critical essays and ability to use them "in a close analytical consideration of particular poems."[20] In addition, course reserve lists included more than forty volumes of secondary material, including critical studies such as Elizabeth Drew's *T. S. Eliot: The Design of His Poetry*, biographies, and collected letters.

Each class focused on several poems by the same author or selections from longer poems. Yet we found almost no examples of a close reading in the style of Brooks's reading of "The Canonization." Instead, the elements that are so tightly braided in Brooks's exemplary readings

appear in Brooks's classroom as individual strands: the parsing of the "plain sense" of a poem; the determination of how its techniques give meaning; the evaluation of the poem; the broader account of poetry's increasingly marginal role in modernity and its inversely proportional value. To read the archive materials is to understand that pulling all of this together in a single close reading while remaining within "the hour" (as Brooks often mentions) would be quite an achievement. In practice, Brooks spent most classes focusing on smaller parts of poems and appreciating the author's technique, as he does when teaching Crane's *The Bridge*: "I think maybe the most useful thing that I can do, however, at this moment is to look at some particular passages with you, talk about them, the texture of them, the quality of them, and postpone a bit the matter of the total meaning of the poem and the way in which the parts are held together. As has just been remarked [by a student], the "Proem to Brooklyn Bridge" is really quite magnificent, and many of the figures that are used there come out quite splendidly."[21] Throughout Brooks's lectures, we found this tension between a formalist reading that would account for the poem's "total meaning" through "the way in which the parts are held together" and a more local and evaluative "talk" about the "texture" and "quality" of particular passages that appreciates their splendor. On the one hand, English 71 occupied itself with deciding, with the aid of essays from the Stallman anthology, whether the poems studied were "poetry" or simply "prose." This formalist practice of separating the literary from the nonliterary was tempered, on the other hand, by a more evaluative approach that placed poems on a spectrum of aesthetic texture and value and even evaluated parts of poems against other parts. Brooks's classroom intersperses what Eve Sedgwick calls the "digital" (on/off) and the "analog" (multiply differentiated).[22]

As Brooks's comment above suggests, his classes were occupied with the "useful" work of getting a feel for particular poems and parts of poems. Brooks usually began by asking for a summation of the poem's dramatic context. He opens discussion on MacLeish's "Memorial Rain" by asking "What is the poem Memorial Rain about? What is the dramatic occasion? What is the city? Who's doing the listening? Who's doing the speaking?"[23] He would then read parts of poems line by line, making comments after each reading that either clarified vocabulary (the "nap" in Moore's "Jerboa" refers to "The nap of the fur"[24]) or drew attention to different elements of poetic technique, such as metaphor ("Why is the airplant called a bird, or almost a bird?" in Crane's "The Air Plant"[25]); imagery and mood ("we get this spacial [sic] image [in MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell"] of the shadow of night creeping on toward the west. . . . This does much to build in a sense of the solemnity and magnificence

but also sombre [sic] grandeur, the way in which empires go down under the impact of time"); grammatical structure ("How many 'ands' words occur in ["You, Andrew Marvell"]? Anyone count them?"[26]); or diction ("Why frightening?" Brooks asks about the phrase "frightening gills" from Bishop's "The Fish"—"I suppose because they seem so vulnerable that one can practically see the blood stream running there at the surface"[27]).

As Brooks notes the poems' plain sense and techniques, he also engages the language of appreciation. Particular techniques or images are "apt" or "brilliant," and individual poems are "admirable" or "magnificent" or "skillful." Brooks's close readings typically end with an evaluative summation. MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell" has "[a] great deal of depth of meaning." In Crane's "The Air Plant," "the imagination is working right straight through. The images are not dead decoration. They demand some kind of leap—answering leap—on the part of the reader." At times, poems are even valued for their statement rather than their technique. MacLeish's "Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City" "is a very brilliant poem. It's a poem which I think actually in its political position is rather sane and fairly balanced." Brooks's evaluative statements seem to hover between an appreciation of the differences between these poems—differences that Brooks's students experience in the close attention afforded to each—and a universal standard of goodness.

At certain points, we can see the moment when close attention to a poem's particular textures and strengths is transformed into a judgment about its status as poetry or prose. Brooks wraps up a close reading of Moore's "England" with just such a reckoning: "This is a rather tart defense of one's homeland. The speaker is a little tired of people who throw off on America as being uncultured and incoherent and so on. On the other hand, though she's defending her country, she does it with a sense of humor, and she does it with some sense that she knows the rest of the world and can appreciate the rest of the world. The trouble is is it a poem? Well some of you will say, I suppose, that it is not a poem. It's a piece of prose, rather distinguished prose, but prose."

In such moments of decision, Brooks and his students draw upon Brooks's own theory of aesthetic formalism, supported and developed by the modernist and New Critical essays that Brooks assigned. In response to Brooks's assessment of Moore's "England," a student asks, "Earlier in the year you made remarks about the difference in poetry and a poem. Sometime would you come back to that again? I know that a poem goes beyond poetry." Brooks replies: "I would say that poetry as I used it then is the stuff of which poems are made. Precision, accuracy, a world rich in [sic] crisp—a world of the senses that's vivid, a world of exactness, a world of rhythm caught—all the sorts of things which we associate with

the gift of the imagination and the arts of language. A poem, however, it seems to me, is more than just this sort of material thrown together in a sack or basket. It's articulated, it has its own form and arrangement."[28]

Several classes before, Brooks elaborated this theory of a poem's "form and arrangement" in relation to MacLeish's "Ars Poetica," which contains the line "a poem should not mean but be." As Brooks explains, MacLeish finds his "analogies for poetry not in the usual terms of discourse but in terms of, oh, arts like painting, sculpture." Brooks elaborates: "Poems shouldn't be talky, they shouldn't be wordy. They should have a form which is so tight and condensed that one feels that instead of speaking out, the poem is speaking through the form." Brooks, noting that students should already be "familiar with that [idea] with some of the other poets and critics we've been talking about," mentions an essay by Stephen Spender, Penn Warren's "Pure and Impure Poetry," and Eliot's "Hamlet and His Problems," as well as Pope's idea that "a poem should do or be in itself what it is talking about."[29]

Poems that fail to transcend the level of "prose" are just as important to the development of English 71's theoretical apparatus. Thus Moore's "Poetry" is of interest despite its failures: "Again, for those of you who say, 'I don't think this is a poem,' still, I think as a document it will be interesting and even exciting."[30] Such interesting failures provide further occasions to delineate the difference between a poem's "form and arrangement" and prose's unrarified qualities: Moore's poem is "talky" and "wordy," it makes statements, and uses denotative language. (Indeed, Moore's "Poetry" itself raises the question of this distinction by pulling a quotation from Tolstoy's diary: "Nor is it valid / to discriminate against 'business documents and // school books': all these phenomena are important. One must make a distinction / however.") Yet Moore's poems fail, for Brooks, because they are excessively referential, containing footnotes citing the sources from which Moore draws quotations. Brooks downplays the importance of such citations: "I suppose it is a kind of amiable pedantry that makes Miss Moore put the quotes around them. Doesn't really matter. You don't have to know the reference."[31] Poems like Moore's seem to invite readers to imagine that their words, phrases, images, and quotations connect to real events—her footnotes evoke the moment when "in her reading in her Brooklyn apartment she picked that up, noted it down, stuck it away in a poem." For Brooks such references snake outward, endangering the poem's self-enclosed structure; their materiality threatens its universality, much as material source scholarship drains the profession of its account of literature's distinctiveness and its value.[32]

Brooks works to make his classroom as self-contained as good poems should be and guards against a referentiality that would connect his

classroom to the world in nonfigural ways. When references to historical events arise in poems in English 71, Brooks resolves them into symbolic situations. For instance, discussing "Memorial Rain," Brooks mentions that the poem is about MacLeish mourning his brother who died in World War I, only to deem this "personal point" irrelevant to the understanding of a poem that could be about any American.[33] Brooks treats the recounting of background or the tracing of allusions as preliminary work that precedes the real work of close reading. On the Poe reference in Crane's "The Bridge," Brooks pauses: "Now, obviously, we've got a reference here, and let's see what the reference is, and then maybe we can make some effort to see what the poem is saying. What is the reference? Anybody know it?"[34] A discussion of MacLeish's "Frescoes" begins with a quick explanation of the poem's occasion that is largely drained of accurate detail and political import.[35]

When the world does enter into the classroom of English 71, it is an already figured world, given shape and meaning by themes and tensions. Brooks's lecture on MacLeish notes that MacLeish exhibits a "whole tendency apparently toward a highly individual and lyrical and private poetry. And yet this is a man whose career has been that of a public man, state department, Fortune magazine, Librarian of Congress, a man terribly interested in politics, very much interested in public affairs." MacLeish's poetry accordingly carries "this anxiety one almost feels inclined to say on the part of Macleish [sic], that poetry not become simply something both [crossed out] very [written in] private and remote from the concerns of the state." Brooks puts it to his students to decide whether MacLeish "really ever reconciled" these "twin tugs."[36] If MacLeish's paradoxical position—both worldly and marginal—recalls the position of modern poetry itself (and the classroom as figured in *The Well Wrought Urn*), other poets seem simply marginal. Moore, for instance, is introduced as aligned with coteries and institutions of print: Brooks notes that she was involved with all of the "little movements and little special magazines," taught at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, now lives in Brooklyn, had been recently awarded the Bollingen Prize, and was "a librarian for a while."[37] Where Brooks presents MacLeish's life as ahistorical and synchronic—offering at all times an image of poetry's paradoxical position—Moore's life is a narrative. She changes, develops, and moves—indeed, the references in her poems seem to link the poems to particular moments along this temporal sequence.

Brooks's story of Moore's life points to a shadowy, alternate version of the classroom. This classroom is less figural and more real—it is the place where teaching and learning happen in time and the place that fills, "for a while," one stage in the course of a life. Brooks introduces this more temporal and historically located sense of the classroom at

many moments in English 71: when he wishes to "stimulate, provoke" his students into "doing some more reading of MacLeish, thinking about him and finding out for yourself" whether he reconciled his "divergent interests," or when Brooks mentions a contemporary culture of letters that holds Bishop's work in "high esteem," even if Brooks himself does not. All of these moments acknowledge literary value as a changing thing—they point to how students' sense of literary value will change over the course of their education and life, and how the culture of letters' consensus about what is valuable changes too, as new members—perhaps even some of Brooks's students—join it.

This more temporal and historical sense of literary value—one that is analog where Brooks's strong theory is digital—is captured by Brooks's judgment that Moore's failed poem is nevertheless "interesting." Sianne Ngai, in her recent analysis of how "interesting" functions as an aesthetic judgment, explains this "link between the interesting and ongoingness." As Ngai points out, to declare an object "interesting" is to mark it—like "sticking a Post-It in a book"—in anticipation of returning to it later. In this sense, the aesthetic of the interesting "registers the simple fact (one strangely overlooked by much aesthetic philosophy) that time makes a difference in aesthetic evaluation."[38] Brooks's judgment that Moore's "Poetry" is "interesting" as a "document" seems likewise to point to a more contingent and temporal sense of literary value that exists alongside English 71's strong, theoretical elevation of formal poetry over "talky" prose. If Brooks's strong theory of literariness cannot account for the way he himself values Moore's poem, his classroom practices nevertheless remain open to the ways in which value accrues to texts by virtue of the attention that we pay to them in the temporality of our experience. This mode of value, like Moore's referential footnotes, snakes outward: it links to the ongoing nature of scholarly research, to experiences of aesthetic value that are low-key and long-lasting rather than instantaneous or transcendent, to a sense of multiple publics that cut across but are not contained by the classroom. Turning in the next section to Edmund Wilson's classrooms, we will see that Wilson offers an historicist method that builds upon and accounts for this alternate, changing, analog form of value.

Mid-Century Classroom #2: Edmund Wilson at Smith, Chicago, and Harvard

To the Students of English 354
University of Chicago, Summer, 1939
—Dedication to Edmund Wilson's "Dickens:
The Two Scrooges" in
The Wound and the Bow

Brooks's opposition between the self-contained poem and the referential "document" reappears in Wilson's teaching and research as a narrative *in medias res*. The poem (or, more often, the novel) is always on the verge of taking on the worldly functions of the document for Wilson, while a document in the correct company holds within it the literary potential of the poem. As Robert Martin Adams noticed in a 1948 *Sewanee Review* review, "*The Triple Thinkers* included observations that the functions of verse were being merged into those of prose, and that literature itself might in time be absorbed into the machinery of social planning. The tendency to think, and in fact to hope, that literature was about to become something else, was common to much of Edmund Wilson's early writing."[39]

Adams, sympathetic to Wilson's search for eddies of literary meaning within "the currents of history," nevertheless means this observation as a criticism; for him, Wilson's utopian fantasy of an order in which literature takes on referential functions is a dodge calculated to "delay or avoid the problem of literary value."[40] Later critics similarly noticed "something peculiar about Mr. Wilson's taste in fiction . . . he seems to want it to cease to be art and to turn into document, or at least assume the style of document."[41] We argue, however, that Wilson's interest in the moment when literature becomes a document, or vice versa, was itself a methodology rather than a delay tactic or a peculiarity of taste. Wilson does not avoid the problem of literary value; rather, he studies and stages the moment when value shifts—the moment when literature becomes referential and touches or transforms the world, the moment when a document becomes literature, and our orientation towards it shifts as a new, provisional canon is formed.[42] In a sense, Adams and others are correct that Wilson failed to theorize this methodology in print—most famously in "The Historical Interpretation of Literature" (1940)—yet his inherently historicist interest in how value shifts finds its true home, we argue, in Wilson's temporal, worldly classrooms rather than his printed texts.[43] If we have failed to view the classroom as a site of methodological articulation, then, the failing is ours, and not Wilson's.

Wilson's interest in literature's tendency to "become something else" comes alive in the changing atmosphere of the teaching hour and the summer session. The duration of a single course allows Wilson to highlight the ways that literary value shifts through history, but also through a reader's individual returns to a single text. In a broad way, his courses transform the unliterary into the literary, as when he revalues the work of Dickens in a course at the University of Chicago during the summer of 1939, or when he teaches diaries, speeches, memoirs, and journalism as the "Literature of the Civil War" at Harvard in 1959–1960. Other

courses, such as a class on Joyce at Smith College in 1942 or the "The Use of Language in Literature" at Harvard in 1958 explore the ways that literary texts like *Finnegans Wake* reference the world and thus become, for a moment, documentary. Just as Wilson connects the unliterary and the literary, so he treats his classrooms as sites where teaching and research connect. For Wilson, the classroom is not a testing ground for more finished published work; instead, it acts as a field upon which Wilson animates or reanimates his research process. Sometimes this link between teaching and research takes the form of a single topic that concurrently unfolds as both class and essay draft, as was the case during that summer of 1939, when Wilson taught a class on "Varieties of Nineteenth-Century Criticism" which supported his work on "The Historical Interpretation of Literature"; a sheet outlining the syllabus and first-day lecture for his criticism class turns over to reveal on the verso a set of penciled notes towards "The Historical Interpretation of Literature."[44] At other times, the classroom provides the scene where a nearly finished book can be fully unfolded. Wilson's classroom is not a space within which research is translated in more or less sophisticated ways for a more or less receptive audience; it is rather the temporal, animating site where the referential world touches the literary text, where the building blocks of literariness are revealed to be everyday words, and where apparently autonomous and self-interested individuals yield themselves up as bundles of potentially researchable connections.

Wilson's pursuit of the connection between literariness and reference takes practical curricular shape in his assignment of theoretical texts and his in-class close reading exercises. The single theoretical text Wilson assigned to his class on Joyce was Stevenson's 1885 "On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements." A primer focused on the sounds of consonants and vowels in poetry and prose, Stevenson's essay frames his close reading protocols by explaining that literature stands apart from the other arts, and much closer to the world, because "the material in which the literary artist works is the dialect of life."[45] The basic elements of literature are "words, the acknowledged currency of our daily affairs," Stevenson notes, and so literature has both "a strange freshness and immediacy of address to the public mind," but is also by this same token limited because unlike the "plastic and ductile material" available to painters and sculptors, the writer "is condemned to work in mosaic with finite and quite rigid words."[46] Analyzing the sounds patterns and structure in the poems of Coleridge and Shakespeare alongside the prose of Milton and Macaulay (in which he triumphs to find in one paragraph "a moment of FV in all this world of K's!"[47]), Stevenson's close reading traverses the literary and the everyday while assiduously avoiding any tight

ties between sound and sense. The very nature of language therefore prepares the way for the possibility of the value transfer between poem and document at the core of Wilson's methodology.

In another class, Wilson's mimeographed handout (a classroom tool today overly associated with New Criticism) draws students' attention to the worldly, referential origin of a vast catalog of highly canonical literary texts. A handout titled "Sound of Bells" from "The Use of Language in Literature" excerpts fourteen different examples of bells represented in literature (including Mother Goose, Poe, Milton, Keats, James, Joyce, Eliot), while a handout titled "Objects Reflected in Water" excerpts Housman, Shelley, Auden, Yeats, Pope, and James Hogg and "Bird Song" includes bits of Nashe, Shelley, Aristophanes in Greek and two translations, Whitman, Arnold, Robert Bridges, Byron, Eliot, Tennyson, Virgil, Milton, and Turgenev.[48] Rather than the poem-on-the-page, Wilson offers his students long catalogs of parts of poems unified by single referents. He creates temporary genres—the bird song lyric, the reflection rhyme, the bell poem—that teach literary representation through a focus on literal reflection. This teaching technique sees a hospitable world organize a temporary but compelling canon (where Brooks might see the canon as an institutional force in the act of temporarily staving off the incursions of a chaotic and hostile world). And rather than imagining the close reading of literary texts as an inherently formalist exercise designed to confirm the literariness, and thus the value, of canonical texts, Wilson models a kind of close reading that identifies canonical literature's connection to the world—its everyday referentiality, its commonality with bird-watching guides and unspectacular shoreside sundowns and change-of-class bells—as itself a source of value.

