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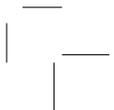
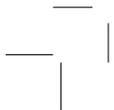
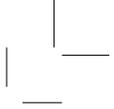
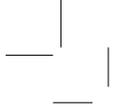
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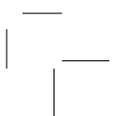
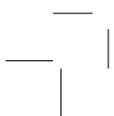
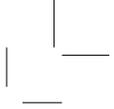
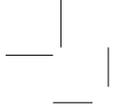
COLUMBIA JOURNAL OF LITERARY CRITICISM

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AN INHERITANCE
WHEN THE PHILOSOPHER WRITES
AMPARO DÁVILA
AND THE HORROR OF DOMESTICITY
BORGES AND I
JOYCE SAINT JAMES
'MEDIEVALITY' IN THE JAPANESE WARRIOR TALE





REVISION

For this issue, we invited authors to consider the theme of revision. We invited them to think of revision as both a concept and a practice with stakes, possibilities and limitations.

As undergraduate student editors, our own thinking about revision began with reflecting upon our university, a university which has increasingly begun to brand itself as “global.” Within the past twenty years Columbia has opened Global Centers in nine different countries. Within the past two, Columbia claimed the right of eminent domain to displace 5,000 West Harlem residents through a 6.3 billion dollar expansion plan. As students within this University, we are deeply concerned by this project of violent and imperial expansion under the false pretense of expanding academic inquiry, whether it occurs within the United States or outside its borders. We realize also that, as students of Columbia, we too are implicated in these expansions. One question we returned to was: how might students today work to dismantle and revise the university? Is such a revision possible?

Yet the theme of revision also drew us to other, broader questions beyond the scope of the university. Recent scholarship has put the concept of revision to work as a means of revisiting canonicity, problematizing literary inheritance and its imagined genealogies, and engaging with the archives of Atlantic slavery and the records of colonialisms — past and present — of which they constitute a part. We asked authors to consider how and where revision has been practiced in the past and present, and to what ends. What is left out or added in the process? What is gained or lost? Whose interests does revision serve? What brings about the conditions that make revision necessary? How have authors revised their work and what is the significance of authorial and/or editorial revisions? What is an individual author’s relationship to their past?

ION

This issue of CJLC attempts an exploration of revision and the practices of thinking and reading revision might engender. In “Borges and I: Comparing English Translations of “Borges y yo,” Martina de Robertis takes issue with previous English translations of Borges’ prose poem. Re-thinking the voice of the original, she provides her own translation in response. Andrew Haas in “Joyce Saint James: Perpetual Pilgrimage in *Ulysses*” discusses James Joyce’s revision of the “arcane ideal of perpetual pilgrimage for the new context of colonized Dublin in relation to the metropolises of twentieth-century Europe.” Diana Shi, a student of Japanese literature, takes up the question of genre in the medieval Japanese warrior tale, while Angelo Hernandez-Sias discusses the feminine revision at work in Amparo Dávila’s *The Houseguest*. Gabriella Etoniru explores the generative possibilities and failures of revision as a practice of healing, tracing the medical industrial complex’s ties to intergenerational and racial trauma. Abraham Lyon interviews Darien Pollock, founder of the Street Philosophy Institute, about the metaphysics of race and the pitfalls of positivism.

There are many people without whose support this journal would not be possible. We would like to thank Nicholas Dames, our faculty advisor in the English department. We would also like to thank our financial advisor and activities board representative, Philip Masciantonio. Most of all, however, we would like to thank the editorial staff of the journal for all their work and dedication throughout the process of putting together this issue. It is with much gratitude that we pass the care of this journal on to next year’s Editor-in-Chief, Efe Alonge, and managing editors Jessica Xu and Abraham Lyon.

Claire Zuo, Safwan Khatib, and Ben Bieser
Editors-in-Chief
2019

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**‘MEDIEVALITY’ IN THE
JAPANESE WARRIOR TALE**

Between Literacy, Oral Performance, and Visual Art

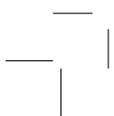
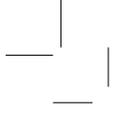
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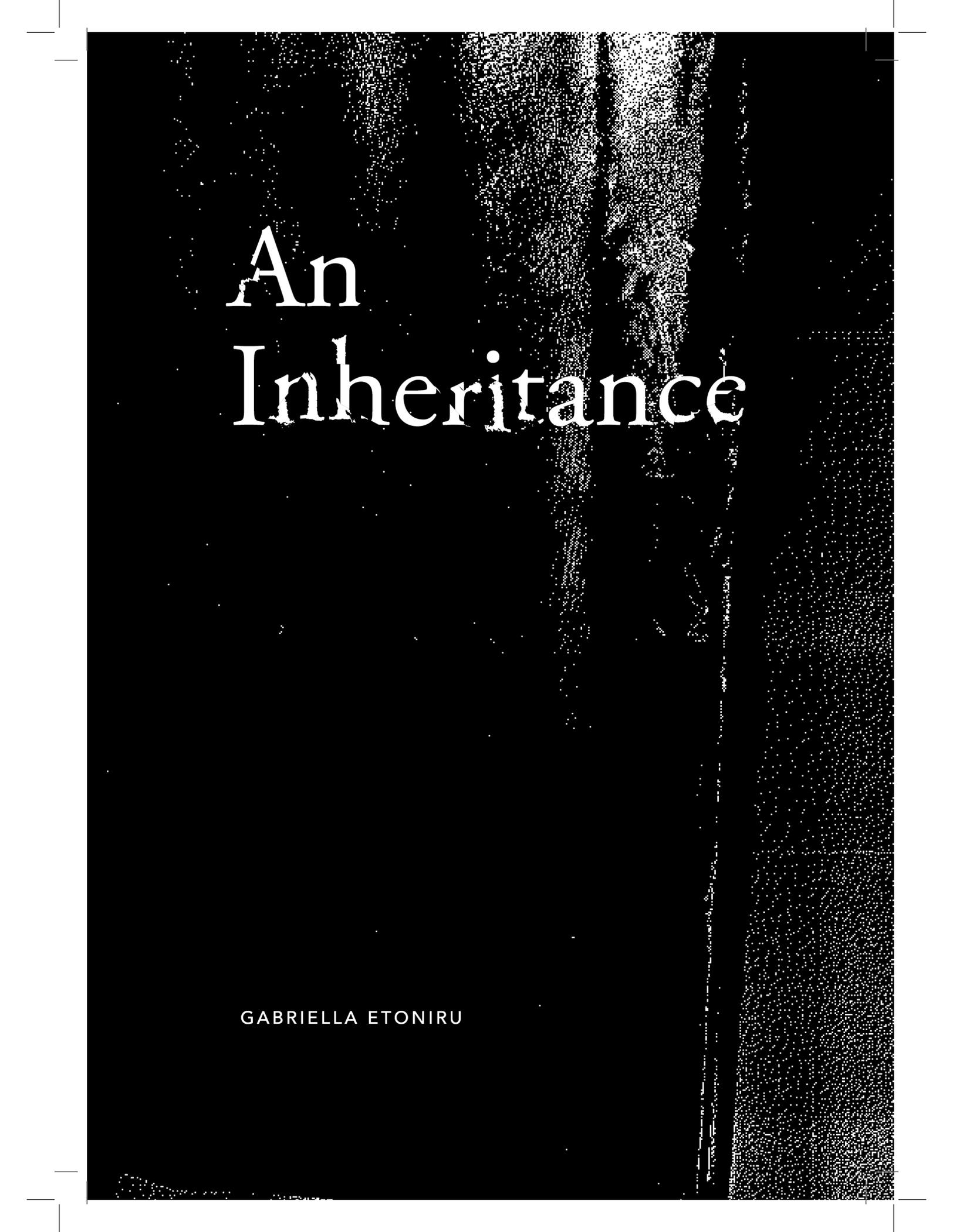
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An Inheritance

GABRIELLA ETONIRU

An Inheritance

Medically Induced Trauma of the Black Community

Gabriella Etoniru

observations and questions

I am a reflection of my mother's secret poetry as well as of her hidden angers.

— Audre Lorde, *Zami*

My grandmother has breast cancer, and she hurts. But her pain is many places. Several times a day she complains of ringing in her ears, headaches, body aches. She rarely sleeps more than four hours a night and is too old and weak to work, but she always goes to church on Sunday mornings. With the conviction of a preacher, she tells me about how her children are surely trying to kill her. Although she frequently forgets my name, she remembers everything about her childhood and a husband she would rather forget. She is not too different from the women who precede her. My mother has breast cancer too. We contemplate if it is hereditary. She suffers from chronic migraines. She uses aspirin each time, but on some days, she comes home from work. I can tell she is sick when she falls asleep on the couch downstairs. My mother does not believe in rest and wakes up in the morning while the stars are still in the sky to prove so. My mother does not want to test for the BRCA gene. We want my inheritance to be a surprise, but my head already hurts. I wake up with the sunrise not out of pleasure but because exhaustion is better than nightmares. I was eight when I began to believe my mother tried

to poison my food at dinner. What else will I inherit from the generations of pained women before me?

Responses to trauma can include persistent fatigue, sleep disorders, nightmares, fear of recurrence, anxiety focused on flashbacks, depression, and avoidance of emotions, sensations, or activities that are associated with the trauma, even remotely. (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>)

When the doctors and mothers who were meant to heal our trauma could not, we had nowhere left to place our suffering.

research

In 32 states primarily between 1950 and mid 1970s, sixty thousand (60,000) women were forcibly sterilized in the United States. From California to North Carolina, state funded eugenics programs were commanding control over women's bodies. The hope was a racial cleansing, a genocide by means of kill before there is someone to kill. Cutting umbilical cord, tying tubes, disrupting the biological matrilineal order. Severing mother from future child but not from the generational and communal harm that accompanies being born Black. *Historical trauma is an event, or a set of events, that happen to a group of people who share a specific identity* (<https://www.hvtn.org/en/community/community-compass/vol18-issue1/historical-trauma.html>). These doctors' concerns were not about babies inheriting the BRCA gene or trauma, rather "promiscuity" and "feeble-mindedness," and other "undesirable" qualities for a child in white America to possess. Having been raped became a fatal diagnosis and sign of being an unfit mother. Hamer, Quinlan, and Grano of University of North Carolina remind us that for "eugenic rhetoric the concept of feeble-mindedness came to operate as an umbrella concept that linked off-white ethnicity, poverty, and gendered conceptions of lack of moral character together." Eugenics was a pseudoscience which abused true genetic research and grew like wildfire. Unfettered by the ubiquitous anti-Black rhetoric of the period, eugenics took the lives and humanity and turned from a Black person to a body.

There are many ways to cure a body. When the body is sick, white blood cells fight the impurity until the invasive substance is eradicated. Then the body develops an immunity, and the sickness cannot return. The disease of Blackness has many common cures in the United States. Some practices are new, some are old. Options for treatment include: slavery, genocide,

racial purification, gentrification. But the prettier names are usually:

“let’s add a Whole Foods,”
and police brutality,
now-outlawed eugenics programs,
or “this neighborhood, this school, this job just
doesn’t seem like a good fit for you.”

White harm towards the Black community is so embedded in the culture of the United States, and further entrenched in Black spaces, that white people have convinced Black people and the world that pain is an inherent part of being Black.

The laws of nature require the obliteration of the unfit, and human life is valuable only when it is of use to the community or race. (Paul, Diane B. *Controlling Human Hereditary 1865 to the Present*)

Elaine Riddick Jessie knows this to be true.