While Wilson's handouts reconnect canonical literature to the world, many of his courses center on noncanonical texts that have been undervalued precisely because of their enmeshment with the everyday. For example, Wilson's Dickens class opens with a lecture that describes how literary culture has undervalued Dickens because of his popularity, a popularity that stems from his connectedness with winter holidays and before-bed reading and memories of school vacations. Wilson's notes, written in pencil on a yellow legal pad, read:

> Everybody has read Dickens—enormously popular—Pickwick + Xmas Carol in England—symbol of Xmas, cheerful old England—English middle class. Not much criticism: Chesterton + Gissing—perhaps because everybody reads him early ++ the highbrows rather scorn him. Dickens was a great favorite of mine when I was a child—I've kept on reading him off + on all my life. Have come to have ideas about him which I'm going to try to explain in this course. I hope you'll criticize them + don't think that, in writing your papers, you have to accept my ideas—don't hesitate to contradict them.[49]

For the "highbrows," Dickens's enmeshment in everyday life is a mark against him; for Wilson, interested in studying the connections between Dickens's life, his novels, and his historical moment, it is generative. His course goes on to consider "Dickens' style," the ways that his novels related to his own "self-pity" ("I think: literature protected something"), and the ways that Dickens selectively represented the events of his moment (To represent the "Chartist agitation came to crisis in '40" in *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens "chose [the] Gordon Riots.") Wilson's historicism considers the range of relationships that a novel can have to a life (and that a life can have to an historical moment); he creates value by creating interest around these connections, in a direct reversal of the logic of "highbrow" scorn. Whereas highbrows create value by building or invoking a canon, Wilson's more fluid historicist model of value acknowledges the contingency and historical specificity of literary value: a contingency and specificity that emerges in the ways that Wilson's own ideas about Dickens have changed—how he has "come to" them over a lifetime of reading—and in how his students are invited to arrive at their own conclusions and valuations.

Twenty years later, Wilson turns this historicist model to an apparently even less literary topic. His 1959–1960 "Literature of the Civil War" class at Harvard reanimates the research process of his nearly finished book, *Patriotic Gore*. Wilson begins his first day lecture by explaining that "I am going to give you the substance of a book I have been writing on the literature of the American Civil War. By the literature of the Civil War I don't mean simply any literature that deals with the Civil War. I confine myself to the writings of people who actually took part in the war or who had some direct connection with it."[50] This choice of texts is framed by Wilson as in part an aesthetic one: "The poetry and the fiction and the drama inspired by the war itself are mostly extremely inferior," he notes, while "[t]he diaries, the letters, the memoirs, military, political and social, the speeches and official papers and the journalistic reports are the main literature of the Civil War" because they give us a sense of the fact that "there has never been an historical crisis in which the actors were more keenly aware of the roles they were playing before the world and in which they were more articulate." Under the pressure of a war carried out within a newly pervasive print culture, people come to see themselves as historical, and the documents of their self-conscious role-playing become therefore literary.[51] Drawing this odd assortment of texts together in the act of teaching, Wilson uses history to hone in on the moments such records of everyday experience take on aesthetic form as they move through different institutional contexts.

Yet Wilson's historicism resists turning history into the "spirit of the age" or any other coherent formation. Indeed, the terrain of his "Literature of the Civil War" is both messy and flexible. As he explains to his students, the course "begin[s] with Harriet Beecher Stowe, who did so much to arouse the North by the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and . . . end[s]—next spring—with Justice Holmes, whose whole view of the world and hence professional career were deeply influenced by his experience in the war."[52] Wilson steers clear of reifications, explaining that "My presentation of these figures will trace a consecutive development but it will not be strictly chronological. . . . My argument[s] . . . will all be presented in a series of literary portraits. I shall be dealing, to be sure, with tendencies, but mainly by implication. Societies and movements and wars are made up of individuals, and my story is all in terms of individuals. Of the career and personality of each I shall try to give a more or less well-rounded picture, so my lectures will be full of details that in a sense will not be relevant to my theses."[53]

Wilson preserves a focus on the specificity of the individual not as a purely psychological subject, but as a bundle of potentially irrelevant but potentially connective details that make up "societies and movements," just as he presented Dickens and his novels as gatherings of possible connections. He rejects the idea of a deep historical truth organizing apparently autonomous individuals and texts. At the same time Wilson's goal is clearly not to offer a series of portraits that he values for their autonomous aesthetic value, or for the insights they give us into the individual authors they represent; his "well-rounded picture" of each "career and personality" is "full of details" not relevant to his thesis. Irrelevancies pose no threat to Wilson's thesis—indeed, we might say, following the logic of Wilson's own method, that irrelevancies are merely details that are not *yet* relevant. They await a future moment when some other critic will connect them in some new way, just as Wilson has gathered together this strange assemblage of "Literature of the Civil War."

Wilson's sense of individuals and texts as bundles of potential connections extends to the feel of his classrooms. Wilson's tendency to bring chance-met friends (like Saul Bellow) along to class, his references to everyday events ("Ford Maddox Ford died two days ago"[54]), the scribbled notes, copies of handouts, carefully preserved student papers, lecture plans, and hand-drawn charts of social relations (for teaching Marxist criticism) all offer evidence of his classroom's predisposition to act as a space that connects different kinds of people and unexpected texts. This principle even applies to the collection of students Wilson accumulates; a single Harvard class found graduate students in philosophy of language, English, and the school of education alongside undergraduate

English, linguistics, history, and philosophy majors, a Radcliffe senior, an otherwise-unidentified student visiting from France, and a Radcliffe linguistics PhD candidate (and research assistant at Harvard Computation Laboratory on an automatic Russian translation project, "where I've been working on machine inflection"[55]). Whereas Brooks carefully figures current events for his entirely male Yale undergraduate audience, Wilson's classroom is designed to send tendrils outward to connect with the everyday lives of the figures—students from France, Russian-translating computers, chance visitors, and Civil War diarists—who crowd the often enrollment-capped classroom. While Brooks's classroom is a rarified space apart from the public sphere, Wilson's classroom cuts across multiple publics; in the case of his teaching of Joyce at Smith, Wilson combined a lecture open to the public with a supplementary two-hour seminar discussion to form a for-credit class. While Brooks works to produce a classroom that feels like a well-wrought urn, Wilson's classroom strives for the effect of a decent railway station bar.

Perhaps most importantly, Wilson's sense of the temporality of interpretation—specifically the sense that texts accrue value as they are read and reread both by individuals and groups—can only truly be modeled in the duration of the class hour and the semester course, coextensive with a life in which a reader returns to texts again and again, as Wilson has "kept on reading [Dickens] off + on all of my life." In Wilson's 1942 course on Joyce it becomes clear that the classroom fosters this temporal model of reading more readily than does the review or the essay. These lectures begin, "I have been reading James Joyce and writing about him ever since a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man came out in 1916,"[56] indicating that only Wilson's living and speaking person can express the current state and ongoing project of his reading of *Finnegans Wake* (though his footnotes to the successive editions and collections of his writing on Joyce attempt to capture something of this ongoing project). As he explains in his opening lecture, he "Wrote reviews of Ulysses and Finnegans Wake" upon their initial publications but then he "Realized immediately [the] inadequacy of reviews. Such books can hardly be reviewed. As I reread the books, I saw that there was much more in them, both of meaning and of art, than I had understood at first."[57]

Joyce can't be reviewed because the mode of the review is a single act of analysis and evaluation; the punctual temporality of the review requires a model of the text as an autonomous object that can be known in a short, if intense, single evaluation and subsequently committed to paper and publication. As Wilson cautions the first-time reader in his review of "A Guide to Finnegans Wake," "A few . . . words of guidance. The conditions for reading this book are different, so far as I know, from

those for reading any other ever written. You have to take it rather slowly, a section at a time, and you have to keep on rereading it."[58] Rather than offer a representation of life all at once and upfront—as a Dickens novel might—the slow, drawn-out lifelong rereading that *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* require produces the sense of "a reality like life's," because the reader's slow building up of experience with the text, her accretion of detail and meaning over the successive years of her life, function to make the experience of reading the novel similar to the experience of living. That is, instead of imitating reality, the experience of reading *Ulysses* imitates the structure of the reader's encounter with everyday real life, the composition of a coherent and significant world out of a wealth of incoherent and disconnected detail and experience—an apt description of his pedagogy and of his classroom itself.

Indeed, it is perhaps because Wilson's criticism and his classrooms feel so much like everyday life—in which people take interest and make connections, thereby creating meaning and value—that they have never been described in a methodological register, as we have done here. Yet, in a contemporary moment in which literary critics are inventing a common reader figure to model these same kinds of reading practices—the ability to confer value by taking interest, the uneven apprehension of relevant and irrelevant details in literary texts, the sense that literature connects both to individual lives and the world—it is worth showing that such practices can be found within that most disciplinary of spaces, the midcentury classroom. Further, we argue, it is our own tendency to dismiss such practices as weak theories when we find them in disciplinary spaces—to let them go undescribed, just as we underdescribe elements of our own classroom practices—that secures false distinctions between professional and common readers. For in the downtime of the classroom and the duration of the semester, and even in the ungraded quiz and the half-finished handout, wait insights and details that are not irrelevant—only not yet relevant.

Coda: Cultural Capital's Classroom

We began this essay by suggesting that literary critics in the new millennium have internalized the sociological critique of their field. The origins of this Bourdieuvian take on literary studies can be dated to 1993, when John Guillory's *Cultural Capital* presented the institution as the dominant, if hidden, determinant of literary canons and hermeneutic practices in the twentieth century. In the midst of the culture wars, Guillory's history offered a salient reminder that making the literary canon

more "representative" of minority writers was not equivalent to changing the social status of minorities—to think otherwise was to confuse literary representation with political representation and to ignore the school as a site where social status is reproduced.

Almost twenty years after *Cultural Capital*, it now seems difficult to imagine the scholarly and pedagogical practices of English as connected to anything other than the school, and critics' widespread adoption of Guillory's analysis has had the strange effect of rendering the decisions we make about what to teach and how to teach it, what to research and how to value it, seem moot. In chastening literary critics' tendency to overestimate their classrooms' impact on the world, Guillory's analysis has ended in foreclosing the possibility that our classrooms connect to the world at all, however modestly. Here, we have focused our attention on the weaker ways in which classrooms and histories connect (a method which might well capture the ways that the inclusion of minority writers in the literary canon did have worldly effects, if not ones immediately equivalent to increased political representation). *Cultural Capital* ends with Guillory's (and, as he points out, Marx's) "thought experiment" in producing an aesthetic experience free from the alienations wrought by capitalism, his wish for a utopian world of universal access to art in which "what we call canon formation would . . . become a much larger part of social life."[59] We hope that by regrounding disciplinary history in the classroom, we might bring a modest and modified version of Guillory's utopia a little bit closer to reach.

Swarthmore College
University of North Florida

This essay was awarded the 2011 Ralph Cohen Prize.

NOTES

A postdoctoral fellowship from the Pembroke Center for Research and Teaching on Women at Brown University supported Laura Heffernan during the research stage of this project.

1 Nicholas Dames, *The Physiology of the Novel: Reading, Neural Science, and the Form of Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 3.

2 David Kurnick, "An Erotics of Detachment: *Middlemarch* and Novel-Reading as Critical Practice," *ELH* 74, no. 3 (2007): 597.

3 Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008), 319.

4 Elaine Freedgood, *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006), 139–58.

5 John Guillory, "How Scholars Read," *ADE Bulletin* 146 (Fall 2008): 9–10.

6 Rita Felski, *Uses of Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 14.

7 Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best, "Surface Reading: An Introduction," in *The Way We Read Now*, ed. Best and Marcus, *Representations* 108, no. 1 (2009): 1–21. Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005).
8 Marjorie Levinson, "What is New Formalism?" *PMLA* 122, no. 2 (2007): 558–69. James English, "Literary Studies," in *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Tony Bennett and John Frow (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008), 127.
9 Best and Marcus, "Surface Reading," 6.
10 Jane Gallop, "The Historicization of Literary Studies and the Fate of Close Reading," *Profession* (2007): 181–86.
11 Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 241.
12 Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" 232.
13 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're so Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003), 149.
14 John Kucich questions "the claim that recent criticism has generally sought to master the text by unveiling its truth, essence, or secret" that is a common feature of recent disciplinary histories, a claim that tends to reduce historicism to ideology critique and ideology critique to the "hermeneutics of suspicion." We suggest that such rote forms of suspicious critique are in fact common to disciplinary history rather than to literary historicisms. See Kucich, "The Unfinished Historicist Project: In Praise of Suspicion," *Victoriographies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 58–78.
15 Edward Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (New York: The New Press, 1998), 159.
16 Cleanth Brooks, "The Language of Paradox," in *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1947), 5, 18, 21.
17 Richard Strier describes the marriage of interpretive and evaluative practices that lies at the heart of New Criticism in "How Formalism Became a Dirty Word & Why We Can't Do Without It," in *Renaissance Literature and Its Formal Engagements*, ed. Mark Rasmussen (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 208–15.
18 Brooks, "The Language of Paradox," 15.
19 These lectures were never published.
20 Yale Course Critique 1963, Cleanth Brooks, YCAL MSS30, Box 81, folder 1657. Beinecke Library, Yale University.
21 Cleanth Brooks, Modern Poetry Lecture #5 transcript [corrected and retyped]. 13 February 1963. YCAL MSS30, Box 81, folder 1662. Beinecke Library, Yale University, 1–2.
22 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2003), 101.
23 Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 9.
24 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 14.
25 Brooks, Lecture #4, folder 1661 (11 February 1963): 2.
26 Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 6–8.
27 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 19.
28 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 7–8.
29 Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 3–6.
30 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 11–12.
31 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 4.
32 Even Moore's footnote-free poems are treated, by Brooks, as documents that contain obscure, excessively particular references: "I don't know what that means." "I think this is probably an old-fashioned or whimsical touch." "Since I don't know the Hebrew language,

this is suggestive, and I am willing to take it on faith. It sounds right, but I don't know." "Is this Thoreau? Could be. Don't remember. Someone of the sort." "Don't ask me what that means. I can think of a dozen things it might mean." Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 1–17.

33 Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 10.

34 Brooks, Lecture #5, folder 1662 (13 February 1963): 14–15.

35 For instance, Brooks says that Rockefeller commissioned Orozco to paint the frescoes, but it was Diego Rivera. When a student explains that the "Mexican artist," intending to satirize Rockefeller, included an image of Lenin, Brooks interrupts: "Yes, Yes, but what happened was that Mr. Rockefeller paid the artist for his work but didn't use the murals in Rockefeller center. And Macleish [sic] decides then that he will provide some frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's city." Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 14.

36 Brooks, Lecture #1, folder 1658 (4 February 1963): 1–3.

37 Brooks, Lecture #3, folder 1660 (8 February 1963): 1–2.

38 Sianne Ngai, "Merely Interesting," *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 4 (2008): 786–87.

39 Robert Martin Adams, "Masks and Delays: Edmund Wilson as Critic," *The Sewanee Review* 36, no. 2 (1948): 277. See Edmund Wilson, "Is Verse a Dying Technique?" and "Marxism and Literature," both in *The Triple Thinkers: Twelve Essays on Literary Subjects* (London: J. Lehmann, 1952), 22–36, 188–202.

40 Adams, "Masks and Delays," 277.

41 Charles H. Foster, review of *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*, *The New England Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1962): 526.

42 If some academic critics saw Wilson as an historicist who had no account of literary value, other saw—and continue to see—Wilson as a common reader critic for whom questions of value were simple and settled. Both reception histories obscure his very productive career-long struggle with the problem of how to properly interpret and properly value literature within the framework of his historical interests and investment in historicist—often Marxist—methodologies.

43 Indeed, Wilson was widely criticized for failing to provide a strong theory of how historical approaches account for the value of literature in "The Historical Interpretation of Literature" (1940), in which Wilson describes the historicist methodologies of Vico, Taine, Marx, and Engels but attributes their success to their intuitive appreciation of "literature of "Grade A." *The Triple Thinkers*, 243–55.

44 Edmund Wilson, English 356A: "Varieties of Nineteenth Century Criticism" lecture notes. Summer 1939. YCAL MSS 187, Box 163 folder 4045. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

45 Teaching students to suspend sense in order to "follow the adventures of a letter through any passage that has particularly pleased you," Stevenson's essay must have struck Wilson as especially useful for approaching *Finnegans Wake*. Robert Louis Stevenson, "On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements," *The Contemporary Review* 47 (April 1885): 549.

46 Stevenson, "On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements," 549.

47 Stevenson, "On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements," 560.

48 Edmund Wilson papers, handouts for class titled "The Use of Language in Literature," Comparative Literature 290, fall 1959. YCAL MSS 187 Box 163 folders 4055–4056, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

49 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 354: "Charles Dickens" at the University of Chicago, summer 1939. Box 163 folder 4044, YCAL MSS 187 Box 163 folder 4044. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

50 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 175: "The Literature of the American Civil War" at Harvard University, 1959–1960. YCAL MSS 187 Box 163 folder 4053. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

51 This general revaluing also extended to the fiction and poetry Wilson did include. Puzzled reviewers wanted to know why Wilson apparently "consciously avoid[ed] close engagement" with canonical literature, and included "such irrelevant figures as Poe, Stephen Foster, Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, Thomas Holly Chivers, Ezra Pound, and, of all people Adelaide Crapsey" instead of "Melville, Whitman, and Timrod." Review of *Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*, *The New England Quarterly*, 526.

52 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 175: "The Literature of the American Civil War."

53 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 175: "The Literature of the American Civil War."

54 Edmund Wilson, lectures notes for English 356a: "Varieties of Nineteenth-Century Criticism," 1939. YCAL MSS 187, box 163, folder 4045. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

55 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for Comparative Literature 290: "The Use of Language in Literature," Harvard University, Fall 1959. YCAL MSS 187 Box 163 folder 4057. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

56 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 30: "An Introduction to James Joyce," 1942. YCAL MSS Box 163 folder 4048. Beinecke Library, Yale University.