In 1968 when Jessie was fourteen, her story would not be considered extraordinary. In fact, she was one of 7,600 poor and Black to be sterilized. Jessie had been raped, impregnated, and without her knowledge, tubes tied. Only when she desired to have children years later did she learn of the tubal ligation. Jessie describes herself as “barren and fruitless” having been denied an inalienable right from God (Begos, Kevin, and John Railey. “Still Hiding.” *Winston-Salem Journal*). We know this to be true. At age fourteen, Jessie could not have consented to the procedure. Social workers went to her house seeking a signature to move forward with the procedure. Jessie’s grandmother who could not read or write was told to sign an “x” on a dotted line or have Jessie put up for adoption. Then Jessie was having her baby, not knowing that only a few hours after giving birth that her first baby would be her last. Much of the Eugenics practices in the 1950s and 60s go this way, sixty four percent of all procedures having been on Black women. Two thousand of whom were under the age of eighteen. Decisions made based on the belief that by mitigating Black births meant improving white livelihood. In many ways we know this to be true. The unrelenting oppression of Black people ensures the impossibility of Black people flipping the script and committing the same harm against the white body – the great white fear of vengeance.

And in 1968 all reproductive decisions made for Jessie and the poor Black girls who looked like her were reached by five members of the North Carolina

Eugenics Board. They concluded that, Jessie, having been raped, was one used to “‘running around . . . out late at night’ (ibid., 4). This was presumed to be sufficient proof of an innate disability that threatened to denigrate the purity of the white race (Stubblefield 2007).” (Tired and Hungry). Being unfit, she was deemed useless, and therefore her offspring would be as well. Her case presented to the Eugenics board is brief and considered to contain all essential information.

8. *Delores Elaine Riddick - (N) - Perquimans County Social information: Age 13. Single. Pregnant. Psychological April 5, 1967. MA 9-6: IQ 75*

This thirteen year old girl expects her first child in March 1968....She has never done any work and gets along so poorly with others that her school experience was poor. Because of Elaine’s inability to control herself, and her promiscuity - there are community reports of her “running around” and out late at night unchaperoned, the physician has advised sterilization....This will at least prevent additional children from being born to this child who cannot care for herself, and can never function in any way as a parent.

Diagnosis: Feeble-minded. (Begos, Kevin, and John Railey. “Still Hiding.” *Winston-Salem Journal*)

The five members of the board and the doctor who conducted the procedure on Jessie represent only a small fraction of U.S. medical interference on Black people’s bodies in the mid 1900s.

The descendants of Henrietta Lacks know this to be true. Eighteen years before doctors cut open Jessie, Henrietta, who is often unnamed and whose existence is condensed to four letters, visits John Hopkins complaining of vaginal bleeding. At this point, Johns Hopkins was one of the very few hospitals willing to treat African Americans (read: examine and experiment). Henrietta, with a knot in her stomach, begrudgingly goes to the doctor’s office, having shared very little of her pain with family members. Her cousin Sadie knows this to be true. But Sadie assumed Henrietta’s distaste for doctors came from a fear of living a life like Jessie’s, being forcibly prevented from having more children. Upon arrival at the hospital, she, too, has a medical chart ready for review.

Sixth or seventh grade education; housewife and mother of five. Breathing difficult since childhood due to recurrent throat infections and deviated septum in

patient's nose. Physician recommended surgical repair. Patient declined. Happy household. Well nourished, cooperative. Unexplained vaginal bleeding and blood in urine during last two pregnancies. Doctor recommended sickle cell test. Patient declined. Tests showed areas of increased cellular activity in the cervix. Physician recommended diagnostics and referred to specialist for ruling out cancer. Patient cancelled appointment. Tested positive for gonorrhea. Patient recalled to clinic for treatment. No response.

In the exam room, Dr. Howard Jones finds the exact spot of Henrietta's troubles, a tumor. He conducts the biopsy, and per his practice keeps some of the cells from Henrietta's sample for his personal use. He does not tell Henrietta or any of her family members of this invasive procedure which encroached upon Henrietta's body and her rights. He reaches out to Dr. George Gey and Wesley TeLinde who are interested in her cells for their individual desires. Gey wants to make cells live forever, and TeLinde wants to assert the urgency of cervical carcinoma as a disease that needs to be treated aggressively. Gey finds what he is looking for. Not only do Henrietta's cells live, they multiply.

Henrietta's cells are the only parts of Henrietta that exist today.

Her daughter Deborah tells us what she knows of her mother: "Science calls her HeLa and she's all over the world in medical facilities, in all the computers and internet everywhere." Even those who do not know her name are more likely to know her cells: HeLa. But before she is HeLa, and before she is Henrietta, she is Loretta Pleasant of Roanoke, Virginia. Although this early life is not the story of her told, we know that in all her identities, she spent her life within the same fifty-mile radius. In medicine, in research facilities, in the bodies of those who have used vaccinations that contain HeLa, Henrietta has touched more of the world than she did alive, living in Virginia.

Despite HeLa cells being one of the greatest medical advancements in the last century, much of the Lacks family lives in poverty unable to receive access to the advanced healthcare for which their mother, wife, and friend can be accredited. In fact, twenty years after her death must pass, and many experiments must be conducted, reviewed, and revised with her cells before the Lacks family learns that parts of their dear Henrietta still exist. That she in some way is replicating. That this integral part of her body is numerous, she could stretch herself around the globe three times. Deborah has thoughts on this too. "I have always

thought it was strange, she says, if our mother's cells have done so much for medicine how come her family can't afford to see no doctors? Don't make no sense... but I don't got it in me no more to fight. I just want to know who my mother was" (Skloot).

And who was she? The healing that comes from a mother was not present for the Lacks children. With what is currently known, none of the Lacks children have multiplying cells like she did. But for the few who can afford to visit the doctor's office, they do have her same fear. After all, doctors took more from Henrietta far more than they ever gave. The Lacks children only live with the pain of knowing that white men who do not care about their livelihood will be closer to their mother than they ever were. Though their words are not listened to, the words of a white woman who decided to write a book about Henrietta are praised. And without a mother and without access to doctors, where and how are the Lacks family members supposed to heal?

*A common symptom that arises from traumatic experiences is hyperarousal (also called hypervigilance). Hyperarousal is the body's way of remaining prepared. It is characterized by sleep disturbances. Hyperarousal is a consequence of **biological changes initiated by trauma.***

What lived in Henrietta's biology that allowed her to multiply? Unable to help her family directly, did she stretch herself thin as many Black women do in hopes of finding healing for future progeny? Or did the inheritance of memory and trauma simply take up too much space to live in a single cell?

*"African American cultural expression emerges from "a distinctive mass experience of loss and longing, of marginalization, chronic mourning, and pain. All of this was constitutive of a traumatic field that provided the existential context for the emergence of African American religious experience...the experience of racialized oppression overwhelmed Africans' psyches (and those of their progeny) and made their ways of making meaning in the world ineffective. In that instance they encountered the abyss in which meaning is not simply destroyed but swallowed up in the void, lost" (Still, Erica. *Prophetic Remembrance Black Subjectivity in African American and South African Trauma Narratives*).*

When the doctors and mothers who were meant to heal our trauma could not, we had nowhere left to place our suffering.



hypothesis

Trauma can be inherited. Much in the same way brown eyes and brown hands can be. Much in the same way promiscuity and “feeble-mindedness” were thought to be. The Black person’s body is frequently subject to trauma, medical and familial. I did not understand my mother’s weariness of the doctor’s office until I was much older. When my mother goes in for surgery to correct her small intestine, the white surgeons made unnecessary corrections on her stomach. She goes back two more times, for two more surgeries. When the doctors tell her follow-up surgery is necessary, what they mean to say is we did not stitch you back properly the first time. We fixed the wrong problem. We tried to fix your Black problem. Sorry we did not listen to your pain. If this one goes wrong too, third time’s a charm.

Though they do not remove the problem, they do remove her belly button. Cut open, cut away so many times. The connection between my mother and her own is eradicated from skin, from sight and surface. It is the making of the doctor’s desired disruption within the Black family. Cut family member away from generations before. Leave the dissected body pondering its origins. Leave them only the memory of trauma that is passed through the blood.

“I have a memory that is not my memory. I think I hold onto this memory in part as a way of trying to piece together fragments of a story to which I was exposed in various ways in childhood but that could not be explicitly told precisely because it could not be linked to my current experience.” (Fragments of Trauma and the Social Production of Suffering : Trauma, History, and Memory, Michael O’Loughlin, and Marilyn Charles, Rowman)

When the doctors and mothers who were meant to heal our trauma could not, we had nowhere left to place our suffering.

begin testing

Being equipped, white doctors began their experiment. The Black men of Tuskegee know this suffering to be true.

With second stage syphilis destroying their bodies, they seek out the only doctors who can help them. Though these doctors have the ability to hurt them as well. The simultaneous fear and need for white medical care runs deep in Black blood. (Read: bad blood.

Read: bad blood is the Black blood that infiltrated Henrietta’s body as her husband brought other blood home every night after meeting new women in their bed).

The Tuskegee Syphilis study lasted forty years from 1932 until 1972. The 623 men involved (read: abused) in the study found a similar state to Henrietta, able to speak only through the representation from another body. In fact, their stories are quite similar, ill and seeking guidance, making a decision they believe is the lesser of two evils. In 1932, while Black men are seeking well-being, the medical community is seeking a cure for the awful disease that is syphilis. The experiment, like the disease, follows three stages.

1. The disease appears first as pimple, small red, unassuming. Often, the spot appears on the genitals. However, the blemish can also pass orally. It will sound like a whisper: *the government doctors who used to provide free exams are in town for a new health study*. This phase generally lasts for only a few days, but in some cases can last up to eight months like it did from October 1932 until June 1933. Apart of step one too, is collecting a sample of this blemish. Four hundred men, ages twenty-five or older, already infected are necessary. Do not tell these men, whose blood you have tested and taken that they have syphilis. Instead, call it “bad blood.” Consent is not necessary. The blemish can also appear in churches, schools, community centers, anywhere deemed appropriate for a doctor’s visit. The goal of step one Dr. Clark makes clear: *It is my desire to keep the main purpose of the work from the Negroes in the county and continue their interest in treatment*. The purpose of the study (read: genocide) was to observe the effects of untreated syphilis. The disease carries many physical forms, affecting cardiovascular and nervous systems. A three-inch needle for a spinal tap is suitable for detecting these conditions.
2. About a week later, and lasting for several more, comes the second stage. A rash on the hands or feet. Ulcers and headaches. Some of these symptoms are almost negligible, but open ulcers can infect others. At this point, a control group without syphilis is added to the study. Commit to following the participants until death. In 1958, participants receive a letter from the Surgeon General and \$25 as a thank you for participating and an incentive to continue. Jim Jones writes in *Bad Blood*, that the fate of

these men had already been determined. Both local doctors and the Public Health Service had agreed not to treat any of the men in Macon County, Alabama. Even when experimental programs, some successful, began to appear, these men were not considered for participation.

- a. Between the second and third stage, syphilis may seem to go dormant. This period can last for years, leaving the third and final stage to appear at any moment. During this period, penicillin is discovered to be a cure for syphilis. Still, the men are not treated.

*The subject of untreated syphilis is not something new. The study of it was started some twenty years ago and has been plodding quietly along ever since. I won't bother you with the minor details of the study except to say that all were to have regular blood tests and physical examinations. The Milbank Memorial Fund agreed to contribute money for necropsy. Part of the money goes to the physician doing the work and part of it goes to the family to aid in burial expenses. Now what have these findings been, in terms of generalities? First, that untreated syphilis shortens life expectancy by 20 percent. Second, that there is a greater involvement of the cardiovascular system and third, that syphilitics without treatment appear to be subject to a higher rate of other types of morbidity. Thus they die earlier. **This is probably what most people expect from general knowledge, but it is important to have the facts documented.***

— Dr. Oliver Wenger (Gray, Fred D. *The Tuskegee Syphilis Study: the Real Story and Beyond*)

3. In the final stage, syphilis attacks the nervous and cardiovascular systems. Some people infected may go blind. Others suffer from paralysis. The heart may fail. Severe damage to the brain, skin, bones, or other organs may occur. Sometimes advanced syphilis will make blood vessels burst, especially near the heart, resulting in immediate death. For a few, some will live without many symptoms. Such is the case for only 7 of the 623 men in the Tuskegee Study. But in the final years of the study between 1965 and 1972, racial relations change throughout the country. Notable events, Rosa Parks refuses to move her seat on the bus and *Lee v. Macon County Board of Education* is brought to court to end segregation in the school district. In 1972, the study's final year, participants in the study learn about their involvement in study. The

public discovers there was a study at all. Lawyer Fred Gray begins developing a lawsuit at the request and consult of a study survivor, Charlie Pollard. The involved parties try to shift blame. The federal government launches an investigation. By November 6, 1972, the study is over.

record data

7,600 Black people in North Carolina forcibly sterilized. 60,000 people, majority Black, across the United States. *Society must protect itself; as it claims the right to deprive the murderer of his life so also it may annihilate the hideous serpent of hopelessly vicious protoplasm.*

5 people on State Eugenics board making decisions for strangers' bodies. *Unfit to care for children.*

623 men used as guinea pigs long after medical papers revised their errors. *Til death do us part.*

1 cell that became many. *Blackness be spreading all inside.*

The Black person, to medicine, is only a body, designed for experimentation and error. Dr. Michele Andrasik tells us “powerful stressful environmental conditions can leave an imprint or “mark” on the epigenome (cellular material) that can be carried into future generations with devastating consequences. In studies of pregnant women, we see that psychological and nutritional stress in the mother during pregnancy can lead to biological changes that predispose their children to diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and PTSD as adults.” The doctors whose eugenic practices could not kill all Black lineage from the source, found other ways to kill bodies instead. They promised the longevity of suffering, internal and mental ache that no one knew how to heal. And the Black mothers and fathers and caretakers who did survive, who could not hold all the hurt in their bodies asked their children to share it with them. So we did.

next steps/revisions

Racial medical discourse in the United States has changed, moved. Certain blatant transgressions against the Black community will now face uproar. Note: be intentional and subtle about racism. Instead of a formal study, ask questions about family and medical history on job applications. Say that you're just double-checking to see if they have insurance coverage, a permanent address, and a reliable mode

of transportation to and from work each day. In the doctor's office, use medical terms that many poor and Black people do not have the access to know. Without explaining further, ask if you may proceed with treatment. This will be considered consent. Hire Black doctors, but make their jobs incredibly difficult and have them complete mundane errands like getting coffee. The University of Virginia study from 2016 says the majority of white medical students believe there are biological differences between Black and white people and believe Black people have less sensitive nerve endings. Don't vocalize your agreement with the study, or else some people may think you're biased. Continue the same harmful practices that make the mortality rate for Black women giving birth to be up to six times that of white women. Follow these steps, revised for a false progressivism, and studies of Black people as experiments can continue.

conclusion

the prophetic element of prophetic remembrance continually puts forward the choice, mandating the continual decision in the present to shape the future.

My mother often gives me choices that are not really choices, and often I find this amusing. The way she asks if I can clean the table, but "if you want, you can continue watching television." But when she is sick, she does not have enough breath to offer a choice, only a plea. So when she complains of pain and asks if I can get her medicine, it sounds like she is asking for me to take her pain away. I do not know how to tell her that though she no longer has a belly button, any sign that she was born to a long line of aching women, that she did give birth to me. And when she did, and survived, that she passed down her pain in my bloodstream. I did not have a choice in that matter.

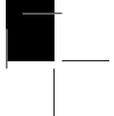
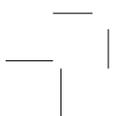
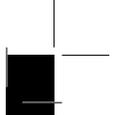
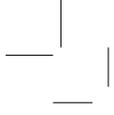
When the doctors and mothers who were meant to heal our trauma could not, we had nowhere left to place our suffering.

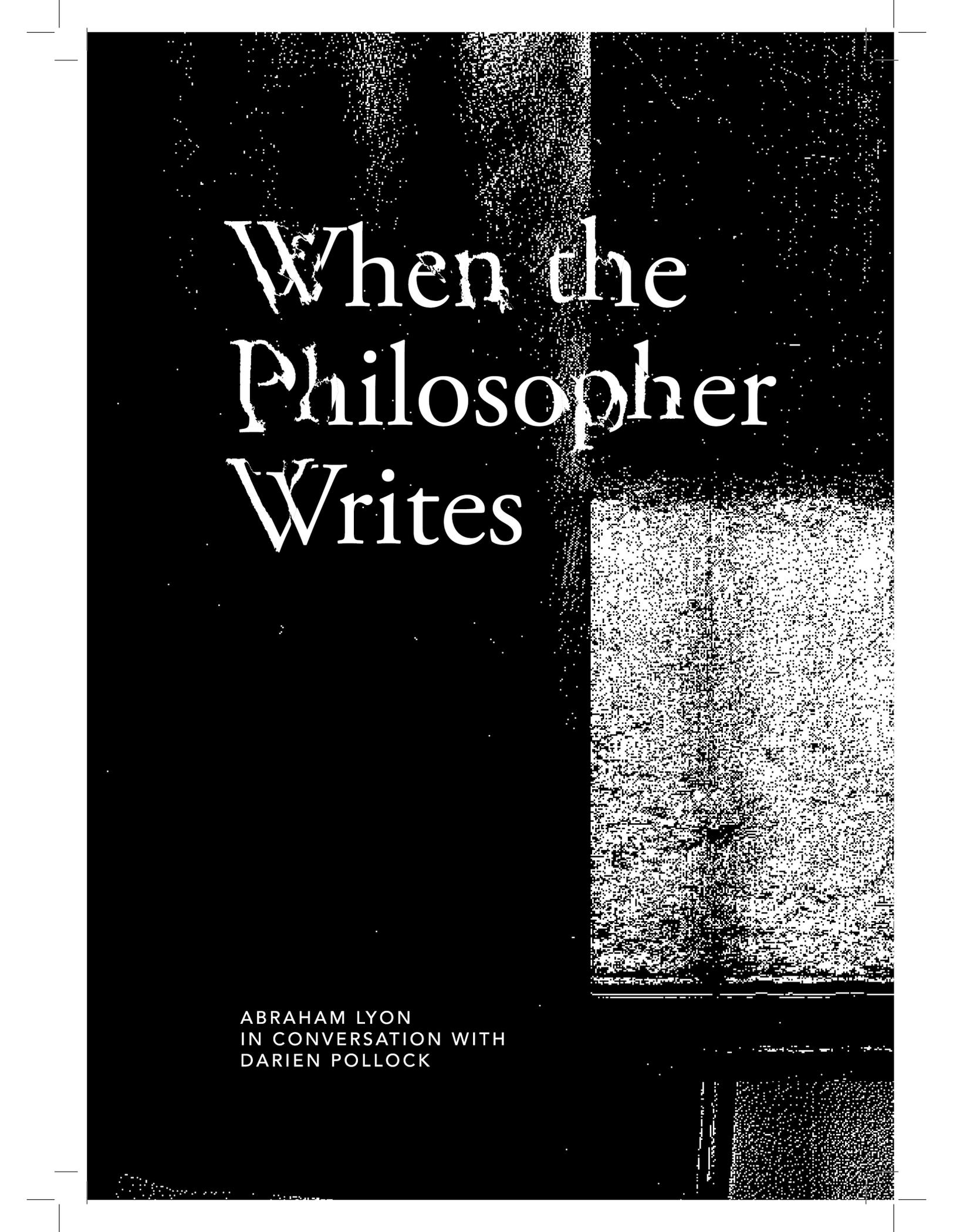
Gabriella Etoniru is a junior at Brown University concentrating in English. Recently, she has been trying to step out of her comfort zone with her writing. She is also a chocolate chip cookie loving Scorpio.

Testing complete.

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When the Philosopher Writes

ABRAHAM LYON
IN CONVERSATION WITH
DARIEN POLLOCK

When the Philosopher Writes

A Conversation with Darien Pollock

Interview by Abraham Lyon

CJLC: I want to begin by asking what got you into philosophy. Where were you when it happened?

Darien: It has a few layers to it. I'm from a small town in North Florida. I call it a plantation town. A town like Maryann – that's where I'm from – it's a town where Black people are living in close proximity to where their ancestors were slaves and white people are living in the same area that their ancestors were oppressors.

But I'll say this. I went to Morehouse College specifically to escape that kind of framework of looking at the world, to see what it really felt like to always live your life without the white gaze looking over your shoulder, so to speak. But when I got to Morehouse, I found out I really hated college. There was a lot of performativity – I didn't know that word back then, but it was a lot of performance, a lot of people who came from specific backgrounds who read the right things and could speak a certain way, and I didn't know that game. I had to learn that game.

I was on verge of saying forget this college thing and just trying to go live life on whatever terms I could – being poor and from the south there ain't too many options. One of my friends had told me, before you give up on this Morehouse shit, on this college shit,

on this elite shit, you should really take a philosophy course. First thing I asked was: how much the books? He was like man that's the thing with philosophy, these books are a few dollars, so I was like alright bet, I'm there.

So I took the intro to philosophy course. The first text I ever read was from John Locke's "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," an excerpt in there called "On Personal Identity," where he has a very temporal understanding of what it means to remain a person over time. I fell in love with the question. That's how I got into philosophy: through discovering certain kinds of questions that were always present within my mind. I just never had the platform or the space to entertain those kinds of questions before. With the book being cheap and with the kinds of questions being asked, I kept wanting to go to classes. This eventually led me to major in philosophy and then to pursue a PhD at Harvard.

CJLC: Western academia doesn't consider certain kinds of writers 'philosophers,' even though their ideas have philosophical grounding. Do you consider these writers philosophers? Do you read what they write?

Darien: The short answer is: of course. It is not possible to separate a philosophical doctrine, theory, or ideology from a power structure. For me that's an axiom. My research is in an area called social ontology, so for me it is a social ontological axiom. When the philosopher writes, whether a trained philosopher or a person engaging in philosophy, the content is always going to be wedded to its power structure. Only when you forget that fact do you have to go through the frustration of trying to figure out why some people think something is not philosophy and others can't imagine how it could not be philosophy.

CJLC: Can you talk more about axioms?

Darien: Axioms, as in a self-evident truth, as in the old school Cartesian sense. I'm working on a program of philosophy I'm calling street philosophy. I say to social theorists and metaphysicians: metaphysicians need to start caring about social theory and social theorists need to become better metaphysicians. In social theory, there are big problems. Whether you're looking at the social theorist on the streets looking at race and gender, or if you're looking at sociological data, there are many holes in our understanding of the social world. The pursuit of social science is to get our knowledge of the social world on par with that of the natural sciences. So the thing I tell people is that the

assumptions that we operate under in social science research are concepts that we totally are confused about.

For example, my dissertation is on the metaphysics of race. When trying to develop explanations of the social world or a social phenomenon like race, social scientists (or anyone else making the attempt) are dealing with a concept that is so confusing and bundled up with so many associations, with histories and power structures and biases. The complexity of the concept ultimately leads to misunderstanding, which leads to confusing claims.

When I say that we need social-ontological axioms, I mean that we need basic claims about the social world that can help us develop clear understanding, models, of what, for example, race and racializing might be, what it looks like in all its different forms, not just the forms in the theorist's head. We need simple claims from which we can start our investigation of the social world, and that's what I'm trying to do with street philosophy. These claims aren't new. I'm not developing new claims. We need to sift through the bad claims to get to the basic claims, so that we can get to an understanding of what it means to be Black.

CJLC: What would one basic claim be?