57 Edmund Wilson, lecture notes for English 30: "An Introduction to James Joyce."

58 Edmund Wilson, "A Guide to Finnegans Wake," in *Classics and Commericals: A Literary Chronicle of the Forties* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1950), 188.

59 John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), 337, 339.

Yeats, Fairies, and the New Animism

Sinéad Garrigan Mattar

> The slogan for our times then is,
> not things fall apart, but things come alive
> —W. J. T. Mitchell

Max Beerbohm's famous 1904 cartoon of "Mr. W. B. Yeats presenting Mr. George Moore to the Queen of the Fairies" is only an early distillation of the ridicule Yeats's investment in fairy lore has often invited.[1] By concentrating on the formal dynamics of Yeats's "Celtic Twilight" poetry, some critics have sidestepped the embarrassment of his beliefs about fairies altogether,[2] whilst others have employed nuanced understandings of both the occult revivals of the 1890s and the function of fairy lore in rural Ireland to create a historicist critique that can address his enthusiasm without seeming to succumb to it.[3] Those who have actively defended Yeats have done so largely by assimilating his credulity towards the fairies into the bigger picture of his evolving and multifaceted occultism: seen in tandem with his interests in esoteric mysticism, spiritualism, and Eastern religions, and with the development of the arcane system outlined in *A Vision*, his early investment in the fairies looks to be part of a grander (and, to some, a more plausible) antimaterialist, Neoplatonic philosophy.[4] But none of these approaches comes near to grasping the radicalism of Yeats's attitudes. Recent developments in social theory bring that radicalism into a new focus and suggest that Yeats's particular approach to the fairies demands both reassessment and renewed interest.

It is in regards to the concept of "animism" that contemporary theories (from across the disciplines of anthropology, psychology, theology, sociology, and philosophy of science) find a touchpoint with Yeats's fairy lore. In the "Compositionist Manifesto" he published in *New Literary History* in Summer 2010, and in challenging the "bifurcation" of human consciousness and "nature" after the "epistemological break" of the Enlightenment, Bruno Latour suggested that "there is no way to devise a successor to nature, if we do not tackle the tricky question of *animism* anew."[5] At the end of the nineteenth century, Yeats too was engaged in reassessing the tricky question of animism by challenging

contemporary anthropological negotiations of the concept that were (as Latour diagnoses now, and as Yeats realized then) the product of a post-Enlightenment, anthropocentric insistence on the primary "materialism" of the cosmos. Of course, Yeats's contexts were literary and occult, where Latour and his contemporaries work within or through the parameters of social science. Moreover, the openness to a relational view of the pluriverse that we find in Yeats's early folklore and poetry cannot be found as readily in the more arcane and hieratic voice of his later writing. Yet there is a remarkable consonance between Yeats's vision of fairy-human-environmental relations in the 1880s and 1890s and the recent redefinition of "animism" by social scientists. Finally, because they are so indebted to Victorian anthropology, a proper analysis of, first, Yeats's writings on world belief-systems acknowledged as animistic and, secondly, his Irish fairy lore reveals something new about the relationship between the materialist narratives of nineteenth-century social science and the concurrent, related "re-enchantment" of the world by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century litterateurs. If at first it seems only idiosyncratic that Yeats should use science contra science in his fairy lore, in the end it seems significant of some forgotten but enduring aspect of that science that he did so.

It is worth remembering that the word "animism" was coined by Edward Tylor in his foundational study of 1871, *Primitive Culture*, to describe the first stage in the development of religious thought: the stage at which "naturalism," an entirely materialist understanding of the world, was superseded by a stage in which souls and spirits were considered to play a part in the functioning of life.[6] Out of animism was supposed to grow religion proper, ultimately itself to be superseded by scientific rationalism. *Primitive Culture* was a text that was grounded in the idea that culture, like biology, evolved (*PCi* 1–2), and that certain cultures (Western ones) had evolved further than others. It depended implicitly on "the myth of progress." Tylor wrote, "The educated world of Europe and America practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one end of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to cultured life. . . . Few would dispute that the following races are arranged rightly in order of culture: - Australian, Tahitian, Aztec, Chinese, Italian" (*PCi* 23–24).

The workings of this "social series" implicitly valorized imperialism, since "elevation is much more apt to be produced by foreign than by native action" (*PCi* 48). Animism, as Tylor defined it, was a savage stage of development, the very purpose of which was to be outgrown, and for this reason twentieth-century anthropologists were justifiably uneasy with

the word, although it remained a part of the discipline's descriptive vocabulary.[7] But since the 1990s the term has been undergoing revision and revival: Philippe Descola, Nurit Bird-David, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Tim Ingold, and now Latour have built on the work of forerunners such as Marilyn Strathern to redefine a series of comparable worldviews, and their thinking has been popularized as "the new animism."[8] Theirs is a renegotiated understanding of relations within an animated pluriverse that carries the name "animism" without its stigma of belatedness. The crucial point for all is, as Bird-David enunciated in 1999, that animism should be seen as a "relational (not a failed) epistemology."[9]

The "failure" of animistic ontologies, according to the rationalist and materialist standards of Victorian anthropology, was not simply determined by the evolutionism of Tylorian thought but also (and as Latour correctly indicates) by its dualistic (one might say, Cartesian[10]) basis. Tylor's definition of animism depended upon the argument that, in the first throes of the animistic stage of development, primitive peoples assumed by analogy that just as they had "separable souls," which seemed to leave their bodies temporarily in sleep and permanently in death, so things in the natural world must be likewise animated. Out of this first leap of (mistaken) rational thought grew their sense that the world beyond them operated with a will akin to their own. Edward Tylor, Andrew Lang, James Frazer, and their contemporaries argued that this idea was reflected in the mythology, folklore, and belief that sprang from this period of development and lingered on into the "adulthood" of the world as a series of "survivals" (*PCi* 15, also chapters 3 & 4 *passim*). The basis of animism, in this understanding, was anthropocentric, cerebral, and analogical—if delusive (*PCi* 20–21). Not only did the subjectivism of this view spring from the "epistemological break" of the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries, but also the argument that a process of analogy was the basis for animistic belief: Andrew Lang, in *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, cited Hume's dictum that "There is an universal tendency in mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object those qualities . . . of which they are intimately conscious"[11] to justify the Tylorian hypothesis.

This dualistic conceptual framework, modern anthropologists insist, was incapable of grasping the bases of animistic ontologies, which operate, rather, according to a subject-subject or "relational" pattern. This is how Tim Ingold defines the issues at stake:

> According to a long-established convention [i.e., after Tylor], animism is a system of beliefs that imputes life or spirit to things that are truly inert. But this convention . . . is misleading . . . . First, we are dealing here not with a way of believing

about the world but with a condition of being *in* it. This could be described as a condition of being alive to the world, characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness, in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux, never the same from one moment to the next. Animacy, then, is not a property of persons imaginatively projected onto the things with which they perceive themselves to be surrounded. Rather . . . it is the dynamic, transformative potential of the entire field of relations within which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence. The animacy of the lifeworld, in short, is not the result of an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation.

The obvious conclusion, for Ingold, is that Western science needs to admit its failings and to reinvent itself: "*Re-animating the 'western' tradition of thought means recovering the sense of astonishment banished from official science.*"[12]

Ingold's description has much in common with authoritative views shared by other social scientists. Yet the inheritance the nineteenth century bequeathed to the twentieth was more complicated, less static, and less confined by the dualism of "official science" than such accounts would have one believe.[13] W. B. Yeats, for one, saw the value of "animistic ontologies" in a way that is consonant with twenty-first century re-evaluations, but he did so, crucially, by plundering the rich resources that "official science" provided, even as he scorned its anthropocentric scientism: it is the richness and complexity of these resources that has been forgotten.

What has *not* been forgotten is that the conception of "animism" that Tylorian anthropology developed (especially via James Frazer and Andrew Lang) was strongly dependent upon the evidence of literature.[14] So, as well as generating questions about the existence of spirits and the workings of the uncanny, it fed debates about perception and representation, analogy and metaphor, that were immediately transferable into an aesthetic mode and which (as we shall see) are strangely resonant with modern theorizations about animism. In a book that Yeats read and annotated, Andrew Lang diagnosed the "nebulous and confused" state of mind of the animistic savage by stating that "The savage draws no hard and fast line between himself and the things in the world," as part of an extended argument about the *myths* to which this state of mind gave rise: "The dead and the living, men, beasts, and gods, trees and stars, and rivers, and sun, and moon, dance through the region of myths in a burlesque ballet of Priapus, where everything may be anything, where nature has no laws and imagination no limits."[15] In one sense, Lang is here conforming absolutely to a Tylorian anthropology,

in which the "savage" is the agent who interprets, or misinterprets, the world to which he feels connected, and his "imagination" is the force that animates it. But, in another sense, Lang is also passing beyond that orthodoxy, suggesting that, in fact, in Ingold's words, "*These peoples are united not in their beliefs but in a way of being that is alive and open to a world in continuous birth*,"[16] and that this is the stuff of poetry: a mythopoeia, beyond catachresis, analogy, and simile, but alive with ever-changing, enacted transformations. To say that the "savage draws no hard and fast line between himself and the things in the world" is *not* to limit the relationship between man and world to a one-way street of subject-object interpretation, especially given Lang's subsequent description of the anthropomorphic mythic world of both savage and Western culture—and Yeats (among others[17]) seems to have noticed this.

In fact, it was precisely because Tylor and his followers were not solely interested in the single idea of the animistic as "*the imputation of life to inert objects*"[18] that they provided such a wealth of material for writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to draw upon. Whatever the stated basis of his theory, Tylor's acceptation of "animism" was complex, wide-ranging, and inclusive: any "doctrine of souls," be it provided by ghost story, poetry, canon law, telepathic experience, or, indeed, "savage" religious belief was a viable object of study—as the lengthy witness of *Primitive Culture*'s second volume testifies. Yeats (among others) was able to plunder the storehouse of evidence that Tylor and his popularizers provided, even as he rejected the "materialist philosophy" upon which their discipline was founded. Just as Comtean positivism obliquely noted the value of "fetishism" even as it placed it at the lowest end of a developmental arch, so Tylorian cultural evolutionism made much of the animism it disparaged.[19] The works that grew out of Tylor's vision, and especially those that pursued the questions of mythology and religion it raised, all added to the stockpile of evidence of an animism that was as vital an ingredient of poetry as it was of societal development.

One of the most interesting pieces of writing Yeats produced in this context is a book review that has otherwise rather flummoxed his critics. John P. Frayne, the editor of Yeats's *Uncollected Prose*, comments that the article Yeats wrote in October 1893 about B. Douglas Howard's account of the Ainu of Sakhalin, *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*,[20] was "certainly Yeats's strangest reviewing assignment," but as an example of Yeats's interest in global animistic traditions it is resonant with significance. Yeats is shrewdly critical of the book, but is won over by Howard's estimation of the "beautiful creed" he finds in Sakhalin as the "crown of all the Ainu life." In Yeats's gloss of Howard's findings, this animistic creed is not the product of a dualistic projection of self onto world, but rather it

takes the personhood and the godliness of all so-called objective realities as its first principal. Here is Yeats's précis of an account that is clearly described in such a way as to be conducive to his own mysticism:

> The savage looks upon naked eternity, while we unhappy triflers have built about us a wall of odds and ends. Mr. Howard's friends affirm one supreme god the maker of gods and men, but hold that he has under him innumerable minor divinities, such as the god of running waters, the god of lakes, the god of the sea, the god of the waters as a whole, and as the great goddess of the sun's fire, and the minor and mediatorial goddess of the household flame. There is an ancient Catholic writer who holds that "The Most High set the borders of the nations after the number of the angels of God." Are not fire and the waters more unchanging and mightier than any nations?[21]

The very first sentence is enough to suggest what is at issue here: the "wall of odds and ends" of a scientific age is an image of both a determinedly material and a scrappily inadequate construction, whereas "naked eternity" combines the physical and the abstract in a single phrase that affirms its connection with both realms even as it obfuscates it. Yeats's description is antirational in every respect, but his core point is one with which our contemporary anthropologists might agree: the Ainu's faith, as Yeats gives it to us, does not depend upon "an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation."[22]

The most radical part of the review, though, comes towards its conclusion, when Yeats leaves off his reverie and turns a more critical gaze to the gritty political questions about representation that the book raises: "Mr. Howard tells all this so admirably and sympathetically that his concluding appeal to someone to go preach Christianity to his late subjects may excite surprise. . . . Should we not rather ask them to send us a tattooed and hairy missionary to help evangelise our own heathen?" (*UPi* 297) The vision of such a figure evangelizing in Bedford Park is titillating, but Yeats's instinctive outrage pre-echoes the theoretically-inflected anger of more recent commentators. Writing about the West's battle with ontologies conceived as "other" in 2004, Latour argued emotively that historically "Westerners have not understood themselves as facing on the battlefield an enemy whose victory is possible, just irrational people who have to be corrected. . . . Westerners have until now been engaged in *pedagogical wars*. But things have changed of late and our wars are now wars of the worlds, because it's now the makeup of the cosmos that is at stake."[23] For Yeats, animistic worldviews, such as that of the Ainu, were an object of fascination because "the makeup of the cosmos" was always what was at stake: let the Ainu do the teaching, he argued in 1893; let

the pedagogical war be reversed. Yeats's own "postnaturalism" may have been driven by a Blakean belief in the primacy of spirit, but, ironically, it led to some of the same conclusions as those of the twenty-first-century inheritors of a more sceptical tradition.

We often forget much about Yeats that should be remembered in this context. Yeats is too easily parodied (as in the Beerbohm cartoon) as an occultist who dabbled amidst the opportunities that the late nineteenth century generated for the spiritually disenfranchised Victorian: a victim of "Huxley and Tyndall" who, having been "deprived" of his childhood faith by evolutionary science,[24] restlessly sought alternatives—amongst the fairies, amongst the Ainu. Yet, as I (and better scholars) have shown elsewhere, Yeats plundered the very science he decried, reading widely and comparatively. Although there is no evidence that he read *Primitive Culture* directly, Yeats read much that was influenced by it, leaping on John Rhys's "Hibbert Lectures" when they were published in 1888, reading works by Lang, Alfred Nutt, Edward Clodd, and Frazer in the 1890s, entering into debate with members of the Folklore Society, and reviewing works of and on folklore that had assimilated modern anthropological and ethnographical ideas.[25] The early 1890s were a period of intellectual expansion for Yeats and they are also the years in which his writings contain the greatest openness to multiple, unsystematized alternative ontologies: after this burgeoning period his margins become tighter.

So, in assessing Howard's account of the Ainu, he mentions a work by "Isabella L. Bird," published in 1880 and called *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, as the only previous account of their animism. Howard's strength, for Yeats, is that he makes an attempt to adopt an "insider" perspective in Sakhalin, unlike Bird who remains always an "outsider" in her account of the Japanese Ainu (*UPi* 296). This incisive critical comment would not be remarkable if Howard had himself pointed to the Bird text, but Howard never mentions the book. Yeats's interest in the Ainu was clearly not limited to an arbitrary reviewing assignment: he knew about the subject from a range of sources. In 1893, with the publication of his three-volume edition of William Blake's work and its extraordinary, vicarious expression of his antimaterialist manifesto, with the appearance of *The Celtic Twilight*, and with his commencement of a group of poems that were announced to be the first stirrings of *The Wind Among the Reeds*, all roads led to a realm in which spiritual and bodily forms existed with an equal and relational personhood, including the unbeaten tracks of Trans-Siberia.

How Yeats came to know of *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* is open to speculation, but it seems possible that he sought it out, having seen it mentioned in a single footnote of another book that he also reviewed in 1893: T.F.

Thiselton Dyer's four-hundred-page account of miscellaneous spiritual phenomena, *The Ghost World*.[26] Although Dyer's book is less valuable ethnographically than Howard's (being a collection of beliefs from around the world concerning everything from fairies to headless horsemen), it is more useful for determining precisely what the baby was that Yeats saw paddling in the bathwater of Victorian anthropology, since Dyer protests his (armchair) scientism repeatedly, and what comments he offers on the "ghost world" place him clearly in the camp of the "materialist philosopher." Edward Tylor himself is Dyer's chief authority for accounts of animistic custom from beyond the British Isles and, indeed, this book may well be the nearest Yeats came to a direct experience of Tylor's writings in the 1890s. Dyer quotes Tylor extensively and dutifully rehearses his theories about the evolution of animism and the varying forms it can take (as well as seeking evidences from Herbert Spencer, John Lubbock, Clodd, Lang, and Frazer). Where for Yeats, Howard's fault was his Eurocentricism, Dyer's is his rationalism, and in his review Yeats goes so far as to claim that the latter's "scientific" bias leads to a total philistinism:

> The outside of the book is far from comely to look at, and the inside is that mixture of ancient beauty and modern commonplace one has got used to in books by scientific folk-lorists. Mr. Dyer collects numbers of the most entirely lovely and sacred, or tragic and terrible, beliefs in the world, and sets them side by side, transfixed with diverse irrelevancies—in much the same fashion that boys stick moths and butterflies side by side upon a door, with long pins in their bodies. At other times he irritates by being hopelessly inadequate, as when he follows a story of priceless beauty with the remark that "these folktales are interesting as embodying the superstitions of the people among whom they are current." But then no one expects the scientific folk-lorist to have a tongue of music, and this one gives us a great deal less of himself than the bulk of his tribe. (*UPi* 285)

That Yeats objects to the lack of poetry and the fatuousness of judgment that the book contains is not surprising: throughout the late 1880s and 1890s he persistently objected to the soullessness of the "scientific folk-lorist's" world.[27] The value of folklore to Yeats was not as a specimen or a "survival" of savage culture, but as a continually revivifying source. The manner in which Yeats reverses the terms of ethnographic study, here, and sees the scientist as a "tribesman" is also typical of his particular irony in this context.

What is more unusual, though, is the counterclaim Yeats's article makes that although Dyer's book is aesthetically worthless and "irreverent" of the beliefs it contains, it is a *necessary* book: a book that will reopen a world in danger of being lost to a scientific age. At the very start of his

article, and having described an illustration by Blake—"Out of every flower and every grass-blade comes a little creature lifting its right hand above its head"—Yeats had argued, "It is possible that the books of folklore, coming in these later days from almost every country in the world, are bringing the fairies and the spirits to our study tables that we may witness a like affirmation, and see innumerable hands lifted testifying to the ancient supremacy of imagination" (*UPi* 284). "We," of the present age, for want of a "living tradition" of belief in gods and spirits, "are trying to persuade the lecture and the scientific book to look, at least to the eye, like the old poems and dramas and stories that were in the ages of faith long ago" (*UPi* 285). Here is a moment of prophecy that the next forty years would bear out: that the science of comparative anthropology could become the inspiration for a new literature, replacing the very animistic ontologies that it dismissed as delusive with an inclusive (if sceptical) account of them. In this context, Dyer's book, for all its faults, is "one of those classifications and reviews of already collected facts of which we stand in great need," and the "mythical method" of modernism raises its head.

The stories that catch Yeats's particular attention from Dyer's book are those dealing with the destiny of the soul after death and, more particularly, those that suggest the spiritual value of birds and beasts: he has no truck with the humdrum accounts of ghosts of the normal "ghost-story" variety that actually make up the larger part of the work. Moreover, Yeats's review makes the book seem more global in scope than it actually is, because the examples of beliefs he cites from it are Tylorian and comparative in origin.[28] Yet, typically, Yeats assesses these neither as delusive nor as proof of an "us/them" analogical anthropomorphism, but rather as examples of a dynamic, environmentally engaged awareness of a world in flux that is both in itself creative and inspirational to poetic creativity:

> All these stories are such as to unite man more closely to the woods and hills and waters about him, and to the birds and animals that live in them, and to give him types and symbols for those feelings and passions which find no adequate expression in common life. . . . Let us listen humbly to the old people telling their stories, and perhaps God will send the primitive excellent imagination into the midst of us again. Why should we be either "naturalists" or "realists" alone? Are not those little right hands lifted everywhere in affirmation? (*UPi* 287–8)

"Naturalism" was, of course, the term for both the Tylorian world in its preanimistic state and that peculiar, Lamarquian form of literary realism that had captured the zeitgeist of the late nineteenth century in France and beyond. "Naturalism" is, too, the word that modern theorists

use to denote a "Western fundamentalism" that has failed to grasp the importance of the "cosmos" because of its blinkered, anthropocentric materialism.[29] Here is a lovely Yeatsian irony embedded in an argument that speaks to and supplements the claims that social scientists are making a hundred years later: modernist Western science has inadequate tools for treating the "astonishment" of animic ontologies with an appropriate "reverence," but the imagination of the West needs to reconnect with that astonishment and may do so (for want of other means) via the works of science that fail to do so.

The question of how and why Yeats was able to see the potential of science to provide this resource, despite its entrenched materialism and his own equally entrenched mysticism, is explained by looking again at the inclusivity of "animism" as it was conceived in the 1870s and after. Tylor, in fact, only chose the word "animism" to designate the essential, delusive core of all religion because the more directly descriptive word "spiritualism" had already been appropriated by the spiritualist movement, from which he wanted to distance himself.[30] In trying to dissociate his theories from spiritualism, though, Tylor inadvertently made a connection that is essential to Yeats's later assimilation and colonization of his material. Tylor used the evidence of spiritualism to explain the beliefs of "savages" in a move that modern anthropologists have understandably seen as topsy-turvy,[31] but, for Yeats, this was the legacy of his thinking that was most exciting. Yeats owned a copy of Andrew Lang's 1893 edition of Robert Kirk's *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*, in which Lang had argued that the folklorist and the psychical researcher should acknowledge their shared interests,[32] and it was an argument that Yeats would increasingly embrace when, in the twentieth century, his own spiritual interests shifted towards those of the Society for Psychical Research.[33] Lang's embrace of psychical research may have been an apostasy in the eyes of his contemporaries (especially Frazer and Clodd),[34] but it made his version of Tylorian anthropology particularly conducive to Yeats's vision.

This, then, raises the concomitant question of why Yeats needed science at all—if spiritualism was able to address the same issues as science in a way more conducive to his beliefs. What evolutionary comparative anthropology gave Yeats that spiritualism could not was a sense of the cultural authenticity of the animistic experience. Basing its findings on the evidence of folk belief and on "savage" practices observed throughout the colonies, sociocultural evolutionists suggested that the shared experience of the peoples of the world at an early stage of their development agreed as to the existence of shifting boundaries between the so-called spirit and the so-called body; between humanity and the natural world

and other worlds. Embarking on his study of animism, Tylor had argued that Dr. Johnson was right—although he said it contemptuously—that, "one set of savages is like another" and "an English ploughman" and a "negro of Central Africa" have "scarce a hand's breadth difference" between them (*PCi* 6). This was an idea that would appeal greatly to Yeats, even if his emphasis was always on the continuity of that experience, rather than its evolutionary development; as he wrote in 1889: "The Irish peasant believes the whole world to be full of spirits, but then the most distinguished men have thought not otherwise. . . . Tradition is always the same. The earliest poet of India and the Irish peasant in his hovel nod to each other across the ages and are in perfect agreement."[35]

To acknowledge continuity was to put aside unanswerable questions about the relationship between the human mind and material nature that were the inheritance of the Enlightenment: Yeats could wield traditional wisdom to argue that the fairies were there, whether one believed in them or not. Yeats adapted ideas freely from Victorian anthropology, but he always refused its scientific methods and its materialist philosophy. It is probably for this reason that he consistently avoided using the word "animism" itself, freighted as it was with the burden of its positivist acceptation.[36]

Nurit Bird-David's argument that we should see animism as a "relational (not a failed) epistemology" was partly foreshadowed, as a consequence, by Yeats's practice in his collections of Irish folklore in the eighties and nineties. His refusal to belittle folk belief *as* primitive, his insistence that "an assumption of [the fairies'] existence is the only fit theory to build a selection of fairy tales on,"[37] and his rejection of the idea that the fairy beliefs he recorded were the result of an analogical/logical process all ally him with more recent defenders of animism. Even his continual juggling with the proper terms by which one should refer to the fairies foreshadows more recent debate: "the others" and "the gentry" and the "persons of the Tribes of Danu" are all traditional, "relational" terms that Yeats repeats. His motivations for doing so might be occultist, rather than observational, but the result is the same: the "personhood" of his fairies makes them comparable to the *devaru* of Southern India and the *xapiripë* of Amazonia. Moreover, it is quite possible that the anthropologists of his day helped him towards this nuanced understanding: Andrew Lang, in his introduction to *Modern Mythology* (complaining that Tylor's word "animism" "is not very clear"), described the savage's worldview as "a philosophy of things, stated in stories based on the belief in universal personality," and suggested (as ever) that this "hypothesis of universally distributed personality" was the core element of myth:[38] this is not simply a dualistic definition.

Crucially, Tylor had argued that poetry was one of the few "civilized" spheres in which the animistic/mythic mode persisted,[39] an idea that implicitly engaged with wider Victorian debates about the representation of "soul" in nature, and the question of whether in art and literature such representations could ever be more than the analogical projection of a subjective sensibility. In as much as his argument was that poetry needed the fluid and astonishing possibilities of animism, he seems to have been endorsing John Ruskin's diagnosis of the "pathetic fallacy" as a modern malaise that both apes and falls short of classical mythopoeic views of the cosmos. Although it is not yet clear to me whether Ruskin influenced Tylor directly, his ideas certainly seem to have shaped how Yeats in turn championed appropriately "reverent" treatments of the pluriverse. One early review of John Todhunter's poetry, for example, shows Yeats reflecting Ruskin's distinction in order to attack the egotism of the "Saxon" poet and to praise instead the flexuous "Celt," engaged, as he is, with a folklore that is intrinsically animistic. The Saxon, Yeats argued, is "always a lens colored by self."[40] The same distinction had been made in a still earlier review of Samuel Ferguson: "At once the fault and the beauty of the nature-description of most modern poets is that for them the stars, and streams, the leaves, and the animals, are only masks behind which go on the sad soliloquies of a nineteenth century egotism" (*UPi* 103) , whilst Ferguson's poetry expressed the animated world itself.

By the time he wrote *The Celtic Twilight*, Yeats was "proving" that in Ireland nature was animated beyond the "sad soliloquies" of the materialist British Empire: the subject-object relations of nineteenth-century science were defiantly replaced by the subject-subject experience of the Celtic dawn in these prose anecdotes. In an extraordinary passage at the crux of "Regina, Regina, Pigmeorum, Veni," Yeats recounts an invocation of the Queen of the Fairies and her troops in which he was involved, on a "far western sandy shore." The fairies are explicitly defined as an intrinsic part of the landscape and *not* as the emanation of the emotions of the human beings who invoke them. Yeats sets about questioning the Queen through his "friend," who is entranced: "I then asked whether she and her people were not 'dramatizations of our moods'? 'She does not understand,' said my friend, 'but says that her people are much like human beings, and do most of the things human beings do.'"[41] "As above, so below" was the watchword of Yeats's occultism in the 1890s and to question the fairies' autonomous personhood was a failure of respect, as this anecdote rather comically shows.

In his poetry of the period we see the inner view of a spiritual landscape in which the "elemental creatures" that go about Yeats's table are transformed into the ghosts of the Irish nation itself—not living in its

hills, but existing as part of them and part of the lives of the people whose mythology and lore continually remembers them. A poem like "The Hosting of the Sidhe" is an act of spiritual mapping,[42] but it is also an aesthetic act of reanimation: from the geographic locale, "Knocknarea," we move to the pseudomythic grave of "Clooth-na-Bare,"[43] and from this grounded signifier of animistic presence, the relentless tetrameter carries us into the mythopoeic realm itself, into the continually changing, sexually-charged world of the persons of the Tribe of Danu. In fact, the whole world teeters on the edge of vision in *The Wind Among the Reeds*: it is a collection which heralds a new apocalypse by returning us to the "mental condition of savages," as defined by comparative anthropology,[44] and celebrating that return. It is a world in which "anything might flow and change, and become any other thing," as Yeats described that of the ancient Celts in 1897,[45] and where there is no strict division between this world and the "other." Here "sun and moon and hollow and wood / And river and stream" are all alive in a "mystical brotherhood," as Yeats tells us in "Into the Twilight" (*Poems* 76), and have wills that need working out as ours do. In this world, a trout can become "a glimmering girl / With apple blossom in her hair" before calling a name, and running, and fading into air (*Poems* 76–77). Like the "animic" worlds Tim Ingold struggles to describe, it is "in perpetual flux, as the beings that participate in it go their various ways."[46] Here, nothing begins or ends with the human; nothing begins or ends with the defining subject of the poem, who is himself, like Mongan (*Poems* 78–79), constantly subject to change. That Yeats first used and then deleted the character names of the "voices" of some of these poems (Aedh, Hanrahan, Robartes, and Mongan himself) suggests how he struggled to find a suitably flexuous poetic voice to meet the demands of such a vision: beyond the objectivities of the nineteenth-century dramatic monologue and somehow intrinsic to the shifting, aerial landscape of which these voices form a part.

In fact, "air" is a word used as often in the collection as the "wind" of its title, and both words together operate to confirm that this is a collection that semantically, as well as actually, approximates the animistic. A favourite fact for Tylorian theorists of animism was that the words for "breath" and "air" and "wind" were related to that used for "spirit" in most languages.[47] The "sidhe" who do the hosting in Yeats's poems, likewise, are both the spirits who haunt and the wind that blows: they are both the air that is breathed and the breath that animates. This is a "weather-world" (to use Ingold's phrase) in which Yeats's sidhe/winds are nature seen as spiritual and animate, rather than as sublime, or beautiful, or, indeed, picturesque.

In his 1897 essay "The Celtic Element in Literature," Yeats stated his favor for Matthew Arnold's view of the Celt over Ernest Renan's, because he agreed with Arnold that "naturalism" was not the word to describe the Celtic worldview: "The Celtic Passion for Nature comes almost more from a sense of her 'mystery' than of her 'beauty,'" he argued (*EI* 173). But Yeats was not really favoring Arnold-the-theorist over Renan-the-theorist, he was favouring Arnold-the-poet over Tylor and Lang and all the scientists.[48] Yeats mounts a direct assault on the anthropological construction of animism when he writes that all the melancholy and beauty of Celtic literature comes "From this "mistaking dreams," which are perhaps essences, for "realities," which are perhaps accidents" (*EI* 181–82). The ironizing use of inverted commas begs us to prioritise the "animistic" view itself (based in its Tylorian form on the mistaken over-reading of dreams) over the rationalist view that has defined it as such. His purpose is made explicit in the flourish with which he ends his essay: "The reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth century has mingled with a reaction against the materialism of the nineteenth century" (*EI* 187) and the arts are about to become religious again. The evolution of thought from the magical to the religious and thence to the scientific is unravelling, for Yeats, and a new animism seems to be just around the corner.

Appropriately then, and despite his continual questing for some absolute apocalyptic canvas against which to paint his fairytopia, the folklore that Yeats collates and comments upon in this period is actually suggestive of a series of relations between the things of this world and their parallels in an "other" world that are performative in just the way that modern theorists of animism insist they should be.[49] So, trees and bushes and mounds of earth do not simply have a "life" that is analogous to what the Irish peasant feels within him/herself, they are part of a complex nexus of social and supra-social relations, involving, but not simply originating from, the cerebral responses of those human beings. In the first of a series of six major folklore articles, "The Tribes of Danu" (1898), Yeats notes that certain "queerly-shaped bushes" and certain trees are "frequented and protected" (*UPii* 60), but the relation between the trees and "tree-spirits" is ambiguous: "The people say that you must not hurt these bushes and trees, because 'the Others' have houses near them; but sometimes it seems that, if you hurt them, you hurt one of 'the Others'. . . ." And he goes on to tell us that "souls are sometimes said to be put into trees for a penance" (*UPii* 61). There is no single relationship between the tree and its soul, or in the tree's inhabitance by an "other" or in the tree's inhabitance by a human soul—and Yeats allows it to be so. The "persons" of the fairy world, as Yeats presents

them, are "dividual" ("a person constitutive of relationships"[50]) and the things of the world are part of a locally defined network of relations between the environment, the human beings who form a part of it, and a spiritual realm that is both separate and intrinsic to this. Fairy spirits, as Yeats shows us them, "operate within the context of social practices." Writing about the Clonmel witch-burning trials in his 1902 essay "Away" (the last of the six articles), Yeats argued that those on trial "only half-knew" their beliefs, because they did not realize either their relational or their performative nature: "In fact," he explained, "mankind and spirit kind each have their hostage. These explanatory myths are not a speculative, but a practical wisdom" (*UPii* 277).

To use Morten Pedersen's phrase, Yeats presents the Sidhe as part of a "super-sociality: that weaves together persons of all sorts, be they humans, animals, or spirit entities."[51] This is apparent when Yeats explains that "Young children are believed to be in greater danger than anybody else, and the number of those whose cries are heard in the wind shows how much 'the others' have to do with the wind" (*UPii* 76). The wind is not simply a metaphor *for* the Sidhe, nor simply a reason why the peasants need to invent the Sidhe, but rather the wind-Sidhe equation is part of an interaction in which the wind, the Sidhe, and the human beings all partake of the same society, whilst each having different natures. The interaction might be instructively compared with the description Eduardo Viveiros De Castro gives of the workings of spirits in Amazonia: "A spirit in Amazonia is less a thing than an image, less a term than a relation, less an object than an event, less a transcendent representative figure than a sign of the immanent universal background—the background that comes to the surface in shamanism, in dreams and in hallucinations, when the human and the nonhuman, the visible and invisible trade places."[52] That de Castro sees this process of trading as being linked to a diachronic reconnection with the ancient but timeless realm of the mythic,[53] and that he continually discusses the *xapiripë* in terms that are related to language and "image," only makes the comparison with Yeats the more tantalising.

Tim Ingold also argues that "In most animic cosmologies . . . the winds are taken to be alive and to have agentive powers of their own."[54] This is how Yeats saw the winds of Irish fairy-lore, but for him their association with change was apocalyptic, as well as continuous. He would reinvoke both the formal and the actual presence of these winds in his poems of the 1920s dealing with the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War: the final part of "Meditations in Time of Civil War" carries a title that reminds us of the Mongan poem in *The Wind Among the Reeds* and the wind blows through and partakes of the tricksy, self-destructive

images of Loie Fuller *et al* in "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" that turbulently embody unwilled macrocosmic changes that the poet descries behind those changes that are simply the product of human will. It is no accident, perhaps, that in order to illustrate her claim for the "animism" of Yeats's formal and imagistic practices in this later poetry—his ability to "think unallegorically" in poems in which "[poetic]form is not a body but an agent"—Angela Leighton must refer back to Yeats's writings from the 1890s:[55] this was the period of Yeats's deepest immersion in the currents of an animistic super-reality, both intellectually and in terms of his poetic practice.