Darien: One claim would be something about the human condition. Let me start with race. The metaphysics of race is awful at the moment. If you look at the research, we're getting back into a neo-eugenics type of moment. It's like hold up, I thought we were smarter than that. What the fuck, hold up. We just went through a whole century where we've seen the holocaust, we've seen slavery in its many forms, how did we get back here to this realist positions about race. The thing about it is, I think that a lot of times in order to try to create shortcuts to understanding about what's going on in the world, we appeal to faulty concepts. Instead of sitting back and saying okay, what is this concept grounded on? For example, people talk about different races -- if you're in certain Black communities, this is what it means to be Black and they give their criteria. And you say well, if I go to the Dominican Republic and try to give these same criteria and say this is what it means to be Black, people may not even know what the hell I'm talking about. If that something, if that's a real thing in the world like gold is and like water is, if this a real thing on that level, why can't it have any consistency to it? If that's how it is, then you might say there's something faulty about this concept and this criteria, something

fictional about this concept. If this goes on, we need to get to the basic elements of what may be causing this.

If you want to make sense of race, you got to think about racialization. And if you think about racialization as distinct from saying there are races out there in the world, then you have this system that makes sense of how, for example, ethnic conflict come up and it resembles the same kind of violence and transgression as certain racial conflicts. Then you say okay, if that's something real, racialization, then what's grounding that? Then you might want to talk about dehumanization. These are kind of concepts I'm talking about that can be kind of basic concepts—racialization and dehumanization instead of races—that can help us understand what's really going on when you know one group just can't see another group as being the same level of humanity as them. So that's kind of stuff I'm talking about.

CJLC: Can you talk more about the problems with the social science disciplines?

Darien: There's a deep history to this, I mean I hate to pick on positivism. When this shit airs, people are gonna be like oh, he doesn't understand the nuances of positivism, but I think that we all float in and out of ideologies, including the experts, the so called experts, the scientists, you know, the learned, and so I actually like this kind of explanation framework, what I'm about to say is this, I think that long story short the social sciences are, yes, suffering from an era of positivism.

Just in case people want to get a sense of positivism, I think positivism is chiefly a philosophical doctrine that was applied in the early twentieth century to science, to metaphysics, infiltrating American universities at the time when philosophy was very integral to the shaping of inquiry.

That meant pursuing the 'objective' truth and whatever doesn't fit within that framework becomes meaningless, or has no sense to it or no reference or no grounding in the world. You can start to see how that philosophical temperament about objectivity and about what logic and mathematics is, harms the social sciences. Because you have to carry out an understanding of social phenomenon through a kind of rigid objectivity which is not possible given the human condition. Positivism probably works great for number theory, I'm not saying positivism wasn't a phenomenal philosophical acknowledgement, but



my claim is why do we have to think that it was an epistemic philosophical framework that could make sense of all phenomena? It has had too strong of an influence, way too strong, and to answer your question: this has harmed the social sciences. I don't want to categorize all social sciences, because if you go to the sociology department, for example, you got people doing some really radical stuff, but you get what I'm saying. In general the social sciences have fallen victim to this rigid objectivity positivist shit.

CJLC: I feel like I went to college with no understanding of that, and when I began considering what I wanted to study I began learning about what was actually going on in some of these departments. It is alarming that there are so many people choosing what they are going to study without having to think about the politics of different disciplines.

Darien: Oh man. It's awful, it's awful. This shit is getting deep. You have to ask a question about why most people in most parts of the world in the academies – what I mean by the academy is the center of research – keep so many secrets. What I mean is that the average person cannot afford all these journals that are peer reviewed, all the established centers of knowledge that we base policies on, that we shape think tanks on. For a person who wants to read a top law journal, it costs one hundred dollars just to access the journal. The purpose of the price is to keep people from understanding what knowledge production looks like, including the students! I tell my undergraduate students: they look at you as consumers.

The university is not even really trying to educate the students. If they were, one of the first things that would be on the table to study is the university itself. The first thing students should be taking is not intro to sociology but the philosophy of sociology.

CJLC: And it costs tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars to attend a university and gain the skills to be able to even read those journals.

Darien: Thank you. My dear mentor and brother who I adore and admire on a spiritual level, Dr. Cornel West, he always talks about the jargonization of the academy. Some jargon has its place. But, from the street philosophy standpoint, the question is this: whether you're in academia or a block in Chicago, why are you so sure that your formal categories work for me? Or us? Or them? Notice the pronouns. Street philosophy is really a philosophy of the Other. This white minded gaze is really trying to impose categories

on us. Who the fuck said they can do that? I'm sorry I'm cussing man, but there's a lot of energy behind this, it's hard to talk about this.

CJLC: How do the academic disciplines take part in imposing categories?

Darien: They're hegemonic. They're trying to dominate concepts. Can you believe no one has thought about what a 'public concept' is? The foundation of my metaphysics is something I'm calling a public concept. The hegemony of the academy is incompatible with street philosophy, though you do have street philosophers in the academy, which is ironic. Part of the hegemony of this academic system, of this research system, is the colonization of public concepts, one example of which is race. Here's one big thing I have a problem with: in the realm of Black studies you have so many scholars like John Henrik Clark. Their folk, their environment, the people that produce the knowledge, their public, they were the people that had the authority to produce claims about the Black community.

You have all these fancy universities that are also producing Black studies stuff about this and that. When I say colonize, I mean controlling the conversation about what it means to be Black. As a result of this colonizing drive for control, you lose something, you lose a lot, and what ultimately ends up happening is that the Black studies conversation becomes a *white minded* ideology because the university (that is part of white gaze) has taken the conversation away from the community. That's why we don't have any ownership over the public concept of race anymore. Is there a law for that? Hell no, but there should be. That's what I mean by the hegemonic colonization of public concepts that the academy abuses and abuses.

CJLC: Yeah, and even if these professors have good intentions.

Darien: Exactly, if we had more time, I would tell a story about that.

Can I say this for the camera: I'm a part of it man. The conversation I'm giving you is the ideal. I'm just here to tell the truth. The truth is the truth. As for practicality, I understand why good people are part of that type of structure. I'm part of it. I'm going to be a professor.

CJLC: Can you talk some more about white-mindedness?

Darien: Like I say, it is a basic axiom. White-mindedness is my term for the basic axiom of racialization. It's what we're talking about so to speak. I went to Morehouse. I came to Morehouse from a community where it was really white against Black, more or less, Black people know they're Black and white people know they're white and that's how it is. To an extent, there's a kind of solidarity back home for Black people, an old school style of not turning your back on your fellow Black brother. It's more complicated than that, but it's there.

When I got to Morehouse I was like wow. Man, I've never seen so many Black people – and I'm saying Black people specifically – oppress other Black people. I've never seen it. We're all supposed to be so-called Black, part of the same group, but at the same time, our mental states were so incompatible and misaligned. One time I was sitting on the stoop with one of my homeboys. He was from California, and we were talking shit and I was like man some of these brothers they so Black but they got such white minds. I just said that, and I just thought about it. And my homeboy was like that's dope, you gotta keep thinking about that, because that's true. After that conversation, I began the investigation into what I call the phenomenon of white mindedness. The thing is every time I give a talk about this concept I tell people the ironic thing about white mindedness is that when it first originated, when I first theorized about it, it was not at all about white people, it was about non-white people, and how non-white people were still capable of have the same properties and characteristics that we attribute historically to white-people. It's not about bodies. This is why race is a myth.

It is not a bodily thing, it's not what the old school metaphysician would call a substance. It is what you might call an ideology, but it's also more than that. You need a mental concept. The label white minded solves what social theorists call a macro micro problem: it's a mental concept, a middle ground concept to understand how you can have an ideology manifest with its subjects, it describes what it means to live in a racialized way. It solves a lot of problems, it shows you why some forms of identity politics don't work, it shows why being Black doesn't necessarily make you in line with historically Black values.

CJLC: Do you think white-mindedness occurs due to the space or the people within it?

Darien: I actually think it's about the space. The social scientist is going to say, what's the space without

the people. This is when I think about artifacts and space and geography and architecture. It's more nuanced. This is when artists can help us, this is when you gotta leave philosophy and science and you gotta go to the artists. Fuck that. We gotta start changing the form of life type shit, like some Wittgenstein type shit. People and things play off each other. That's the nature of the social – that's an axiom. As a young kid – nineteen, twenty – I was so hurt. It totally went against my metaphysics of race. I thought Black meant Black. Black doesn't mean Black. Black is nothing other than how you experienced it. Some people align with certain historical values of Blackness and some people don't because they went to white minded spaces and were around things that were products of the white gaze.

White mindedness is a property of what Franz Fanon calls the white gaze. The white gaze is just this abstract collection of people and things, entities and institutions that produce or facilitate the white supremacist doctrine. So the white supremacist doctrine is whatever the mental state of historical white oppressors were. Whatever that was. How do you figure it out? You gotta do your homework. You gotta read the history, read the writing. That's the transitivity of white mindedness, that's the grounding of it. White mindedness is a basic concept of the metaphysics of race but it's not a basic concept of social ontology. So, the claim is that in order to make sense of the phenomenon of racialization you need to understand the concept of white mindedness, but also it is not necessarily true that in order to understand all the forms of domination of the human conditions you need to understand everything about the concept of white mindedness. White mindedness is trying to understand white supremacy, but it may turn out that white supremacy is contingent upon other ideologies. You want to make room for that.

CJLC: How does street philosophy relate to subversive action?

Darien: Ultimately street philosophy is a metaphysical program for how we ought to arrange our political resistance. I'll give a detail. What I'm saying is that street philosophy is trying to get us to understand that in order to resist, given certain historical conditions – white supremacy and patriarchy – there are certain layers of ideology that we have to work through first. What does that take? That takes a nuanced education, what street philosophy is trying to do is get us to understand that.

I don't mind this being on record. I personally had a lot of problems with the Black Lives Matter movement. I thought it was very white minded in some respects. The Black Lives Matter movement has done a lot of great things and it has also harmed a lot of people silently because of its white mindedness. That said, the thing is that in order to even engage with the BLM movement you have to be at war with the ideology that we are all Black people because of the way we appear.

Darien Pollock is a PhD candidate in Harvard University's department of Philosophy.

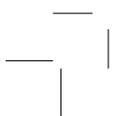
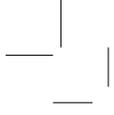
Before we resist, whether as Black people, Palestinians, or any other group that has been historically oppressed, we have to understand certain ideological points first. We do that by the street philosophy program. It's a program and platform for why we should engage with knowledge in this way in order to have an effective resistance. I think a lot of movements are not as effective because they are haunted by problematic ideological components. Street philosophy is trying to help us dig through that before we resist.

CJLC: Do you think resistance comes out of re-thinking how we learn and how knowledge is produced?

Darien: Yes. I think that's the only way in the twenty first century. It's not that we can do it now, it's that we must do it now given what the information age has become. This is the age of informing people through information and knowledge with accurate reference to the human condition. People are thirsty for this. I don't need to sell people street philosophy because they already own it, they just never had a word for it. I'm not teaching them anything, I'm just providing them a label. I am Wittgensteinian to an extent. I do think language is a co-creator of reality, I do think street philosophy is tied to language.

If someone asks me, why are you writing a dissertation on this? Why have you created an organization called the street philosophy institute if people are already doing this? I'd say because people don't have a word for it. Same with white-mindedness. James Baldwin said in an interview in the latter part of his life that all whiteness is a state of mind. He had the concept of white-mindedness, but he didn't have a word for it. So that's what I'm here to do: to provide words and language to help people resist.

I really want street philosophy to get out into the world because I think we can use it for resistance. But we can't resist if we don't understand what's holding us hostage.



Amparo Dávila and the Horror of Domesticity

ANGELO HERNANDEZ-SIAS

Amparo Dávila and the Horror of Domesticity

Angelo Hernandez-Sias

“Ah, one learns when one has to; one learns when one needs a way out; one learns at all costs.”