Moreover, Yeats's sense that animistic forces have an intrinsic, radically anti-anthropocentric power allies him with modern anthropologists, and with Viveiros de Castro especially. In a guest editorial to *Anthropology Today*, written in January 2009, Latour describes a *disputatio* between Descola and de Castro, which took place in Paris that month about "perspectivism" (where "perspectivism" defines the relational view of animistic personhood particular to the fieldwork of these anthropologists). Latour recounts how de Castro distanced his own view from Descola's: "Perspectivism, in [de Castro's] view, should not be regarded as a simple category within Descola's typology, but rather as a bomb with the potential to explode the whole implicit philosophy so dominant in most ethnographers' interpretations of their material. If there is one approach that is totally anti-perspectivist, it is the very notion of a type within a category, an idea that can only occur to those Viveiros calls 'republican anthropologists.'"[56] One is reminded of Yeats's zeal for that mystical bombshell: "the revolt of the soul against the intellect,"[57] as well as his oft-expressed hatred of the scientific practice of "pinning" the evidence of folkloric ontologies as so many dead butterflies. When Irish fairy lore was finally collected and recorded in an ethnographically authoritative way, after the foundation of *An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann* in 1927, it was indeed seen as "a type within a category." In Seán Ó Súilleabháin's 1942 classic, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore,* memorats of the fairies were collected as a type under the category "Supernatural Beings," which was itself a subsection of "Chapter X: Mythological Tradition." "The Afterworld" was also a subsection of this chapter, but "Nature" was seen as an entirely different category and had a chapter all to itself (Chapter 6), as did "Human Life."[58] For Yeats in Ireland in the 1890s, as for de Castro in Amazonia in the 1990s and 2000s, the implications of accepting the indigenous ontology of animating spirits were explosive to Western post-Enlightenment thinking, precisely because they were at the heart of a human-natural-supernatural sociality that gave the lie to such neat ethnographic boundaries.

It would be wrong, however, to imply that Yeats somehow managed to overcome all problems inherent in a Cartesian dualism by being "baptised with fairy water" in the 1890s: there was no total immersion for him, and he struggled to frame appropriately his knowledge, first, that fairy lore was not actually part of a current, complete ontology in Ireland and, secondly, that he was not himself a part of the peasant communities he represented. Rather than seeing how problematic this relationship was, in fact, Yeats chose to suggest increasingly that his occult studies somehow gave him access to the spiritual root of the beliefs that these communities were in the process of losing. Whatever else I am claiming for Yeats, I am claiming neither that he was a disinterested ethnographer nor that his "animistic" period lasted long. By the time Yeats wrote "Magic" (which cites Andrew Lang by name) in 1901, he had moved away from the inclusive embrace of animistic possibilities that was his in the 1890s. The "credo" at the heart of this essay is uprooted from the material realities of community life, although it recounts experiences from the 1890s that seemed then to partake in a "wisdom" shared by the Ainu, "the Indian sage," and the Irish alike. Yeats merely argues in "Magic" that the borders of mind are ever shifting, that symbols give access to the "great mind" and the "great memory," and that he himself and his fellow mages have been experimenting for years in the invocation of magical visions: the grave of Clooth na Bare seems as distant as Sakhalin.

But something did remain in the new century: despite his growing elitism, Yeats's conception of Celtic spirituality continued to be associated with his commitment to an aesthetic of (idealized) communality. Just as he fondly drew a distinction between Saxon egotism and the more generous sympathies of the Celts in the 80s and 90s, so in "Magic" he distinguished between the "modern" view of things and the view of "barbaric" people: "We [the moderns] are always praising men in whom the individual life has come to perfection, but they were always praising the one mind, their foundation of all perfection" (*EI* 44). In so saying, he was echoing a Theosophical teaching, "the one self has to forget itself for the many selves,"[59] which would ultimately become his own famous cry for impersonality in art: "all that is personal soon rots; it must be packed in ice or salt" (*EI* 522)—but these ideas had been fuelled by his studies in animism. Addressing the issue in 1899, he had written: "A change in thought in the world makes us understand that we are not walled up within our immediate senses, but bound one to another, and to some greater life, by a secret communion of thought and emotion" (*UPii* 165). And the legacy of this stayed. Yeats's "Great Mind and Great Memory," and their appearance as the "Anima Mundi"

in his later theorizations (Lang notes in *The Making of Religion*, the book Yeats cited in "Magic," that for Tylor, "Animistic conceptions thus reach their utmost limit in the notion of the Anima Mundi"[60]), were his explanation for the source of his symbolism and the medium through which he might break down "the dykes that separate man from man" (*EI* 241): all were testament to his belief that the limits of "modernity" included the limiting of personhood to homologous individuals.

Ingold has argued that, "above all," positivist commentators on animistic societies "make the mistake of assuming that life and mind are interior properties of individuals that are given, independently and in advance of their involvement in the world."[61] Yeats is no positivist and does not succumb to this mistake, despite his commitment to the power of the individual imagination. "The mind changing changes all," but it is also acted upon by "moods" that lie beyond its scope and by an anthropomorphic world in which image, object, and "soul" snakishly fuse and refuse. In his fairy lore and in the poetry that springs from it in the 1880s and 90s, Yeats opposes his understanding of the "relatedness" of persons in the world to the "totalizing scheme of separated essences" that is, in Nurit Bird-David's terms "the object of modernist epistemology," but he does so in a way that is tellingly indebted to the details that lie behind the "totalizing schemes" of nineteenth-century science. We should learn from him.

University of Cambridge

NOTES

1 Max Beerbohm, *The Poets' Corner* (London: W. Heinemann, 1904).

2 Angela Leighton argues that this critical tendency might be traced back to Louis MacNeice. *On Form: Poetry, Aestheticism, and the Legacy of the Word* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 144.

3 Robert Fitzroy Foster, *W. B. Yeats: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1998 & 2005); Mary Helen Thuente, *W.B. Yeats and Irish Folklore* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980); Anne Markey, "The Discovery of Irish Folklore," *New Hibernia Review* 10, no. 4 (2006): 21–43; and Angela Bourke, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story* (London: Pimlico, 1999).

4 Especially Frank Kinahan, *Yeats, Folklore and Occultism: Contexts of the Early Work and Thought* (London & Winchester: Unwin Hyman, 1988) and Kathleen Raine, *Yeats the Initiate: Essays on Certain themes in the Work of W. B. Yeats* (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1987). For a brief and more skeptical account, which incorporates Raine's views, see Edward Hirsch, "Wisdom and Power: Yeats and the Commonwealth of Faery," in *Yeats Eliot Review* 8, no. 1 (1986): 22–40.

5 Bruno Latour, "An Attempt at a "Compositionist Manifesto," *New Literary History* 41, no. 3 (2010): 481.

6 Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: Murray, 1871), 20–21 (hereafter cited as *PC* with volume number). This description is also indebted to Edward Clodd's *Animism: the Seed*

of Religion (London: Constable, 1905), 22–23. Yeats knew Clodd personally: see Genevieve Brennan, "Yeats, Clodd, *Scatalogic Rites* and the Clonmel Witch Burning," *Yeats Annual* 4 (1986): 207–15.

7 See Nurit Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational Epistemology," *Current Anthropology* 40, no. 151 (1999): 67–68.

8 By Graham Harvey, in *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006).

9 Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited," 69.

10 Alf Hornborg, "Animism, Fetishism, and Objectivism as Strategies for Knowing (or not Knowing) the World," *Ethnos* 71, no. 1 (2006): 21–32.

11 Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1887), 161.

12 Tim Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate, Re-Animating Thought," *Ethnos* 71, no. 1 (2006): 9–10.

13 The call for a revisionist reading of Tylor's legacy was carefully made by Martin D. Stringer "Rethinking Animism: Thoughts from the Infancy of our Discipline," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (m.s.) 5, no. 4 (1999): 541–56.

14 Marilyn Strathern, "Out of Context: the Persuasive Fictions of Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 28, no. 3 (1987): 251–81, and Robert Fraser, ed., *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination* (London: Macmillan, 1990).

15 Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 46 & 10.

16 Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate," 9.

17 An illuminating essay on the numerous fin de siècle attempts to integrate positivism and imagination, which also gestures towards a general underreading of the nuances of positivist discourse, is Michael Saler, "Clap If You Believe in Sherlock Holmes: Mass Culture and the Re-Enchantment of Modernity c. 1890 - c. 1940," *The Historical Journal* 46, no. 3 (2003): 599–622.

18 Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate," 9. See also Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited," 67.

19 Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, "*The Return of the Native*: Animism, Fetichism and the Enchanted Heath," *Thomas Hardy Journal* 24 (Autumn 2008): 13–15. Cf. also Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 81.

20 B. Douglas Howard, *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages* (London: Longmans, Green, 1893).

21 John P. Frayne, ed., *Uncollected Prose by W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 1:297 (hereafter cited as *UPi*. The second volume [1970, ed. Frayne and Colton Johnson], will be cited as *UPii*).

22 Ingold, "Re-thinking the Animate," 10.

23 Latour, "Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics?" *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 3 (2004): 455.

24 W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, ed. William O'Donnell and Douglas Archibald (New York: Scribner, 1999), 115.

25 Mattar, *Primitivism Science and the Irish Revival* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), 52–82.

26 T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *The Ghost World* (London: Ward and Downey, 1893). The footnote referencing Isabella Bird is on page166.

27 See, for example, John Kelly, ed., *The Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 1:29.

28 Frayne and Johnson note that the material comes originally from *Primitive Culture*: *UPii* 286 n.9.

29 Latour's words are used here, but they carry the influence of Descola and Viveiros de Castro ("Whose Cosmos," 461).

30 George W. Stocking Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 192. See also *PCi* 128.

31 Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited," 69.
32 Robert Kirk, *The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies: A Study in Folk-lore and Psychical Research*, ed. Lang (London: David Nutt, 1893), especially pp.xv–xvii. See also Lang, "Savage Spiritualism," *Longman's Magazine* xxiii (March 1894), 483, and *Modern Mythology* (London: Longmans, Green, 1897), 126, where he also invokes William James's evidence on mediumship.
33 See especially, "Swedenborg, Mediums and the Desolate Places," in *Later Essays*, ed. William O'Donnell (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 47–73.
34 For a useful account of this and other "apostasies" see Robert Ackermann, *J. G. Frazer: His Life and Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 151–3.
35 George Bornstein & Hugh Witemeyer, eds., *Letters to the New Island* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 97.
36 Yeats's enthusiastic American disciple W.Y. Evans-Wentz reconnected Yeats's nuanced, creative interpretation of fairy lore with the orthodoxies of comparative science in his study (dedicated to Yeats and AE) *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1911), in which he blankly stated that the Celtic "fairy-faith" was "a part of a world-wide animism."
37 *Collected Letters*, 1:145–46.
38 Lang, *Modern Mythology*, xii.
39 Martin Stringer is particularly interesting on this aspect of Tylor's work. See "Rethinking Animism," 548.
40 *Letters to the New Island*, 89.
41 Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight: Men and Women, Ghouls and Faeries* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893), 87.
42 Yeats, *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London: Dent, 1990), 72 (hereafter cited as *Poems*).
43 For the background to this pseudo-myth, see John V. Kelleher, "Yeats's Use of Irish Materials," in *Selected Writings of John V. Kelleher on Ireland and Irish America*, ed. Charles Fanning (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 2002), 27–32.
44 Chapters 3 & 4 of Lang's *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*.
45 Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 178 (hereafter cited as *EI*).
46 Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate," 14.
47 See Clodd, *Animism*, 36–37, for example.
48 Lang was, of course, also a poet, but it was his scholarly objection to the unscientific bases of popular Celticism that prompted this article. Lang, "The Celtic Renascence," *Blackwood's Magazine* 161 (February 1897), 181–89.
49 Augusta Gregory did most of the collecting. See Judith Hill, *Lady Gregory: An Irish Life* (Stroud: Sutton, 2005), 117.
50 Cited and glossed by Bird-David, "'Animism' Revisited," 68.
51 Morten Pedersen, "Totemism, Animism and North Asian Indigenous Ontologies," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (m.s.) 7, no. 3 (2001): 416.
52 Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "The Crystal Forest: Notes on the Ontology of Amazonian Spirits," *Inner Asia* 9, no. 2 (2007): 160.
53 Viveiros de Castro, "The Crystal Forest," 160.
54 Ingold, "Rethinking the Animate," 16.
55 I am glossing what Leighton, in *On Form*, says particularly about Yeats (167) with what she says generally about a legacy of ideas about form "as a shaping activity" (7).
56 Latour, "Perspectivism: 'Type' or 'bomb'?" *Anthropology Today* 25, no. 2 (2009): 2.
57 *Collected Letters*,1:303.
58 Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Wexford: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1942).

59 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (London & New York: Theosophical Publishing Co. and W. Q. Judge, 1889), 53.
60 Lang, *The Making of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1900), 168.
61 Ingold's response to Bird-David, *Current Anthropology* 40, no. 51 (1999): 82.

"Prestige of a Momentary Diamond": Economies of Distinction in Proust

Hannah Freed-Thall

In 1908, a diamond-fabrication scam captured the French popular imagination. The intrigue, sensationally recounted in all the newspapers, featured a con artist named Henri Lemoine who claimed to have invented a method of manufacturing diamonds.[1] Lemoine defrauded the De Beers diamond company out of nearly 1.6 million francs by performing a carefully choreographed trick: he invited company executives to observe as he made a show of cooking up diamonds in an electric furnace, in the nude, with the aid—unbeknownst to De Beers—of a false-bottomed crucible. The diamond company paid Lemoine to keep his "formula" secret (he was to stash it in an English bank), and invested in a diamond factory he pretended to build in the Pyrenees. The hoax only became public knowledge when De Beers grew suspicious and pressed charges for fraud, effectively calling Lemoine's bluff.[2] Throughout the highly publicized trial that ensued, Lemoine continued to play the part of the great inventor, insisting that he really could fabricate diamonds, and pleading for the opportunity to perform the experiment again.[3] For several weeks, a public debate raged over whether Lemoine was a clever impostor or a misunderstood inventor: "Un imposteur de génie ou un grand inventeur méconnu."[4] Despite Lemoine's unfaltering performance, his trial revealed that the diamonds he claimed to have created had jewelers' marks on them—proving they had been bought in Paris and originated in De Beers' own South African mines.[5] In other words, Lemoine had passed off "real" diamonds as fake ones: his genuine synthetic diamond turned out to be just a genuine diamond.

If people know about the Lemoine Affair today, it is largely thanks to Proust, who was so intrigued by what he termed "the prestige of a momentary diamond" that he made the affair the subject and guiding thread of a series of pastiches published in *Le Figaro* in February and March of 1908. In the year before he began drafting *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust composed accounts of Lemoine's hoax in the styles of Balzac, Flaubert, Sainte-Beuve, Michelet, Renan, Goncourt, and the literary critic Emile

New Literary History, 2012, 43: 159–178

Faguet. In March of 1909, after Lemoine had skipped bail and fled to Eastern Europe (he would be recaptured in April), Proust published a Lemoine Affair pastiche of the symbolist poet Henri de Régnier. In the summer of 1909, Proust planned to publish pastiches of Chateaubriand and Maeterlinck, as well as a second Sainte-Beuve, but he missed his deadline at the *Figaro*, so these did not appear in print at the time.[6]

While a wealth of recent criticism investigates convergences between high modernism and mass cultural forms, Proust's participation in public life and his fascination with the mundane details of modernist material culture remain largely unexplored in Proust scholarship.[7] Few critics have written about Proust's journalistic and pastiching activities; those who have tend to take the position that the practice of strategically counterfeiting the styles of celebrated authors enabled Proust to purge external influences and find his own voice.[8] I propose that we might, instead, view the Lemoine Affair pastiches as modernist experiments in the production of value—test cases exploring the phenomenology of "convulsive" and "unstable" preciosity (*CSB* 23). These ventriloquistic exercises highlight Proust's fascination with the volatility of value and with the peculiar status of the aesthetic object in modernity. Casting himself in the role of the performance artist alternately described in the papers as an "alchemist," an "illusionist," and an "ingenious swindler," Proust simultaneously flaunts and mocks his own cultivation of sophisticated discourses. As he delves into the shimmering substance of Lemoine's real/fake diamond, he plays on the conceptual kinship between precious stones and pure art, demonstrating high modernism's capacity to ironize and deconstruct its own claim to aesthetic autonomy.

These outrageous imitations also reveal a Proust whose habits of perception and of composition were conditioned by the spatial and temporal rhythms and textures of the daily newspaper. "Prestidigitator," journalist, stock-market speculator, and literary ventriloquist, the Proust of the Lemoine Affair pastiches is unabashedly connected to the worldly networks of his day. This essay approaches Proust's experiments with the production and circulation of aesthetic value and authorial distinction from two points of view. The first section investigates Proust's enthusiastic participation in the Lemoine Affair, and the second explores the importance of newspaper reading and writing to Proust's aesthetic imagination more broadly.

I. Synthetic Diamonds

Proust is famous for championing an economy of aesthetic redemption, which we might call, following Pierre Bourdieu, an ideology of charisma.[9] According to this logic, the most mundane objects conceal secret aesthetic riches that can be mined by those endowed with special powers of perception. The Proustian narrator calls this trick "translation," "deciphering," or "conversion," and suggests that by mastering the magic of "involuntary memory," one can conjure treasures out of the "waste product of experience." The true meaning of things lies hidden from most people, but the exceptional perceiver can learn to convert visible "hieroglyphics" into their "spiritual equivalent," distilling lasting subjective "truth" from mere materiality.[10]

Proustian involuntary memory is a trick that really pays off in the *Search*: the narrator manages to pull his entire childhood out of a cup of tea, the beach at Balbec out of a starched napkin, and the city of Venice out of a cobblestone. The Lemoine Affair pastiches also bundle together the mundane and the marvelous, but they reveal a Proust who is less interested in the redemptive or sublimatory power of art than in discredited performances of sophistication and spoiled economies of distinction. In his Lemoine Affair pastiches, Proust is enchanted not so much by alchemy and miraculous transformations, but by the failed bluff—the conjuring trick that falls flat, humiliating the credulous executive even more than the would-be magician. (Lemoine's main line of defense was that his procedure had to be authentic, because if it were a hoax, it would mean that the world's great diamond experts were idiots for having believed him.[11])

In 1919, when Proust had become famous, he published his Lemoine Affair pastiches as a volume. He contended at this time that the affair had been an insignificant subject chosen at random. The few critics who write about the pastiches have taken him at his word—the Lemoine Affair itself has attracted no critical attention. Perhaps this is because it is difficult to reconcile Proust's fascination with the hoax—which he spent months writing and rewriting from various points of view—with his reputation as the highest of high modernists. Indeed, while the *Search* has been mythologized as a paragon of cultural distinction—a "monumental expression" of "supersophistication," as Joseph Litvak wryly puts it—Proust is often imagined as a sickly esthete walled up in a cork-lined room.[12] This mythology is undercut by the image of Proust as an avid newspaper reader and writer, as a speculator, and a scandal- and gossip-monger who followed every detail of Lemoine's trial as it played

out in the paper—and then brought the affair back to the front page by publishing his own lovingly mocking accounts.