— Franz Kafka, “A Report to An Academy”

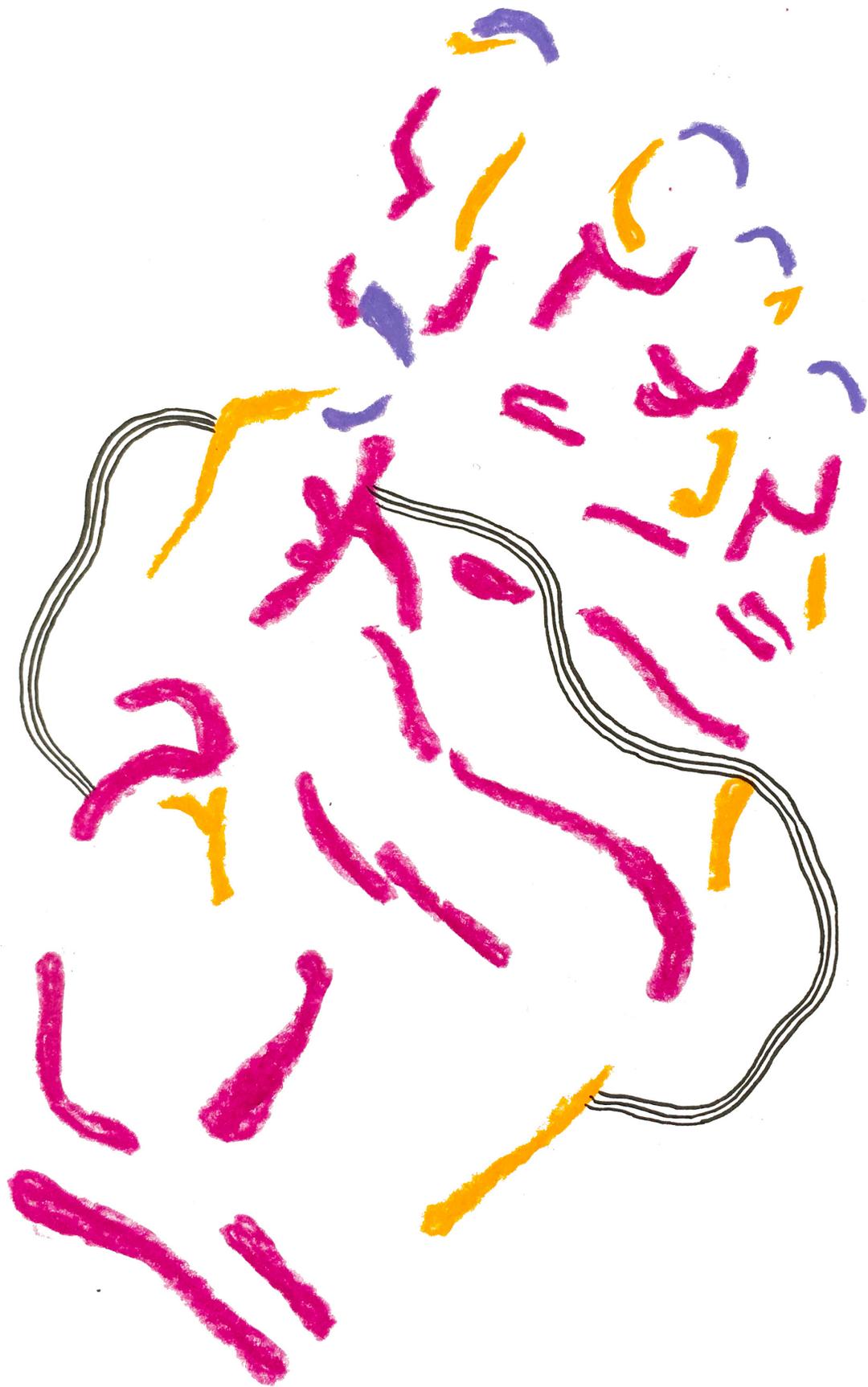
It’s no coincidence that Amparo Dávila’s first collection of short stories to appear in English, *The Houseguest*, was published in the month of October, when we commemorate the dead. It’s a set of scary stories, and a scary set of stories. It introduces English speakers to an author long-acclaimed in Mexico for what one of her translators, Matthew Gleeson, describes as uncanny and fantastic works that “revolve around characters gripped by extreme states of mind, psyches stoked with an uncertain mix of imagination and fact” (“The Crying Cat”). The publisher’s synopsis compares Dávila’s work to that of Franz Kafka, Edgar Allen Poe, and Shirley Jackson: “terrifying, mesmerizing, and expertly crafted.” There’s also a blurb by Carmen Maria Machado: “Amparo Dávila is Franz Kafka by way of [Yoko] Ogawa, [César] Aira by way of [Leonora] Carrington, [Julio] Cortázar by way of [Armonía] Somers ...” Maria Machado gives a head-spinning, kaleidoscopic lineage—one that, like any, invites elaboration and contestation. What happens to Aira when filtered through Carrington? Does Kafka by way of Ogawa look like either Kafka or Ogawa? Or do they become one of those digital face-swaps, where both people look like neither?

I’m particularly interested in Maria Machado’s reading, from which I glean two ideas. One, that Dávila

belongs in the same camp as these other writers; two, that Dávila is part of a feminine revision of that camp. The authors she mentions orbit what Maggie Nelson calls the “art of cruelty”; that is, they affect “precision, transgression, purgation, productive unease, abjectness, radical exposure, uncanniness, unnerving frankness...” (Nelson 6). Kafka’s “In the Penal Colony” is one example discussed by Nelson. In it, an officer shows off an exquisite torture device, lamenting its decline in popularity. To turn to Jackson, we might consider “The Lottery,” in which a small town annually stones to death a randomly selected resident. And there’s Carrington’s “The Debutante,” in which a girl’s hyena-friend attends a ball in her place—and tears off the housemaid’s face to wear it as a disguise. Even Aira, the least cruel of the bunch, dabbles in this aesthetic: consider his novella “How I Became a Nun,” in which a six-year-old child named César Aira eats cyanide-tainted strawberry ice cream, only to witness her/his—the narrator alternates pronouns—dad kill the ice cream vendor. Each of these stories hinges on an absurd act of deliberate harm. I won’t say that this group of writers is defined by the art of cruelty, or that they belong solely to it. Rather, some of their works rub elbows in terrain where cruelty pervades. And Dávila fits right in. Her landscapes are singularly uncanny, both surreal and hyperreal—her prose terse and gleaming with ambiguity.

A friend brought it to my attention that in each pairing, a male author is accessed by way of a woman author. If Maria Machado is suggesting a gendered revision of a horror/surrealist aesthetic, then I begin to wonder: what, if anything, might be feminine about the latter authors’ works? I can’t find any singular formal or aesthetic difference that divides the works neatly along the gender of their authors, nor would I expect to. I could define the masculine and the feminine as Pam Houston does in her essay on Alice Munro’s “Menasetung,” in which case we’d say that the masculine is direct and destination-oriented, and the feminine circular and journey-oriented (81). Our authors land on both sides of the divide, and not in accordance with their gender. Central to Aira’s oeuvre is what he calls the “flight forward,” his commitment to improvisation, a kind of artmaking hardly concerned with destination. Dávila’s stories, meanwhile, trod steadily toward a decisive final twist.

Perhaps this theory of feminine revision is discernible in the thematics of the works. Dávila, for instance, is very much a writer of the quotidian, the domestic, the private—all of which are often defined as subjects of the so-called feminine domain. But even then, what



is Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," a story in which a family reconsiders its relationship to a member who has suddenly transformed into a giant bug, if not a domestic tale? This is all to say that, while I think there's value in Maria Machado's nod toward a feminine revision of the canon at hand, I find the gesture more compelling when considered through Houston's framework of masculine/feminine rather than men/women. I also keep in mind that, as her translator Matthew Gleeson points out, "Dávila's work, which she resolutely labels 'universal,' [is not] intended to have a feminist or gender-specific slant" ("The Crying Cat"). That said, considering Dávila's position as a small-town woman who made it big in Mexico City's male-dominated literary scene of the 50s, which Gleeson also notes, I won't be reading Dávila solely as "universal."

In *The Houseguest*, families and individuals crumble under immense pressure from a dark force inside the household. The protagonists, often women, are tethered to the home, where they must face inhuman creatures on the inside—or on the outside, breaking in. In "Oscar," published originally in 1977 as part of the collection *Árboles Petrificados [Petriified Trees]*, the story's namesake character wreaks havoc on his family from the cellar, where they keep him locked away. He must be fed according to a strict schedule, lest he burst into a fit of rage. He'll break dishes, smash furniture to bits, crush flowerpots, bang on the door, scream. Sometimes his father, at great risk to himself, will attempt to restrain and tranquilize him. At night, he lurks in the house and watches his family members sleep. They do so lightly, in fear that he might go Tell-Tale-Heart on them at any moment. And yet, "no one ever complained: resigned to what they could not change, they accepted their cruel destiny and suffered in silence" (65).

Monica Ramón, our protagonist, a stylish young woman on a visit home from the capital, must have at one point resisted this fate — after all, she left. At the point that we enter the story, however, she has returned, and is now confined to the house by a sense of guilt for having abandoned her younger sister. When she enters her old room, which she shared with her younger sister Cristina during childhood, she feels a "pang of remorse for not having brought her sister along when she left for the capital, and instead leaving her behind to languish, to waste away in this confinement" (61). And waste away Cristina does. At a meal, Monica takes note of her family's rapid deterioration under Oscar's tyranny: "Emaciated in the extreme, with her sharp, ashen face and her dull,

sunken eyes, [Monica's mother] seemed more like a sorrowful shadow than a human being. Cristina, weighed down by silence, solitude, and despair, was an aged youth, a wilted flower" (62). The stress of caring for a thoroughly destructive creature proves to be too much for Monica's parents, who die of heart attack and unspecified illness. She and her siblings barely escape death when, in the story's final twist, the cackling Oscar sets the house on fire in the middle of the night.

Monica comes home and stays home; leaving no longer seems possible. I'd be remiss to suggest that she is bound just by her guilt for having left in the first place — her confinement is also literal. As the narrator puts it, "The women only went out when absolutely necessary: for groceries or shopping, Sunday mass and sometimes to recite the rosary during the week, some condolence or funeral, some truly special event, because these things excited him inordinately; he didn't accept anything that would break the rhythm of his life or alter his routine" (65). For the Ramón family, the domestic sphere is a prison. They prepare Oscar's meals, clean his messes, and most of all ensure he doesn't escape. Oscar is fly and flytrap, prisoner and warden. He characterizes the rhetoric that confines women to the home, and reveals such talk for what it really is: a mechanism of control.

For Dávila, the biggest danger of domestic confinement is isolation. When her characters are isolated, they are most deadly—to themselves and others. They curl into themselves and fall prey to their own demons. After the parents in "Oscar" die, for instance, the narrator says, "the three siblings closed themselves off, didn't dare to talk or communicate, became hollow and self-absorbed, as if their thoughts and words had been misplaced, or carried away by those who had gone" (69). Together, they may have had a chance of figuring out a solution to the Oscar problem; separately, no such possibility exists. In "Moses and Gaspar," a man who kills himself leaves his beloved brother an inheritance of two creatures—pets, Matthew Gleeson speculates in "The Crying Cat," though, thanks to Dávila's masterful ambiguity, I initially thought they were people. Moses and Gaspar are so demanding and chaotic that they force our protagonist to cut ties with his partner and friends, forfeit his bedroom, quit his job, and move into a desolate rural home, where he may well meet his brother's fate. In "The Cell," Señora Camino grows concerned about her teenage daughter's deteriorating health. Little does she know that the young Maria Camino suffers alone each night in her bedroom as she faces an undescribed

monster that not even marriage can protect her from. Like all good horror, these stories are scary within and beyond themselves. They are scary not just because they feature grotesque creatures and suspenseful plots, but also because one gets a sense of what these things might represent. “Moses and Gaspar,” to me, is an allegory about grief, dysfunction, and the trauma we inherit from our families; I am reminded of Ari Aster’s terrifying film *Hereditary* (2018). “The Cell” evokes the isolation experienced by victims of domestic violence in a deeply unsettling way.