The term "pastiche" is often used to refer to the characteristic style (or stylelessness) of postmodernity. Fredric Jameson famously defined postmodern pastiche as "blank parody"—a depthless, ahistorical, random cannibalization of all the styles of the past.[13] Modernist pastiche, on the other hand, was a particular practice of writing, popular in France around the turn of the century, which required its practitioners to give themselves up to the rhythm and feel of another writer's voice.[14] Anticipating surrealist automatic writing, the belle époque fad for pastiche can also be tied to modernism's broader interest in travesty, masks, animal mimicry, and emotional contagion, from Gabriel Tarde's fin-de-siècle theory of imitation as the foundation of social cohesion, to Marcel Mauss's 1934 theory of "habitus" as "a prestigious imitation" whereby the individual "borrows" his corporeal dispositions.[15] Walter Benjamin, Roger Caillois, and Jacques Lacan were all taken by the notion that identity might be fundamentally imitative, based in a sort of mimetic compulsion to "become other."[16]

Pastiche was a widely practiced school exercise during the French Third Republic, and by the early twentieth century there was a market for pastiche compilations, like the multivolume series, *A la manière de . . .* , edited by Paul Reboux and Charles Müller and published in five installments between 1908 and 1950. Pastiche as practiced by Reboux and Müller is caricatural in tone: it mocks the very concept of stylistic novelty, and denigrates the authors it imitates.[17] But Proustian pastiche is not simply parodic—it is not just about surpassing more powerful authors, or becoming free from literary influence. Rather, Proustian pastiche is a rehearsal of tonal flexibility and plasticity, a practice of intimacy with a variety of styles and generic norms. Bourdieu has suggested that Proustian pastiche is not caricature or parody—it does not simply reproduce the most salient characteristics of a style. Rather, Proust's pastiches reproduce the *habitus* of other writers—Proust gets inside those writers' tastes, reproducing their dispositions, their habits of perception and interpretation, the quasi-corporeal rhythms they cultivate, their manner of orienting the reader through time and space.[18]

Proust embeds Lemoine's fantasmatic artificial diamond differently in each pastiche. Sandwiched amidst news of romantic deception, financial speculation, and international diplomatic intrigue, the affair is at first one more piece of gossip passed around in a Balzacian salon. The synthetic jewel then undergoes numerous transformations, appearing as the collective dream of a dusty courtroom crowd in a Flaubertian trial scene, as the perfect theatrical subject for Edmond de Goncourt, and even as

a glistening bit of snot hanging from Lemoine's collar in a pastiche of the symbolist poet Henri de Régnier: "One could make out just the one single succulent, quivering mass, transparent and hardening and in the ephemeral brilliance with which it decorated Lemoine's attire, it seemed to have fixed the prestige of a momentary diamond there, still hot, so to speak, from the oven from which it had emerged, and for which this unstable jelly, corrosive and alive as it was for one more instant, seemed at once, by its deceitful, fascinating beauty, to present both a mockery and a symbol."[19] In this deliciously revolting pastiche, the diamond is presented as a sign of distinction that "quivers" precariously on the border between the delectable and the disgusting. Pairing Régnier's rarefied syntax with the image of Lemoine's leaking body, Proust dares his reader to relish this conjunction of refinement and vulgarity.

Proust said that he composed his pastiches by setting an "internal metronome," and indeed, we can feel him practicing his act in these pieces.[20] He tests out the limits of different generic norms, alternating between fiction and criticism, presenting the affair as a vaudevillian tragedy that "abounds with improbabilities"—"fourmille d'invraisemblances"—but also as a historical topic that gives Michelet a headache.[21] The pastiches are joyfully anachronistic: representing his contemporary moment as a present bristling with temporal contradictions and overlaps, Proust revels in inserting Lemoine's fabricated diamond into incongruous epochs. In the most outrageously anachronistic of the pastiches, Proust imagines Ruskin traveling by airplane in order to look at Giotto's Lemoine Affair frescoes. Experimenting with narrative conventions, Proust repeatedly oversteps the border between diegetic and extradiegetic worlds: he blurs the line between the fictional and the real by introducing his own friends and acquaintances into established literary frames and by confounding novelistic and historical personnages.[22] In the Balzac pastiche, for example, Proust describes Lemoine as "one of those extraordinary men" who could either be celebrated, like Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great, or disgraced, like the fictional Balthazar Claës or Vautrin (*LA* 15, *CSB* 12). Proust also stretches the bounds of his reader's credulity by constructing pastiches that critique other pastiches. He plays on the fictionality of the entire exercise, for example, when he ventriloquizes Sainte-Beuve in order to critique his own invented Flaubert (Sainte-Beuve quibbles with Flaubert's lack of verisimilitude), and when he ventriloquizes the critic Emile Faguet in order to "cite" lines from a play of his own invention—a vaudevillean tragedy about Lemoine's hoax by the playwright Henri Bernstein. Proust even writes himself into the affair as a character: Goncourt happily receives the news of Lemoine's discovery along with news of Marcel Proust's suicide—he has allegedly

killed himself due to the devaluation of his stock portfolio. (Goncourt is disappointed to learn the next day that Lemoine is a con-artist and Proust is still alive.)

In a 1919 review of the pastiches (which Proust had collected and published as *Pastiches et mélanges*), Louis Aragon praises Proust's skill, but notes that "the game ran the risk of being vulgar" ("le jeu risquait d'être vulgaire"). He also admits that he doesn't really have the stomach for such a medley: "À vrai dire, mon estomac supporte mal les mélanges" (qtd. in *CSB* 693). Aragon is playing here on the etymology of "pastiche," which derives from the Italian "pasticcio," a pie made of various ingredients. Proust exploits this etymology as well, returning in several of the pastiches to the image of the diamond being cooked in the oven. His Renan dramatically exclaims, for example: "Rekindle tomorrow the furnace that has already gone out a thousand times whence the diamond might one day emerge!"[23] In the unpublished pastiche of Ruskin, the baked diamond as aesthetic object is replaced by a tuber: Giotto's painting technique is analogized as a procedure of drawing perspective lines on a potato fresh out of the oven (*CSB* 204). In the Régnier pastiche, as we have seen, the special diamond-cooking oven is actually Lemoine's nose. Anticipating the conjunction of high art and everyday culinary arts so central to his novel, Proust savors Lemoine's blatantly home-cooked "scientific" experiment. In response to the prosecutor's query as to why no one else had been able to manufacture diamonds using his method, Lemoine cheekily responded that perhaps they simply failed to cook their diamonds long enough: "La cuisson n'avait pas dû être suffisante."[24]

My wager is that Proust's Lemoine Affair pastiches reveal something crucial about the precarious distinction between art and the ordinary in modernity. The diamond, after all, suggests the fantasy of aesthetic autonomy. The ultimate luxury item, an object Adam Smith described as "the greatest of all superfluities,"[25] the diamond is a gleaming chunk of pure form. Its dazzle obscures its material origins, the labor that drew it from the earth, and the economic networks that maintain the illusion of its rarity.

The diamond has been described as a "super-commodity": a commodity without planned obsolescence.[26] The same might be said of the work of art in modernity. Bourdieu describes the work of art as a "fetish": an object that exists only by virtue of the collective belief—or rather, "collective misrecognition"—which acknowledges it as a work of art.[27] Metaphorizing the artist as an illusionist, Bourdieu notes that works of art exist as symbolic objects only if they are received by spectators capable of legitimating them as such. According to Mauss's 1903 analysis of the social basis of magic, the magician's "legitimate imposture" is dependent

on the "magic group."[28] Similarly, the production of the work of art as a "sacred and consecrated object" involves, as Bourdieu puts it, an "immense enterprise of *symbolic alchemy* involving the collaboration . . . of a whole set of agents engaged in the field of production."[29] Hence the avant-garde artist who offers up a "ready-made" object as his own original artwork is effectively testing the power of the spell.[30] When Lemoine tries to pass off De Beers's diamonds as his own creation (claiming "I recreate the diamond as nature makes it"), he presents himself as a sort of unwitting Duchamp: an artist investigating the limits of modernist magical thinking (in this case, the collective investment of belief enabling the gross overvaluation of certain shiny rocks). Just as Lemoine's hoax tested the elasticity of the system that produces and maintains faith in the diamond's uniqueness, Proust's pastiches are experiments in the production and circulation of aesthetic value. In his ventriloquist's act, Proust is not simply demystifying the authority of consecrated nineteenth-century authorial voices; he is simultaneously dismantling this edifice of prestige and luxuriating in it. In the Lemoine Affair pastiches, we see Proust practicing his tonal and generic flexibility as he investigates the mixture of incredulity and magical thinking that shores up the fantasy of aesthetic autonomy in modernity. As he tries out various points of view on Lemoine's manufactured diamond, Proust plays at the limit between enchantment and disenchantment, illusion and disillusion, knowledge and belief. This capacity to shuttle back and forth between a position of sociological demystification and an attitude of aesthetic captivation becomes one of the most striking features of *In Search of Lost Time*.[31]

A January 31, 1908, cartoon in *Le Figaro* (titled "Great Attraction") shows a wealthy couple luring a lady to their salon by boasting that their guest list includes a countess, an "unheard-of cinematographer," "two fakirs," and the "prestidigitator Lemoine." "We'll make money and diamonds!" the couple exclaims ("on fera du blé et des diamants!"). As a number of recent accounts have shown, belle époque illusionists ("prestidigitators") fostered in their audiences a state of "lucid self-delusion."[32] With his mixture of science, performance skills, and rhetorical dazzle, Lemoine played on the appeal of the modernist prestidigitator—an association Proust exploits when he has Goncourt describe Lemoine as an awkward conjurer, "a sort of Robert-Houdin with no hands" (*LA* 40, *CSB* 26). Just as trick cinema and magic-show audiences enjoyed cultivating a special mixture of credulous incredulity, the public both knew Lemoine was a fake, and took great pleasure in believing his act all the same. As a January 13, 1908 editorial in the socialist daily *L'Humanité* puts it (speaking of the diamond recipe that Lemoine had placed in a safe-deposit box in a London bank, in order to keep it safe from the

prying hands of De Beers executives): "We know perfectly well that the envelope deposited in a London Bank contains nothing, or that if it does contain a formula, it is worth nothing, we know this. . . and nonetheless we love to hear ourselves repeat that perhaps there could be something in it . . ." (original ellipses).[33] It was precisely the excitement of investing belief in an apparent fiction that made the Lemoine Affair so compelling.

The Lemoine Affair was an event that both demystified and remystified the diamond. First the diamond's uniqueness is threatened when it is imagined to be artificially reproducible. Later it turns out not to be reproducible—and De Beers stockholders everywhere breathe a sigh of relief.[34] Nonetheless, the diamond emerges from the Lemoine Affair looking like an unstable apparition: a fiction of investor confidence and controlled scarcity. Lemoine's trick of cooking up synthetic diamonds, after all, offered the paradoxical lure of a preciosity so easy to reproduce that it wouldn't be worth much at all.[35] Proust's pastiches experiment with the wavering prestige of Lemoine's "momentary" synthetic diamond, which appears in the pastiches as miraculous and abject, precious and banal.

Proust is famously interested in sublimatory economies that transform unremarkable everyday things into rare treasures. But he is also fascinated by objects that appear simultaneously invaluable and valueless—at once incomparable and perfectly forgettable. He is drawn, for example, to characters that seem to oscillate between the poles of originality and banality, appearing alternately singular and utterly typified. His novel simultaneously celebrates and denigrates Odette (a demi-mondaine with a Botticelli face); Rachel (an actress at once ordinary and invaluable—a "femme quelconque" who is also "une femme d'un grand prix"); Charlus (a prince so distinguished that he prefers to go by the lowly title of "baron"); and Albertine (an incomparably desirable lover who is also just an undistinguished-looking middle-class girl). In a draft of *The Fugitive*, the narrator describes a woman (Madame de Putbus's maid) whom he desperately desires but has never met. He imagines her as singularly ordinary: her smile expresses "the most common commonplaces of the most banal stupidity" (*ALR* 4:725). This paradox of superlative ordinariness, or of uniqueness indistinguishable from utter nonuniqueness, is also what attracts Proust to the fantasy of mass-produced diamonds.

Modernist writers love these strangely ordinary, overdetermined, yet unreadable signs. The momentary snot-diamond that Proust tenderly serves up in his pastiche of Régnier is something like Woolf's "solid object"—an inestimable "drop of solid matter" that washes up on shore, a mere "large irregular lump" that is "nothing but glass" but appears

nonetheless to be "almost a precious stone."[36] Similarly, Woolf's "mark on the wall" resembles a jewel lying about "at the roots of turnips," and sparks innumerable fantasies before it turns out to be a mere snail.[37] Proust's conjunction of the precious and the worthless is reminiscent, too, of James's "figure in the carpet," a hypermeaningful and yet meaningless metatextual index that vaguely signifies "something or other," and is metaphorized, variously, as a "little point," a "foot in a shoe," a "piece of cheese in a mouse-trap," a "little trick" an "exquisite scheme," a "silver lining," a "buried treasure," or simply "*that!*"[38]

In the pastiches and throughout *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust demonstrates that the signs of distinction are difficult to handle. Art is both enchanting and embarrassing in Proust. His characters frequently make fools of themselves when they try to derive cultural capital from performances of "disinterested" aesthetic pleasure. They froth at the mouth while waxing poetic about Chopin, make absurdly exaggerated claims to musical sensitivity, mispronounce names, knock objects off the table, lose track of time and hold up a fancy dinner party for forty-five minutes, and so on. This may be because they lack the training and rhetorical skills necessary to manipulate complex and shifting aesthetic discourses—like Lemoine, their bluff just isn't quite practiced enough. On the other hand, there is something inherently discomfiting about art in modernity. It's the ultimate luxury item, reflecting the good taste of the select few who know how to enjoy it, but it's also troublingly unremarkable—an object defined by its explicit lack of established criteria, set content, or precise purpose, and which is supposed to incite not intelligence or wittiness, but states of unthinkingness. This dazzling emptiness makes the artwork in modernity a perilous investment—like the diamond, circa 1908.

II. Reading the Newspaper in Proust

The Lemoine Affair pastiches present a case study in modernist value production. These pastiches also enable us to see Proust as a writer whose practices of composition and habits of perception and interpretation were bound up in the circuits and rhythms of early twentieth-century material culture—and especially, those of the daily newspaper. Indeed, as this section will demonstrate, the newspaper is crucial to *In Search of Lost Time*: it functions as both a miniature version of the novel and as an orienting device—a compass enabling characters to trace their position in the marketplace of social prestige.[39]

For Proust, the Lemoine Affair was entirely mediated by the newspaper: he followed the developments of the scandal in early 1908 as it played out in the pages of *Le Figaro*. The pastiches he then published in that paper are performances that not only riff on the styles of a particular set of authors, but also play on the articles that ran throughout the month of January. The *Figaro* articles about what it dramatically calls "L'Affaire des diamants" include a hodge podge of voices and opinions: the articles already read like a set of pastiches. They shift from one point of view to the next, quoting Lemoine's supporters and detractors at length, citing scientists, jewelers, lawyers, Lemoine's wife, amateur chemists, gem enthusiasts, and even letters that were sent to Lemoine in prison from enthusiastic fans hopeful that he might be willing to cook them up a diamond or two. Like Proust, the *Figaro* journalists are enchanted by the details of Lemoine's performance; they want to know everything about the mysterious "substance" he allegedly transformed into diamonds: "What did it look like, what was its size, what was its consistency? Was it hard or soft, powdery or sticky, amorphous or crystalline, heavy or light?"[40]

Roland Barthes has suggested that Proust only began serious work on his novel after his critical essay, *Against Sainte-Beuve*, was rejected by *Le Figaro* in 1909. This rejection, according to Barthes, was the force that propelled Proust out of journalistic, episodic writing and into an entirely different rhythm of prose—"une écriture longue."[41] It is tempting to think of Proust's monumental novel, launched in response to a journalistic failure, as the ultimate anti-newspaper. The newspaper, after all, deals in daily humdrum; it is composed of disconnected information bound together only by the idea of "today"—information rendered obsolete by the mere act of reading it. *In Search of Lost Time*, on the other hand, is famous for celebrating what Deleuze calls the "true signs" of art.[42] Proust's novel supposedly demonstrates the power of art to overcome the passing of time; it valorizes the cultivation of a perceptual disposition capable of transforming merely ephemeral apparitions into lasting aesthetic riches.

Yet Proust's novel valorizes not only redeemed time—the eternal, the monumental, Art with a capital A—but also the contingent and episodic, the forgettable and forgotten. The Proustian narrator describes the newspaper as precisely the medium in which these temporal modes overlap: as he puts it, the newspaper presents "the incalculable proportions of absence and presence of mind, of recollection and forgetfulness, of which the human mind is composed" (*ISLT* 2:68, *ALR* 1:478). Two opposing temporal orders exist within the newspaper, one privileging continuity, the other obsolescence: "In the same newspaper in which the moralist of the leader column says to us of an event, of a work of art, *a fortiori* of

a singer who has enjoyed her 'hour of fame': 'Who will remember this in ten years' time?', on page three, does not the report of the Académie des Inscriptions speak often of a fact in itself of smaller importance, of a poem of little merit, which dates from the epoch of the Pharoahs and is still known in its entirety?"[43] In the pages of the mass daily, the "philosophy of the serial novelist" ("philosophie du feuilletoniste") according to which "all is doomed to oblivion," is on equal footing with its opposite: "A contrary philosophy which would predict the conservation of all things" (*ISLT* 2:67, *ALR* 1:477).