“The Last Summer” may be the most horrific example of the perils of isolation in *The Houseguest*. A lonely and depressed mother of six unexpectedly gets pregnant during a midlife crisis. One sleepless night, she grabs a breath of fresh air by the stairs that descend from her bedroom to the garden. As she leans on the railing, she suddenly miscarries. She cries out for her husband Pepe, who calls for the doctor. The doctor sees her and tells her to rest. Upon her request, Pepe wraps the coagula in newspaper and buries it in a corner of the garden, out of the children’s sight. In a few days, just as she is beginning to feel better, her son refuses to cut her some tomatoes from the garden: “No, Mami, the worms are there too.” She quickly becomes paranoid, thinking to herself, “Surely Pepe, clumsy as ever, hadn’t dug deep enough and then ... but how horrifying, the maggots crawling out, crawling out ...”¹ (106). A deep anxiety seeps into all of her daily tasks, which she carries out more and more absent-mindedly as she retreats further into her own psyche. She hardly speaks to her family, and soon becomes irritated by all that they say and do: “she wanted to be alone, to think, to observe ... she didn’t want to be distracted, she needed to be alert, listening, watching, listening, watching ...” (106). When they leave her alone in the house one evening, she hears a “light rasping sound, something dragging itself across the floor” (106), and glimpses a faint shadow beneath the door. She runs to the oil lamp across the room, douses herself in its contents, and lights a match. The narrator concludes, “Nothing would be left for them to avenge themselves upon but a pile of smoldering ashes” (107).

Not all of Dávila’s characters meet such grim fates. The title story may provide a glimpse into Dávila’s vision of some kind of way out. In “The Houseguest,” a repressive husband brings home a dangerous creature that harrasses his wife, the maid Guadalupe,

1 All ellipses in the passages quoted from *The Houseguest* are Dávila’s.

and their children. The story opens in an ambiguous register: “I’ll never forget the day he came to live with us. My husband brought him home from a trip.” Judging from this paragraph alone, the story could be about anything. For all we know, the husband could’ve brought home a cute dog that would become his wife’s lifelong companion. In the next paragraph, however, the unease settles in:

At the time we’d been married for almost three years, we had two children, and I wasn’t happy. My husband thought of me as something like a piece of furniture, one that you’re used to seeing in a particular spot but that doesn’t make the slightest impression. We lived in a small, isolated town, far from the city. A town that was almost dead, or about to disappear. (14)

Who is the real monster in this story? The husband or the houseguest? Even before we get to know the terrible creature that is the houseguest, we are situated in the horror of a marriage gone awry, the psychological violence² of a negligent partner. What is initially a banal comparison to a piece of furniture morphs into a commentary on what lurks behind the things that look harmless on the surface, the things we relegate to the unused corners of our houses (or gardens), where the houseguest types reside. I get all the more concerned when I consider that the narrator herself lives in a small rural town, another one of those neglected spaces that is “almost dead” — a corner of its own.

The houseguest turns out to be a kind of Oscar, albeit quieter; he’s “grim, sinister, with large yellowish eyes, unblinking and almost circular, that seemed to pierce through things and people” (14). Like Oscar, the houseguest is human-ish. (When I showed my dad the story, he thought the houseguest was an animal.) He sleeps all day, roams the house at night, stalks the narrator and her children, and eats only two meals a day, comprised of solely meat. Gleeson’s analysis of the beings in “Moses and Gaspar” applies here: the houseguest exists on an “ambiguous, uneasy continuum between the animal and the human (or the animal and the human and something else), an instability of borders that lies at the heart of Dávila’s story and

2 For more on psychological violence in Dávila, see the essay by Torres and Ramírez, “Lo fantástico, lo monstruoso y la violencia psicológica en ‘El huésped’ de Amparo Dávila” [“The Fantastic, the Monstrous, and Psychological Violence in ‘The Houseguest’ by Amparo Dávila.”]

makes it linger, disquietingly, in the reader's mind" ("The Crying Cat"). The narrator begs in vain for her disinterested husband to get rid of him. She almost meets a fate similar to our protagonist in "The Last Summer." One night, she notices him standing by her bed, staring at her. She leaps out of bed and throws an oil lamp at him, which he dodges. It shatters, and has just burst into flames when Guadalupe comes to her rescue. Later, after the houseguest attacks Guadalupe's child and the narrator, the two women decide to take matters into their own hands. When the husband goes on a three week business trip, they act:

Guadalupe sawed several large, sturdy planks while I looked for a hammer and nails. When everything was ready, we silently crept toward the corner room. The double door was ajar. Holding our breath, we closed the door, dropped the bolt, then locked it and began to nail the planks across it until we had completely sealed it shut. Thick drops of sweat ran down our foreheads as we worked. He didn't make any noise; he was seemingly fast asleep. When it was all finished, Guadalupe and I hugged each other, crying. (19)

The houseguest survives nearly two weeks, and raises hell as only Oscar could until his death. "When my husband returned," the narrator concludes, "we greeted him with the news of his guest's sudden and disconcerting death" (19).

"The Houseguest" stands out among the collection as the only story with a happy ending—if that's what this could be called. At the very least, the monster is slain, and everyone we're rooting for survives. It is also the only story where the protagonist isn't entirely isolated; her relationship with Guadalupe accounts for her survival of that initial midnight encounter with the houseguest and her success in carrying out his murder. After the deed is done, she hugs Guadalupe and cries. In this regard, it seems that Dávila is pointing to solidarity as a way out of the houseguest's grip. And yet, I'm not quite satisfied. I get the sense that the real horror in this ending is the temptation to celebrate. At the end of one nightmare lies the next. Kill one houseguest, and the next one comes home from a business trip. Who knows what it'll cost to get rid of him this time.

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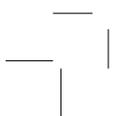
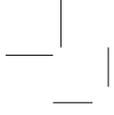
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Borges and I

MARTINA DEROBERTIS

Borges and I

Comparing English Translations of “Borges y yo”

Martina DeRobertis

It is very easy to associate authors' lives with their writing, and assume there is some personal feeling and commentary involved. Yet poets take on different personas when crafting their work to keep themselves hidden, inviting us to connect more deeply with their words. Jorge Luis Borges is well known for not necessarily showing his personality in his writing. He encourages his readers to reflect. Here, I will attempt to do some reflection.

Like Borges, I am from Buenos Aires. Borges' work has been translated multiple times, making his interpretations of the world accessible for speakers of many languages. I feel privileged to read Borges' in Spanish, but there are many translators who bring his craft to the English-speaking world; Kenneth Krabbenoft, Andrew Hurley and James E. Irby are three very popular ones. Like me, all of them found his famous prose poem “Borges y yo” so captivating that each attempted a very personal translation. In this text, Borges describes the “symbiotic” yet problematic relationship he has with another version of himself: “Borges” the celebrity writer, whom he refers to as “the other one,” distant from his true self. Perhaps all the translators chose to translate and share this particular prose poem because it invites them to reflect on feelings that most of us, regardless of background, experience often. Borges plays with a first and a third person voice to distinguish the two “versions” of himself, which, while they indeed conflict and resent each other, still have

sympathy for one another.

On a first read, “Borges y yo” seems intimate. It seems to be only about the narrator's internal struggle with his identity. . The translations of Krabbenoft, Hurley and Irby succeed in carrying across Borges' detailed internal paradoxical strife, but their translations lack literal accuracy. They turn “Borges y yo” into a poem only about Borges' life. The narrator's tone and themes get lost when translated. Their translations do not capture the experience I get with the original. The precise and concise vocabulary in the original text conveys a remarkable narrator who speaks in a distant tone. The speaker changes in the three English translations, changing the overall takeaways of the piece. I chose to think about this because the speaker makes me reflect on the duality I find in everyone, in everything, in myself. To put it simply, it is this duality which I think makes life exciting. Indeed, the duality in this poem is what sparked my interest in translating the text myself, and in my translation I attest to the value of Borges' message: I created a different version of the same poem.

In the Spanish text, the speaker directly states his philosophical “complaint” about life in general: “Lo bueno ya no es de nadie,” Yet when comparing the original line to the three English translations, I notice that they do not quite represent the depth of feeling that the line carries. The translators' word choice narrows the statement down to one about Borges' life only. Although the narrator of the original describes how his alter ego's literature is valuable and even a kind of “salvation” for himself, his words soon transition into tackling a much bigger picture when reflecting that “Lo bueno ya no es de nadie,” which I interpret and translate into “what is good is no longer anyone's”. Borges is shifting his complaint to *everything* that “is good” and that no longer remains that way, hinting at a change. In Spanish, this line is not necessarily making reference to the category of literature mentioned previously; the masculine article “lo” is indeed indicating to the word “todo” ‘everything’ that once was good and has suffered a change. However, the focus in this statement is not to make us think about what “good” thing has been lost, but to emphasize that it is *no longer* good. Something worth noting is that because Borges addresses this commented belonging to “nadie” — ‘anybody’ — it becomes an active subject so I wanted it to remain such effect.

Borges' narrator passively complains that once he shares his literature with the world, it no longer belongs to him. Nevertheless, he seems to have

accepted how life works and has resigned to try and do something about it. Although spiteful, he understands that his work must abandon him. Both Krabbenoft and Hurley, however, make this line a complaint simply about the literature of the “other Borges.” Krabbenoft translates: “Good writing belongs to no one,” unnecessarily making “Lo” refer to the “writing” only. Hurley also makes it specific to Borges’ worthwhile pages by writing: “The good in them no longer belongs to any individual,” also making a simplistic reference to the literature with “in them.” None of these translations convey the great critique of literary society that Borges’ own words do. Irby, however, gives a closer translation: “what is good belongs to no one.” This line successfully refers to everything in general, but still is missing the key word “anymore” — *ya* — that Borges uses, pointing that life has not *always* worked that way, indicating a comparison to the past and an attention to what no longer happens. The translators fail to retell what the original speaker hints at. The English versions do not invite me to analyze beyond Borges’ own experience. They do not compel me to feel engaged and identified.

In every reading I do, I begin some sort of relationship with the speaker of “Borges y yo”. In the Spanish, the narrator openly shares such inner struggles that portray him as someone I can trust in and rely on. The narrator confesses his feelings about life in general and allows such complicity with his readers when stating that: “Por lo demás, yo estoy destinado a perderme, definitivamente” that one can literally translate as: ‘as for the rest, I am destined to get lost, definitely.’ This is the line that I feel I translated most accurately, as even the sentence structure and word order can remain the same. In this line, the speaker clearly assumes that he is fated to get lost, but does not seem to feel so conflicted about it, probably because he knows there is no point in fighting against it. For example, when using the transitional addition phrase “por lo demás” — ‘as for the rest’ — he mentions it as if it were some insignificant detail of his life that he is at ease with already, and implies a rather friendly tone. Furthermore, the clarifying the adverb “definitivamente” — “definitely” — affirms that it is a fact that he is going to get lost, and adds it as if it were no big deal. His neutrality towards the matter makes possible my reliance on someone like him, who can be at ease and relaxed during critical situations.

I do not find this tone when reading either of the three chosen English translations. For example, Krabbenoft translated it as “as for the rest, I am fated to disappear completely.” Although his transitional

phrase is literally accurate, when he moves on into the sentences, he chose the verb “disappear.” Not only does it not completely replace “getting lost,” but it also makes it exclusively about his physical presence. Instead, the original narration transmits that he, or his “true” personality, will be the one getting lost figuratively, while the other side or version to himself will be the one to remain. Krabbenoft selects the adverb “completely” to describe this disappearance, taking away the chance of him being found again. Hurley, translates: “Beyond that, I am doomed – utterly and inevitably – to oblivion.” His choice of words exaggerates Borges’ language tremendously, as he adds a feeling of pity for himself, when in fact the Spanish words do not lament. Irby’s translation also imposes a different feeling from the original, as he writes that “Besides, I am destined to perish, definitively.” First, he chooses to transition with the word “besides,” which adds something as a relevant counterargument, differing from Borges’ more irreverent tone which just mentions his loss, without giving it that much of importance. Irby too distorts Borges’ words and states that he will “perish definitively,” making his loss terminal, when Borges’ do not. All of the translators capture the idea that something will happen to him, but take it to a negative extreme, while Borges’ words in fact transmit a passive, irreverent feeling about it. It is crucial to preserve this tone, but has not been fully accomplished.

Borges is known for alluding to metaphysical or abstract themes, such as explaining how the world works in general, by using personal examples. This invites me or anyone who can access the text in Spanish to reflect on our own actions and ways. He uses very precise language, showing the complexity of his distant yet intimate insights. He claims that “todas las cosas quieren perseverar en su ser” and this statement I interpret in English as he affirming that: “each thing wants to persevere in its being.” In this phrase, I did not exactly give every single word a literal translation. For example “todas las cosas” literally translates to “every thing,” but his message goes beyond pointing at every single thing. Instead, he wants to make emphasis on every thing *in particular*. Therefore I believe “each thing” is more accurate. I kept a literal translation, however, for the specific verbs “want” and “persevere” as they both have a specific purpose. In this statement, he shifts from his own example. And yet, while Borges is a complete stranger to me, his precision and calm makes it feel as if I can count on him as kind of teacher.

But once again, the translations fail, repeatedly



opposing Borges' lack of attachment and intention to give advice to the matter. Krabbenoft translates it as "All things desire to endure in their being," Hurley as "All things wish to go on being what they are," and Irby as "All things long to persist in their being." Borges simply uses "want," which is not the as strong and active of a verb as "desire," "wish," or "long" are. These add an overtly personal and passionate sense of wanting and attachment to whatever their "being" is, far from Borges' words, changing the focus of his claim and sentiment towards it. Additionally, Krabbenoft chooses the word "endure," which is associated with necessarily undergoing suffering while lasting or remaining, with a very different meaning than to persevere, that is instead something done by choice, not obligation. Hurley and Irby make a different claim in their translation, using very neutral and vague verbs like to "go on being" and "persist," respectively. Both these verbs are quite inactive, merely to be or just to remain, and do not address the great themes ideas beyond his own internal battle. Although this text is brought to the English-speaking readers, the sense of comforting and companionship for his audience that Borges expresses in the words he chooses seem to fade when translated.

The second to last sentence in the poem summarizes all of the previously mentioned ideas: "Así, mi vida es una fuga y todo lo pierdo." I translate: 'this way, my life is a leak and everything I lose.' This particular line in Spanish indeed represents what I believe seems to be Borges' literary mission with this text. He describes his life as a "fuga," I interpret in two ways: it can translate literally as "leak" which means a crack that can be the source of trouble and leads to catastrophes, like a leak of gas. It can also translate figuratively as a plan of action to get out of trouble or non-ideal situations, like breaking out of prison. Both meanings allows us to assume that either his life is building up into a problem, like a leak, or that his life is the solution to a problem, like an escape. This ties into Borges' paradoxical relationship with his other self, which he seems uncomfortable with, but not so concerned about. He does not make me feel sorry about his situation. His words imply that he somehow clearly understands his place and role in the world, however mysterious that place is. The original structure of the sentence, moreover, I felt the need to keep intact, especially because he writes "todo lo pierdo" 'everything I lose,' instead of saying "pierdo todo" 'I lose everything.' By putting "todo" first, he gives focus to what he is constantly losing, beyond the simple fact that he is losing it.

The translators are again misguided. Krabbenoft, for instance, writes: "Thus, my life is an escape. I will lose everything." He chooses "escape," thus suggesting that Borges longs for something better or freedom. And also, takes the liberty to translate the sentence into two separate ones, isolating these ideas that were meant to show cause and effect, to seem distant. Hurley also lengthens the sentence and adds many words to it, writing: "So my life is a point – counter point, a kind of fugue, and a falling away – and everything winds up being lost to me." Using so many unnecessary words here, he opposes the economy of Borges' precise writing style. Irby's version goes: "Thus, my life is a flight and I lose everything." Although his interpretation seems to come closer to a most accurate translation, I still feel that it does not replace Borges' Spanish effect. The word "flight" specifically associates with fast and quick moves to escape, acting on reflex or running away from something when being prosecuted. On the contrary, Borges' "fuga," if indeed an escape, would likely be a slow-paced and planned. Given the opposing word choices and sentence structure, it is evident that takeaways from this paradoxical and illusory text cannot simply be the same when translated.

As I was analyzing the translations, I felt the need to try and write my own interpretation of this poem. During the process, however, I witnessed how hard it is to try and carry his meanings over into another language. My translated "Borges and I" of course will read very differently from the original, but it is still something worth taking the time to study, given its theme: the question of the self.

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Notes

1. The following is my own translation of "Borges y yo":

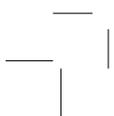
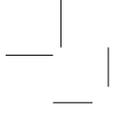
To the other one, to Borges, is whom things happen to. I walk through Buenos Aires and get delayed, even automatically, to look at porches and front doors; of Borges I get news over the mail and I see his name within a list of selected professors or in a biographical dictionary. I like hourglasses, maps, typography

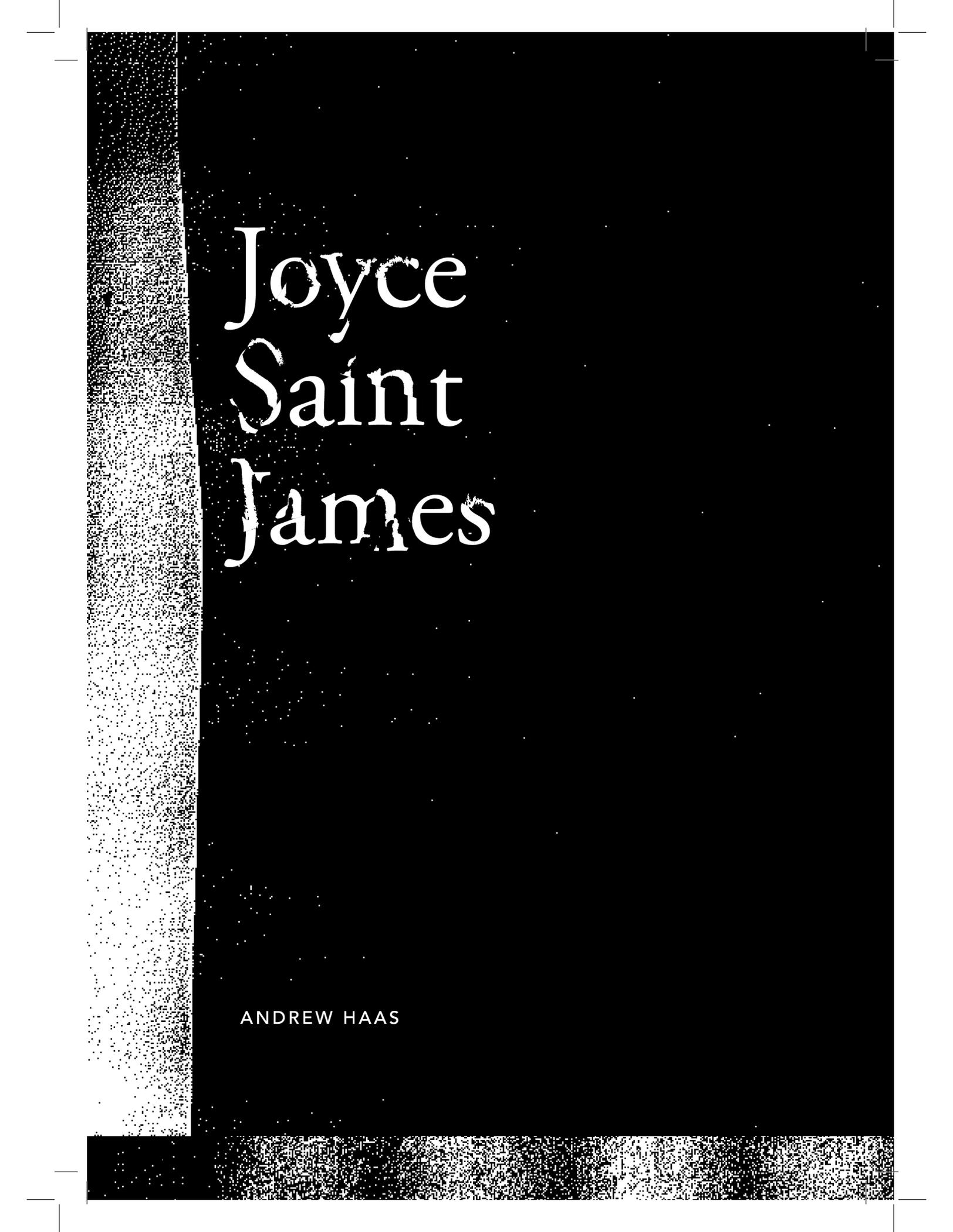
from the eighteenth century, etymologies, the taste of coffee and Stevenson's prose; the other one shares these preferences with me, but in a vain mode that converts them into an actor's attributes. It would be exaggerated to say that our relationship is hostile; I live, I allow myself to be lived, so that Borges can contrive his literature, and that literature then justifies me. Nothing costs me to acknowledge that he has achieved certain valid pages, but those pages cannot save me, maybe because what is good is no longer anyone's, not even his, but instead belongs to language and tradition. As for the rest, I am destined to get lost, definitively, and only some instant of myself would be able to survive within the other one. Little by little, I am giving everything to him, although I am aware of his perverse custom of falsifying and magnifying. Spinoza understood how each of all things want to persevere in their being; the stone eternally wants to be stone and the tiger a tiger. I shall remain in Borges, not in me (if it is that I am someone), but I recognize myself even less in his books than in many others, or in a laborious strumming of a guitar. Years ago, I tried to free myself from him and went from the porteño mythologies to the games with time and infinity, but those games are Borges' now and I will have to think up other things. Like this, my life is a leak and everything I lose belongs to oblivion, or to the other one.

I don't know which of the two writes this page.

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Joyce Saint James

ANDREW HAAS

Joyce Saint James

Perpetual Pilgrimage in *Ulysses*

Andrew Haas

James Joyce's lifelong interest in medieval thought, particularly in figures such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, and St. Patrick, is today generally recognized. And although the small volume of studies about the topic undermatch its significance, there have also been several preliminary surveys into the study of the figure of the pilgrim in Joyce's work (Holloway, 212-225; Toro Santos, 101-114; Szczesnak-Brewer, 1-25). No work to date, however, has explored the significance of Joyce's inheritance of the historical phenomenon of the medieval Irish "perpetual pilgrimage," or "pilgrimage *ex patria*." Joyce self-consciously adapted this tradition of "perpetual pilgrimage" not only as a model for his own life as an Irishman in exile on the European continent, but also, in *Ulysses* and other works, as a mode of thinking about individual movement and escape within the constraining social structures of twentieth century urban modernity.