One way to understand the distinction between high-culture and mass-culture literary production and consumption is in terms of two opposing temporal regimes. As Bourdieu points out, so-called "pure art" privileges production and slow time, while the literary industry privileges dissemination and temporal immediacy. The fantasy of pure art requires a delay in publishing success; the work must be imagined as a priceless "symbolic offering," a gift met with the most precious counter gift: name recognition.[44] Essential to this symbolic economy is the time lag between offering and counter offering. On the other hand, the literary and artistic industries privilege immediate and temporary success, measured by sales, and adjusted according to client demand. What I want to show here is that Proust does not simply dismiss the instantaneity of diffusion in favor of the longue durée—the "time regained"—of elite literary production: he explores the interstice between these two temporal economies, and is as intrigued by the possibility of an instantly disseminated "high" literature as he is by the possibility of a mass-produced precious gem.

In Search of Lost Time is a novel about someone who wants to write a novel, but it began as a newspaper article about someone who wants to write a newspaper article. In late 1908, when Proust began working on the project that would become his novel, he conceived of it as a newspaper piece. It would open with a man tossing and turning in bed, wondering what happened to the article he submitted so long ago; then in the morning, thrilled to find that his article has finally been published on the front page of the *Figaro*, he has a conversation with his mother about another newspaper article he plans to write.[45] This newspaper frame, I would argue, did not really drop out of Proust's *Search* but was absorbed into and scattered throughout the three-thousand-page novel.

Proust had a real penchant for the newspaper. Open the first volume of the *Search* and you get a sense of his affinity for the press right way, since this volume is dedicated to Gaston Calmette, editor in chief of *Le Figaro*. When you turn the page, however, you might be jarred by the apparent contrast between that publication-world dedication, and the

elaboration of the time-and space-expanding, metamorphic force of reading that famously opens the novel. In the celebrated first paragraph, the narrator's literary reflections take a "rather peculiar turn" when he falls asleep perusing an anonymous "volume" and imagines himself absorbed into the text he has been reading. The narrator/reader's personality and will are scattered as he *becomes* the heterogeneous subjects of his book:

> For a long time I would go to bed early. Sometimes, the candle barely out, my eyes closed so quickly that I did not have time to tell myself: 'I'm falling asleep.' And half an hour later the thought that it was time to look for sleep would awaken me; I would make as if to put away the book which I imagined was still in my hands, and to blow out the light; I had gone on thinking, while I was asleep, about what I had just been reading, but these thoughts had taken a rather peculiar turn; it seemed to me that I myself was the immediate subject of my book: a church, a quartet, the rivalry between François I and Charles V.[46]

Strangely enough, in drafts, this potent, liminal state of subjective dispersal is sparked not by a "volume," but by the newspaper that the narrator is reading: "~~I thought that I was still reading the newspaper and I told myself that~~ an hour had passed, and thus the thought that it was time to go to sleep woke me | I ~~I woke without realizing that I had just been asleep~~ + | wanted to toss away the newspaper that I thought I still held in my hands."[47] This newspaper is replaced by a book in the published version of the *Search*. Nonetheless, the newspaper, allied with threshold states of consciousness, and with the scattering and dispersal of attention, remains a phantom presence in the overture and throughout the novel.[48]

In Search of Lost Time is not only a celebration of the death-defying essence of art, but a semiotic laboratory that multiplies and accumulates interpretive and phenomenological possibilities. Early in the novel, Charles Swann advocates a reversal of the "essential" and the "insignificant," whereby newspapers would publish philosophy, and salon gossip would only appear in a gold-embossed volume published once a decade.[49] *In Search of Lost Time* celebrates precisely this marriage of the ordinary and the esteemed. This patchwork novel orients us toward numerous points of view and modalities of attention, oscillating between gossip and philosophy, melancholia and euphoria, sleepiness and wakefulness, solipsism and schizophrenic multivoicedness. From this point of view, the newspaper—and especially *Le Figaro*—is quite possibly the most significant and critically overlooked intertext in the novel. In its very first issue, published in 1826, *Le Figaro* calls itself a literary paper with a satirical bent, and declares that it will investigate "theater, criticism, science, art, customs, news, scandals, domestic economy, biography, bibliography, fashion, etc, etc." You couldn't ask for a more apt description

of the subject matter of Proust's novel.[50] Indeed, Proust's name became so associated with this publication that when André Gide apologized in a January 11, 1914, letter for having refused to publish *Swann's Way*, he explained that the mistake was due to his perception of Proust as "the one who writes in *Le Figaro*." Proust evidently did not mind the association; in 1918 he vied to become the literary critic for *Le Figaro*, but was passed over for the position.[51]

Everyone reads the newspaper in Proust—from aristocrats to cooks.[52] Newspapers circulate throughout the novel—marking parties, deaths, wars, theatrical performances, and art exhibitions, and even allowing the narrator to track his lover's movements without leaving his bed. *Le Figaro* is an important catalyst in the plot of Proust's novel: the narrator's initiation into the literary world is marked by the publication of his front-page *Figaro* article. He anxiously awaits this publication for hundreds of pages, and when it finally appears, it turns out to be a broken-off piece of the novel that we are reading—a prose poem that we witnessed the child narrator penning five volumes earlier.[53] The narrator suggests that seeing one's name printed in the newspaper is equivalent to seeing oneself in a mirror, and indeed, the newspaper does function as a mirror in Proust: or rather, it is both a miniature version of the novel and a supplement, filling in information to which the not-quite-omniscient first person narrator does not have access. Hence, in *Sodom and Gomorrah*, the narrator treats the newspaper as a narrative prosthesis, borrowing from the newspaper description of a party he has attended in order to add details missing from his own limited account (*ISLT* 4:75, *ALR* 3:46).

Walter Benjamin has suggested that the newspaper erodes the divide between readers and writers, making "public property" of literary competence.[54] Juxtaposing literary compositions and weather reports, jokes, advertisements, pastiches, musical scores, and obituaries, war news and society gossip, the newspaper's multidirectional reading pathways and incessantly renewed, incessantly annulled present orient us away from the dynamics of private temporal redemption for which Proust is so famous. In Proustian involuntary memory, the force of analogy conquers the passage of time, as lasting aesthetic profit is drawn from spent quotidian experience. Involuntary memory takes place on a vertical axis, and it permits the perceiving subject to cast away the outside world and retreat into the sphere of his imagination. The experience of newspaper reading, on the other hand, is heterogeneous, and involves perpetual reorientation in relation to the outside world and its various overlapping circuits. In *The Captive*, for example, the narrator becomes flustered while attempting to flirt with a stranger, and so he makes a show of reading *Le Figaro* in order to regain his composure. The newspaper gives him a

"countenance," he explains; it is not only an emblem of his ideal social self, but an extension of his body, a second skin. Both a shield and a conduit, the newspaper plugs its reader into multiple narrative trajectories and social worlds: even as the narrator pretends to skim the paper in order to cover his embarrassment, he cannot help but read it, and his attention is immediately oriented away from the flirtation at hand and toward an alternate intrigue (*ISLT* 5:184–85, *ALR* 3:650).

My objective in this essay has been to demonstrate that Proust is not exclusively interested in the cultivation of distinction and the monumentalizing power of art. Rather, he is attuned to the circuits of investment and exchange necessary to the production and maintenance of literary prestige and authority. His pastiches and his novel simultaneously mystify and demystify the time lags and practiced sleights of hand that subtend the cultural fantasy of aesthetic autonomy. In 1908, when he published his Lemoine Affair pastiches in *Le Figaro*, Proust was not exorcising influences—he was rehearsing the various styles and perceptual modes that he would activate throughout his novel. There was no end to this practice for Proust, and he never "outgrew" his love of gossip, scandal, newspapers, and ventriloquistic experimentation. The pastiches help us to recognize the affective, sensory, and epistemological heterogeneity of the *Search* itself, showing us just how elastic, expansive, and variegated Proust's fictional world can be.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

NOTES

1 Beginning on January 10, 1908, the scam was reported in newspapers ranging from the elite, literary *Le Figaro* and the serious, governmental mouthpiece *Le Temps* to the popular *Le Petit Parisien,* with sensationalizing titles like "The Diamond Affair," "The Alchemist's Diamonds," and "Lemoine's Secret." For a brief synopsis of the story as *Le Figaro* presented it, see Jean Milly, *Les pastiches de Proust* (Paris: Colin, 1970), 16–17. See also Georges Grison's summary: "L'Affaire Lemoine," *Le Figaro,* April 15, 1909. Stefan Kanfer also offers a dramatic retelling of Lemoine's exploits in *The Last Empire: De Beers, Diamonds, and the World* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1993), 161–65.

2 According to a January 26, 1909 article in *Le Figaro,* a De Beers executive, Sir Julius Wernher, paid 1,575,000 francs while another investor (a London-based diamond trader named Feldenheimer) was duped into investing 96,488 francs into Lemoine's invention. Wernher states in interviews published in *Le Gaulois* and *Le Figaro* that he went to court to stop Lemoine from publicizing his contract with De Beers; the inventor had begun flaunting the contract as a means of persuading others to invest. See L. de Vignogne, "Trente minutes en taxi-auto avec Sir Julius Wernher: L'affaire des diamants," *Le Gaulois,* January 12, 1908, and "Interview de M. Werhner [sic]," *Le Figaro,* June 19, 1908.

3 Lemoine's act was so convincing that the jewelers' syndicate soon came forward with a civil suit of its own, citing the damages the engineer's claims had done to the diamond business. On Jan. 13, 1908, *Le Figaro* cites Lemoine's request to replay the spectacle: "En

présence des experts, du juge, de toutes les personnes qu'on voudra, je ferai l'expérience définitive." Finally, the judge, Le Poittevin, granted Lemoine's request to be released on bail for two months; the condition was that Lemoine would make a massive synthetic diamond—larger than any on the market—and present it to the court. Lemoine took the opportunity to flee instead. Under the pseudonym Hans Leitner, Lemoine took a long jaunt through Eastern Europe and London before settling into a Paris hotel, where he was apprehended by the police in April of 1909, and eventually sentenced to six years in prison. See Louis Latzarus, "Lemoine à Paris: il est arrêté," *Le Figaro*, April 15, 1909.

4 Georges Grison, "L'Affaire des diamants: Au Parquet," *Le Figaro*, January 15, 1908.

5 "Un détail bien curieux, c'est qu'il paraît que les diamants . . . provenaient des mines de Jagersfontein (Etat d'Orange) et avaient été achetés par M. De Haan à la Société De Beers, dont M. Julius Wernher est, on le sait, le gouverneur. De sorte que Lemoine apportait à M. Wernher, comme le produit de sa fabrication, des diamants achetés chez M. Wernher avec le propre argent de celui-ci." ("A very curious detail is that it seems the diamonds . . . came from the Jagersfontein mines (State of Orange), and had been bought by M. Haan [a Parisian lapidary testifying against Lemoine] from the De Beers Company, which M. Wernher heads, as we know. This means that Lemoine presented to Wernher, as the product of his own workmanship, diamonds bought from Wernher's company with Wernher's own money.") Georges Grison, "La Réponse de Lemoine," *Le Figaro*, February 26, 1908. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

6 Proust continued to write Lemoine Affair pastiches through the summer of 1908: Jean Milly notes that he promised (but never delivered) a Nietzsche pastiche to *Le Figaro* in April, 1909. See *Les pastiches de Proust*, 19–20. Proust republished his *Figaro* pastiches in *Pastiches et mélanges* in 1919, adding a Saint-Simon imitation to those he had previously completed; these, as well as drafted pastiches of Ruskin, Maurice Maeterlinck, and Sainte-Beuve, are now collected in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), 7–59, 195–205 (hereafter cited as *CSB*).

7 A notable exception to this rule is Sara Danius's study of Proust's attraction to modernist technologies of velocity. See her "Aesthetics of the Windshield," in *The Senses of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2002), 91–146. Others have examined the importance of photographic rhetoric in Proust. See, for example, Mieke Bal, *The Mottled Screen: Reading Proust Visually* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1997); Kaja Silverman, "Je Vous," *Art History* 30, no. 3 (2007): 451–67; Rebecca Comay, "Impressions: Proust, Photography, Trauma," *Discourse* 31, nos. 1 & 2 (2009): 86–105; Suzanne Guerlac, "Visual Dust: On Time, Memory, and Photography in Proust," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 13, no. 4 (2009): 397–404; and Dora Zhang, "A Lens for an Eye: Proust and Photography," forthcoming in *Representations* 118 (Spring 2012). For an overview of scholarship on mass media rhetorics within the "new modernist studies," see Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The New Modernist Studies," *PMLA* 123, no. 3 (2008): 742–45.

8 See, for example, Annick Bouillaguet, *Proust lecteur de Balzac et Flaubert: l'imitation cryptée* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000); Michael Finn, *Proust, the Body, and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), chap. 3; Jean Milly, *Les pastiches de Proust*; and the notes to the *Pléiade* edition of the pastiches in *CSB*, 690. (The Pléiade editors make the dismally homophobic suggestion that Proust's homosexuality and his inclination toward pastiche are "concordant symptoms of a state of psychosomatic disequilibrium.") In contrast, Gérard Genette suggests that pastiche for Proust is not "an incidental practice, a purely stylistic catharsis, or a simple prenovelistic exercise. It is, along with reminiscence and metaphor, one of the privileged—and in truth, necessary—modes of his relationship to the world and to art." *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997), 120. Jean–Yves Tadié

briefly addresses the centrality of pastiche to Proust's novelistic imagination in *Marcel Proust* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999), 605.

9 As Bourdieu puts it, charismatic ideology legitimizes social privilege by pretending that it is a gift of nature. It "concedes to the work of art a magical power of conversion capable of awakening the potentialities latent in a few of the elect." See "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," in *The Sociology of Art: A Reader*, ed. Jeremy Tanner (London: Routledge, 2003), 164–77, 174.

10 Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, trans. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D. J. Enright (New York: Random House, 1992), 7:290 (hereafter cited as *ISLT*). *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954–1989), 4:457 (hereafter cited as *ALR*).

11 It is "materially impossible to believe," Lemoine declared in a January 31 statement (printed in *Le Figaro*), that "the greatest experts in the world" could have overlooked the jewelers' marks on the diamonds that De Beers was now claiming the engineer had tried to pass off as his own. No one could possibly swallow De Beers's story ("personne ne voudra avaler pareille couleuvre").

12 See Litvak's "Taste, Waste, Proust" for a refreshingly irreverent take on Proust's insatiable taste for "bad objects." *Strange Gourmets: Sophistication, Theory, and the Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1997), 77–111.

13 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1991), 17–18.

14 Paul Aron discusses this trend in *Histoire du pastiche: le pastiche littéraire français, de la Renaissance à nos jours* (Paris: PUF, 2008).

15 Marcel Mauss, "The Notion of Bodily Techniques," *Sociology and Psychology: Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Routledge, 1979), 97–105, 101–102.

16 Taussig notes that for these thinkers, "the wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power." *Mimesis and Alterity: A Paricular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xii. On the importance of trance, possession, and passivity in the French avant-garde, see Joyce Cheng's "Mask, Mimicry, Metamorphosis: Roger Caillois, Walter Benjamin and Surrealism in the 1930s," *Modernism/Modernity* 16, no. 1 (2009): 61–86.

17 For example, in the 1910 edition of Müller and Reboux's compilation, the pastiche of Tolstoy is full of comically unpronounceable names ("Ivan Labibine Ossouzoff, du Gouvernement de Kartimskrasolvitchegosk, district de Vokovosnesensk-Anskrevsantchoursk," etc.). *A La Manière De. . . ,* ed. Charles Müller and Paul Reboux (Paris: Grasset, 1910), 33–43.

18 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 173.

19 "On ne distinguait plus qu'une seule masse juteuse, convulsive, transparente et durcie; et dans l'éphémère éclat dont elle décorait l'habit de Lemoine, elle semblait y avoir immobilisé le prestige d'un diamant momentané, encore chaud, si l'on peut dire, du four dont il était sorti, et dont cette gelée instable, corrosive et vivante qu'elle était pour un instant encore, semblait à la fois, par sa beauté menteuse et fascinatrice, présenter la moquerie et l'emblème." Proust, *The Lemoine Affair*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2008), 35 (hereafter cited as *LA*); *CSB*, 23.

20 In a March, 21, 1908 letter to Robert Dreyfus, Proust writes (in reference to his pastiche of Renan): "J'avais réglé mon métronome intérieur à son rythme et j'aurais [pu] écrire dix volumes comme cela."

21 Proust's Michelet declares that contemplating the affair disturbed his mind, making him feel as unwell as he had felt while researching the absolutist reign of Henri XIV: "[P]eculiar headaches every day made me think that I was going to be forced to abandon my

history. I didn't really recover my strength until the Tennis Court Oath (20 June 1789). I felt similarly disturbed before this strange realm of crystallization that is the world of the stone." ("[D]'étranges maux de tête me faisaient croire chaque jour que j'allais être obligé d'interrompre mon histoire. Je ne retrouvai vraiment mes forces qu'au serment du Jeu de Paume (20 juin 1789). Pareillement me sentais-je troublé devant cet étrange règne de la cristallisation qu'est le monde de la pierre.") Proust, *LA*, 45; *CSB*, 28.

22 For an interesting analysis of the queer dynamics of this mode of transgression—what Gérard Genette terms "narrative metalepsis"—see Michael Lucey, *Never Say I: Sexuality and the First Person in Colette, Gide, and Proust* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2006), 193–214.

23 "Rallume encore demain le four éteint mille fois déjà d'où sortira peut-être un jour le diamant!" Proust, *LA*, 59; *CSB*, 36.

24 *Le Figaro*, January 25, 1908.

25 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations: Books 1–3*, ed. Andrew S. Skinner (London: Penguin, 1999), 311.

26 Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy, "Selling Jewels: Modernist Commodification and Disappearance as Style," *Modernism/modernity* 14, no. 2 (2007): 189–207, 191.

27 Bourdieu, *Rules of Art,* 169; *Les règles de l'art,* 240.

28 Bourdieu, *Rules of Art,* 169.

29 Bourdieu, *Rules of Art*, 170; *Les règles de l'art*, 241.

30 Thierry De Duve suggests that Duchamp's urinal (or "fountain") "manifests the magic power of the word 'art.'" Duchamp is therefore playing a game with the notion of aesthetic autonomy: perceiving the urinal as an autonomous artwork requires "an act of faith." *Kant after Duchamp* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 13–14.

31 For a different perspective on the imbrication of enchantment and demystification in Proust, see Eve Sedgwick's compelling essay, "The Weather in Proust," in *The Weather in Proust,* ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2011), 1–41.

32 Joshua Landy notes that the famous nineteenth-century "prestidigitateur," Robert-Houdin, acted the role of professor, presenting his own tricks as experiments or miracles of science, and unmasking the tricks of others in volumes such as *Les Tricheries des Grecs dévoilées* (1861) and *Les Secrets de la prestidigitation et de la magie* (1868). As Landy puts it, "Mid-century prestidigitation was a legerdemain in which what was taken away with one hand was, simultaneously, restored with the other." Robert-Houdin's show called for new kind of spectatorship: someone with "mental dexterity equal to his manual dexterity." Robert-Houdin's performances required the spectator's simultaneous convinction and distrust, his or her "aptitude for detached credulity." Hence the ideal spectators would be "ready to don and doff their lucidity repeatedly throughout the show." In this sense, Robert-Houdin provided his audiences with "a model for the construction of a belief system that recognizes itself as illusory." "Modern Magic: Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin and Stéphane Mallarmé," in *The Re-Enchantment of the World: Secular Magic in a Rational Age*, ed. Joshua Landy and Michael Saler (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009), 125, 108, 110. For a broader history of secular magic, see Simon During, *Modern Enchantments: The Cultural Power of Secular Magic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002) and James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing With Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001). Cook notes that in the nineteenth century, magicians began using exposés and how-to manuals as a promotional tool. "For the first time, explaining the behind-the-scenes workings of one's magical performance was becoming almost as important and as central to the professional magician's craft as the more conventional work of designing and performing tricks" (178). For a discussion of the relation between the fad for theatrical conjuring and the flourishing of trick cinema in the early twentieth century, see Matthew Solomon, "Up-to-Date Magic: Theatrical Conjuring and the Trick Film," *Theatre Journal* 58, no. 4 (2006): 595–615.

33 "[O]n sait parfaitement que dans le 'pli' déposé dans une banque de Londres il n'y a rien, ou que, s'il y a une formule, elle est sans valeur, on le sait . . . et cependant on aime à s'entendre redire que peut-être il se pourrait qu'il y eût quelque chose . . ." *L'Humanité*, January 13, 1908.

34 Proust was one of the relieved shareholders. In a March 26, 1908 letter to Louis d'Albufera, he references the Goncourt pastiche in which his imagined financial ruin provokes his fictional suicide: "Did you see that in my *Figaro* pastiches I spoke of my failure with De Beers?" ("As-tu vu que, dans mes pastiches du *Figaro*, j'ai parlé de ma déconfiture avec la De Beers?") The journalist Georges Grison notes that Lemoine's "fantastic discovery" was expected to make diamond prices fall by 80%. "L'Affaire Lemoine," *Le Figaro*, April 15, 1909.

35 According to the *Figaro*, many people wrote to Lemoine in prison, begging him to send them a few diamonds (since making them was so easy for him, or so they imagined): "Détail amusant: Lemoine reçoit à la prison de la Santé des masses de lettres. Beaucoup sont des demandes d'argent, de gens le suppliant de leur venir en aide. Il y a des commerçant menaçés de la faillite, des jeunes filles qui ont besoin d'une petite dot pour se marier. . . . 'Il vous serait si facile de faire cinq ou six pauvres diamants dont le prix nous tirerait de peine,' disent-ils." Georges Grison, "L'Affaire des diamants," January 27, 2008.

36 Virginia Woolf, "Solid Objects," *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (London: Harcourt, 1972), 79–86, 80.

37 Woolf, "The Mark on the Wall," *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (London: Harcourt, 1972), 37–46, 38.

38 Henry James, "The Figure in the Carpet," *Major Stories and Essays* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 276–312, 282–85.

39 While Proust's love of the newspaper has largely fallen beneath the critical radar, several interesting recent studies explore the phenomenology of newpaper reading. Sara Danius discusses the relation between the "fait divers" (random news story) and the modernist novel in "Joyce's Scissors: Modernism and the Dissolution of the Event," *New Literary History* 39, no. 4 (2008): 989–1016. Philip Fisher describes the newspaper in modernism as a text that prompts readers to "look around," rather than looking directly at objects in "Torn Space: James Joyce's *Ulysses*," in *The Novel*, vol. 2, *Forms and Themes*, ed. Franco Moretti (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), 667–86. In a wide-ranging and fascinating study, Kevis Goodman suggests that the rise of "the news" in the eighteenth century ushers in a historically new structure of feeling which precedes and lays the groundwork for Romantic (Kantian) aesthetic "free play." See her *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004). For a useful discussion of shifts in the visual mapping of newspapers in the U.S. context, see Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone, *The Form of News: A History* (New York: Guilford, 2002) and Elisa Tamarkin, "Losing Perspective in the Age of News," *PMLA* 125, no. 1 (2010): 192–200.

40 "Quel était son aspect, quelle était sa grosseur, quelle était sa consistance? Etait-elle dure ou molle, pulvérulente ou cohésive, amorphe ou cristalline, dense ou légère?" Emile Gautier, "L'Affaire du diamant: une hypothèse," *Le Figaro*, January 15, 1908.

41 Roland Barthes, *La Préparation du roman: notes de cours et de seminaires au Collège de France, 1978–79, 1979–1980* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 154.

42 *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003), 13.

43 "Dans le même journal où le moraliste du 'premier Paris' nous dit d'un événement, d'un chef-d'oeuvre, à plus forte raison d'une chanteuse qui eut son heure de Célébrité: 'qui se souviendra de tout cela dans dix ans?,' à la troisième page, le compte rendu de l'académie des inscriptions ne parle-t-il pas souvent d'un fait par lui-même moins impor-

tant, d'un poème de peu de valeur, qui date de l'époque des Pharaons et qu'on connaît encore intégralement?" Proust, *ISLT*, 2:67 (translation modified); *ALR*, 1:477–78.

44 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 148; *Les Règles de l'art*, 211.

45 In a December 1908 letter to Georges de Lauris, Proust writes that he is planning a review article about Sainte-Beuve, which will be framed by a fictional bedside conversation with his mother: "[Il] débuterait par le récit d'une matinée: maman viendrait près de mon lit, et je lui raconterais l'article que je veux faire sur Sainte-Beuve, et je le lui développerais." In an early draft of his novel, Proust similarly embeds his narrator's literary ambitions in a newspaper context. The editors of the Pléiade edition paraphrase the passage as follows: "il décrit l'émotion que lui a causée la publication d'un article de lui dans *Le Figaro*; après quoi il s'abandonne à des rêves de voyage; enfin, au cours d'une conversation avec sa mère, il lui annonce son intention d'écrire 'un article' contre la méthode de Sainte-Beuve." Proust, *CSB*, 822–23, 830–831, n217.

46 "Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure. Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire: 'Je m'endors.' Et, une demi-heure après, la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait; je voulais poser le volume que je croyais avoir encore dans les mains et souffler ma lumière; je n'avais pas cessé en dormant de faire des réflexions sur ce que je venais de lire, mais ces réflexions avaient pris un tour un peu particulier; il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce dont parlait l'ouvrage: une église, un quatuor, la rivalité de François I^{er} et de Charles-Quint." Proust, *ISLT*, 1:1; *ALR*, 1:3.

47 "~~je me croyais encore en train de lire le journal et je me disais qu'il était~~ une heure après, et donc la pensée qu'il était temps de m'endormir m'éveillait Je ~~je m'éveillais sans me rendre compte que je venais de dormir~~ + voulais jeter le journal que je croyais avoir encore en mains." N.a.Fr. 16641, f. 71 v-f 65, quoted in Mireille Naturel, "Le fabuleux destin de l'article dans *Le Figaro*," *Marcel Proust 4: Proust au tournant des siècles*, ed. Bernard Brun and Juliette Hassine (Paris: Minard, 2004), 23–39, 30.

48 Mireille Naturel suggests that in the earliest drafts of the overture of Proust's novel, publication appears as the narrative's central concern: in this first version of the novel, "lost time" is in fact time lost while waiting for publication. Naturel, "Le fabuleux destin," 24. Jean-Yves Tadié notes that Proust attached great importance to the equilibrium and "dosage" of his own newspaper publications, spreading out articles over several weeks. *Marcel Proust*, 603.

49 "'Suppose that, every morning, when we tore the wrapper off our paper with fevered hands, a transmutation were to take place, and we were to find inside it—oh! I don't know; shall we say Pascal's *Pensées*? He articulated the title with an ironic emphasis so as not to appear pedantic. 'And then, in the gilt and tooled volumes which we open once in ten years,' he went on . . . 'we should read that the Queen of the Hellenes had arrived at Cannes, or that the Princesse de Léon had given a fancy dress ball.'" ("'Du moment que nous déchirons fiévreusement chaque matin la bande du journal, alors on devrait changer les choses et mettre dans le journal, moi je ne sais pas, les. . . . Pensées de Pascal ! (Il détacha ce mot d'un ton d'emphase ironique pour ne pas avoir l'air pédant.) Et c'est dans le volume doré sur tranches que nous n'ouvrons qu'une fois tous les dix ans, ajouta-t-il . . . que nous lirions que la reine de Grèce est allée à Cannes ou que la princesse de Léon a donné un bal costumé.'") Proust, *ISLT*, 1:33–34; *ALR*, 1:26.

50 With a largely upper-class readership, *Le Figaro* was known for its society news, literary columns, and theater reviews. But it was also a space for avant-garde manifestos: *Le Figaro* published Baudelaire's "Painter of Modern Life" in 1863, Jean Moréas's symbolist manifesto in 1886, and Marinetti's futurist manifesto in 1909. Elite and conservative, *Le Figaro* was nonetheless pro-Dreyfus early in the Dreyfus affair, a position for which it lost some of its readership. Its price was three times that of the more popular mass dailies.

On the history of this newspaper, see Claire Blandin, *Le Figaro: deux siècles d'histoire* (Paris: Colin, 2007).

51 Tadié, *Marcel Proust*, 793.

52 The Baron de Charlus claims to read newspapers habitually and without the slightest care: "I pay no attention to the newspapers; I read them as I wash my hands, without considering it worth my while to take an interest in what I am doing." ("[J]e ne fais aucune attention aux journaux; je les lis comme je me lave les mains, sans trouver que cela vaille la peine de m'intéresser.") Swann, however, is not only a newspaper enthusiast but a gifted and attentive reader of the newspaper, such that "if he read in a newspaper the names of the people who had been at a dinner-party, could tell at once its exact degree of smartness, just as a man of letters, simply by reading a sentence, can estimate exactly the literary merit of its author." ("[S]'il lisait dans un journal les noms des personnes qui se trouvaient à un dîner pouvait dire immédiatement la nuance du chic de ce dîner, comme un lettré, à la simple lecture d'une phrase, apprécie exactement la qualité littéraire de son auteur.") The cook, Françoise, on the other hand, weeps "torrents" of tears over newspaper calamities that would leave her unmoved if they happened to the people she knew in her everyday life. Proust, *ISLT*, 3:390, 1:344, 1: 171; *ALR*, 2:584, 1:242; 1:122.

53 I discuss the conjunction of banality and wonderment marking the scene in which the narrator's article is published in "Zut, zut, zut, zut: Aesthetic Disorientation in Proust," *MLN* 124, no. 4 (2009): 868–900.

54 According to Benjamin, the newspaper-reader is "at all times ready to become a writer." "The Newspaper," *Selected Writings: Volume 2, 1927 – 1934*, ed. Marcus Paul Bullock, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005), 740–41.

CONTRIBUTORS

Charles Altieri teaches in the English Department at University of California–Berkeley. His most recent books are *The Particulars of Rapture: An Aesthetics of the Affects* (2003) and *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After* (2006). His *Wallace Stevens and the Phenomenology of Value* is forthcoming.

Shoshana Benjamin recently retired from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev where she taught English as a foreign language. Her literary interests center on cryptic literature and its interpretation. Her latest paper is "Puzzling Narratives: Detective Fiction, Cryptic Texts, and the Difference between Them," written for the 2012 conference of the International Society for the Study of Narrative.

Rachel Sagner Buurma is Assistant Professor of English literature at Swarthmore College, where she teaches Victorian literature. She is finishing a book project titled *A Material History of Omniscience: How Criticism Made the Novel Literary.*

Dipesh Chakrabarty is the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History and South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. From July 2013, he will be the Harold F. Linder Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. His books include *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000).

Hannah Freed-Thall is a Perkins-Cotsen Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Princeton University. She is currently completing a manuscript on taste and disgust in French modernism.

Laura Heffernan is Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Florida, where she teaches modernist literature and is completing a book project about modernist critics and their unremarkable objects of study. She and Buurma recently received an ACLS Collaborative Research Fellowship to complete their book *The Historicist Classroom.*

Sinéad Garrigan Mattar is a fellow of Girton College, University of Cambridge, where she teaches English literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her first book, *Primitivism, Science, and the Irish Revival*, was published in 2004.

Henry Staten is Lockwood Professor in the Humanities and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington. His *Wittgenstein and Derrida* (1984) was the first book-length study of deconstruction as philosophy; he is also the author of *Nietzsche's Voice* (1990) and *Eros in Mourning: Homer to Lacan* (1995). The essay in this volume is from a book in progress.

ROBERT JC YOUNG is Julius Silver Professor of English and Comparative Literature at New York University. His books include *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (1990); *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Culture, Theory and Race* (1995); *Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory* (1996); *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (2001); *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (2003); and *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (2008). He is also editor of *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies.*

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Phantom of Chance: *From Fortune to Randomness in Seventeenth-Century French Literature*. By John D. Lyons. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2012. 211 pp. $105 (cloth).

Modes of Authorship in the Middle Ages. Edited by Slavica Ranković. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012. $90 (cloth).

Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies. Edited by Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe. Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2012. 460 pp. $85 (cloth); $35 (paper); $29.99 (ebook).

A Historical Guide to Henry James. Edited by John Carlos Rowe and Eric Haralson. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012. 271 pp. $27.95 (paper).

Julian Bell: *From Bloomsbury to the Spanish Civil War*. By Peter Stansky and William Abrahams. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2012. 314 pp. No price given. (cloth)

America's Corporate Art: *The Studio Authorship of Hollywood Motion Pictures*. By Jerome Christenson. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2012. 388 pp. No price given. (paper)

Secularism in Antebellum America. By John Lardas Modern. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011. 313 pp. No price given. (cloth)

A History of American Literature, 2nd ed. Edited by Richard Gray. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 913 pp. $49.95 (paper).

William Faulkner: *Seeing Through the South*. By John T. Matthews. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. 309 pp. $29.95 (paper).

Hemingway, Race, and Art: *Bloodlines and the Color Line*. By Marc Kevin Dudley. Kent: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2012. 208 pp. $45 (cloth).

Race, Ethnicity, and Nuclear War: *Representations of Nuclear Weapons and Post-Apocalyptic Worlds*. By Paul Williams. Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2012. 278 pp. $95 (cloth).

Postcolonial Poetics: *Genre and Form*. Edited by Patrick Crowley and Jane Hiddleston. Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 2012. 279 pp. $95 (cloth).

THE QUESTION OF GENDER: *Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism*. Edited by Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2011. 366 pp. $80 (cloth); $27.95 (paper); $22.95 (ebook).

LITERARY PARTNERSHIPS AND THE MARKETPLACE: *Writers and Mentors in Nineteenth-Century America*. By David Dowling. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2012. 240 pp. (paper). $39.95 (cloth).

THE IMPLIED SPIDER: *Politics and Theology in Myth*. By Wendy Doniger. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2011. 232 pp. $27.50 (paper).

THE MATERIAL FAMILY. By Julie P. Torrant. Boston: Sense Publishers, 2011. 228 pp. No price given. (paper)

HART CRANE'S POETRY: "*Appollinaire lived in Paris, I live in Cleveland, Ohio.*" By John T. Irwin. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2011. 440 pp. $65 (cloth).

RECONSTRUCTING THE NATIVE SOUTH: *American Indian Literature and the Lost Cause*. By Melanie Benson Taylor. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 2012. 248 pp. $24.95 (paper); $59.95 (cloth).

"STRANDENTWINING CABLE": *Joyce, Flaubert, and Intertextuality*. By Scarlett Baron. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011. 311 pp. $110 (cloth).

RADIO: *Essays in Bad Reception*. By John Mowitt. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2011. No price given. (paper)

UNSEASONABLE YOUTH: *Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development*. By Jed Esty. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012. 282 pp. $49.95 (cloth).

THE MOTHER IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION: *Psychoanalysis, Photography, Deconstruction*. By Elissa Marder. Bronx, NY: Fordham Univ. Press, 2012. 306 pp. $80 (cloth); $27 (paper).

SPECTACLE AND TOPOPHILIA: *Reading Early Modern and Postmodern Hispanic Cultures*. Edited by David R. Castillo and Bradley J. Nelson. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 2012. 273 pp. $79.95 (cloth); $34.95 (paper).

NARRATIVE MIDDLES: *Navigating the Nineteenth-Century British Novel*. Edited by Caroline Levine and Mario Ortiz-Robles. Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 2011. 296 pp. $54.95 (cloth); $9.95 (CD).

QUEEQUEG'S COFFIN: *Indigenous Literacies and Early American Literature*. By Birgit Brander Rasmussen. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2012. 207 pp. $84.95 (cloth); $23.95 (paper).