As early as the seventh century, the Irish ideal of pilgrimage or *peregrinatio* was formally and functionally distinct from both the definitions of pilgrimage on the medieval continent and from typical definitions today. "Pilgrimage," by the standard definition, involves a voyage to a holy site with intent to return home afterward. But in what Kathleen Hughes has called "perpetual pilgrimage," and other sources refer to as "pilgrimage *ex patria*," or simply the Irish *peregrinatio*, Irish pilgrims undertook pilgrimages explicitly intending never to return to their homes, nor, often, even to Ireland (Hughes, 143; Riain-Raedel, 17-

21). Perpetual pilgrimage was one instantiation of the longstanding tradition of Christian hermetic asceticism, an act of self-sacrifice made still harsher by the particular structure of Irish law and society. A medieval Irish person's legal and social status, as well as cultural identity, was defined within a series of nesting bonds—to family, kin group, nation or polity (*túath*), Ireland as a whole. The difference in binding power between the two foremost levels of community—the *túath* and Ireland generally—is reflected in a division between "greater" and "lesser" perpetual pilgrimage. The lesser pilgrimage is a departure from the *túath*, a small group of about 3000-5000 people, which was the primary social structure from which an Irish person received support and protection and to which one was fiscally and socially obliged (Hayes-Healy). The greater pilgrimage, on the other hand, is a pilgrim's extrication from the less infrastructurally and legally binding but more deeply culturally binding structure of the Irish nation as a whole, in which were invested the conventions of law, language, religion and tradition that individuated an Irish person as distinct from foreigners. The perpetual pilgrimage thus represented a complete sacrifice of social identity and legal rights, a renunciation not only of worldly comforts but of the innermost moorings of a pilgrim's subjectivity.

Many of Ireland's most renowned saints, such as St. Columba, St. Columbanus, and St. Fursey, undertook perpetual pilgrimages, establishing over the course of their travels foreign monasteries and hostels for perpetual pilgrims. The decentralized and mobile quality of Irish *peregrinatio* suited itself well to the evangelization of much of pagan Europe, allowing Irish pilgrims to be received by noblemen and Teutonic kings (Hughes, 144). But by the middle of the eighth century the Irish ideal of *peregrinatio* became increasingly subjected to restriction and regulation by both papal decree and internal Irish legislation. Around 600, a variety of modes of monasticism and pilgrimage coexisted in Western Europe, from the Irish exilic model to the monastic ideal of perpetual prayer found in the Burgundian monarchy (Helvetius and Kaplan, 280); by the beginning of the next century, this variety came to be seen by the papacy as a problem requiring standardizing reform. That the church hierarchy had such a keen interest in curtailing the movement of Irish perpetual pilgrims suggests that the common perpetual pilgrim of the seventh century "Age of the Saints," so highly regarded in Ireland for centuries, may have behaved quite differently (and had quite a different background) from the valorized saints of this period like Columbanus and Fursey, whose legacy

is preserved in history only through the rosy lens of hagiography. Many of the Irish pilgrims were criminals; *peregrinatio* was often imposed as a punishment for a sin or crime, either as only temporary exclusion or permanent banishment. In the “Penitential of Cummean,” for example, a monk who commits a murder “shall die unto the world with perpetual pilgrimage” (qtd. in Hughes, 145). For a saintly pilgrim, total erasure from the legal and economic structure of the túath was a component of the brutal asceticism and self-sacrifice that valorized one’s pilgrimage, but this function also ran in the opposite direction: those who found themselves burdened under legal obligations such as debt and marriage could also dissolve these problems by becoming pilgrims, thereby erasing their legal status within their community.

Developments in commerce and transitions in early medieval Irish economy were also necessary for the birth of the perpetual peregrine ideal. Perpetual pilgrimage can be understood as responsive to, and made possible by, the transition of sectors of Ireland from the fifth to the tenth century from an agricultural economy that resembled a less productive subsistence economy to an economy of “agricultural and commodities surplus beyond the needs of subsistence and local lordly-client socio-economic relationships” that produced the necessary conditions for widespread maritime trade (Loveluck and O’Sullivan, 20). Some of these territories, like Brega, with its eastern coasts along the Irish Sea, have furnished archeological evidence of extensive trade in various foodstuffs, hides, leather, vellum, livestock, and slaves; this trade produced a merchant class which was relatively free of the top-down control associated with kings and lords (21). As the anthropologist Pierre Clastres has written, transition from a subsistence to a surplus economy is rarely welcomed, except by rulers; the imperative for accumulation destroys the sense of leisure that subsistence agricultural societies enjoy and lays the groundwork for greater coercive political power (197-203). In early medieval Ireland we see an interesting case in which the rise of this undesirable economic transition simultaneously produced a viable escape route from itself: a network of sea routes that facilitated the relatively autonomous classes of merchants and perpetual pilgrims. A telling way this alignment of economic forces manifests in the literary and hagiographic tradition of Irish *peregrinatio* is an imaginative fixation upon the sea and ships. As Wooding argues, in Adomnán’s hagiography of the perpetual pilgrim Saint Columba a wide range of terms for ships appear—*barca*, *cimbul*, *curucus*, *longenauis*, *nauis*—indicating that a variety of types of ships, Irish

and foreign, would have been commonly observed along the Irish coasts during this time. A number of accounts romanticized perpetual pilgrims who had simply jumped into a rowboat and floated off to sea, or those “who had stolen away” in these merchant ships with no destination in mind “because they wished for the love of God to be on pilgrimage, they cared not whither” (Hughes, 143). In its shifting of imaginative emphasis from land to sea, Irish *peregrinatio* reasserts the traditional Christian ascetic devotion to what Deleuze calls “smooth space,” space that is not yet “territory”: as John the Baptist once emerged from the desert dressed in camel skins and eating locusts, Irish pilgrims set off without maps into the wild sea in oarless dinghies. This interrelation between commercial networks and the exilic impulse in the imagination of the perpetual pilgrims, I will argue, is what motivates Joyce’s excavation and revision of this arcane ideal for the new context of colonized Dublin in relation to the metropolises of twentieth-century Europe.

In *Ulysses*, Stephen explicitly identifies his own exilic faith with the faith of Columbanus, noting that they each left behind their dying mothers in Ireland: “His mother’s prostrate body the fiery Columbanus in holy zeal bestrode. She was no more: the trembling skeleton of a twig burnt in the fire, an odour of rosewood and wetted ashes” (2.144). The events of *Ulysses* take place in the shadow of Stephen’s failed ventures in Paris. Stephen explicitly understands this regression and failure as a failure to fulfill the Columbanic model of *peregrinatio*: “You were going to do wonders, what? Missionary to Europe after fiery Columbanus. Fiacre and Scotus on their creepystools in heaven spilt from their pintpots, loudlatinlaughing: *Euge! Euge!*” (3.194). Stephen measures his exilic impulsion against that of Columbanus (and of Fiacre and Scotus), and feels he has returned to Dublin because his, in comparison, is laughably deficient. But if Joyce admits the early deficiency of his exilic impulse in comparison to his peregrine forefathers, he does so only to enact a radical misprision of the nature of this impulse, and of Irish *peregrinatio* itself.

Joyce poses Stephen’s identification with Columbanus, and with other perpetual *peregrini*, as exiles from Ireland in opposition to the vulgar nationalism that many in modern Ireland then associated with that golden age of “Saints and Sages.” As with most uses of the “golden age” mytheme, its popular deployment in Ireland as a trope tended to be reactionary: “the citizen” in *Ulysses* recalls this period of mythic perfection in Irish piety to imply that Bloom cannot, as John

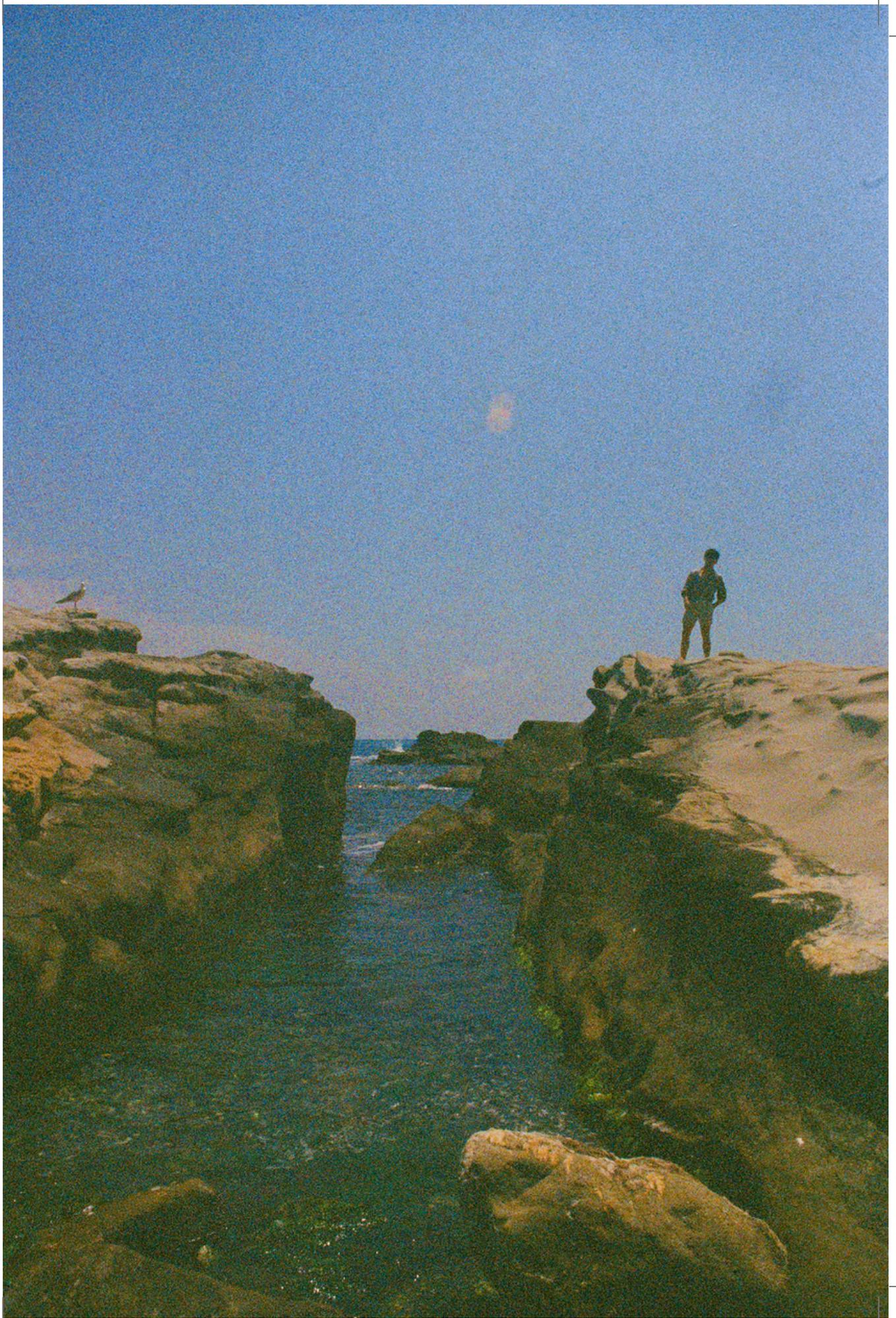
Wyse suggests, “love his country like the next fellow,” because Bloom, as a Jew, is necessarily excluded from what the citizen characterizes as the Columbanic tradition of evangelical Christianity and proto-nationalism: “That’s the new Messiah for Ireland! says the citizen. Island of saints and sages!” (12.1642). In reality, the alliance between Irish *peregrinatio* and social structures and religious hierarchy was always characterized by a certain uneasiness, because perpetual pilgrimage involved an extrication of the pilgrim from obligations to family, the *túath*, accumulated debts, judicial punishments, and even, to an extent, immediate religious institutions (cloisters, monasteries, and so on). It is true, as I described earlier, that this forsaking of the immediate “law of the father” was always said in hagiography to be undertaken under a professed obedience to a higher law, a higher father. This was precisely Columbanus’s justification: that he was merely obeying God the Father’s command to Abraham, “Get out of your native land, and away from your family, and from your father’s house, into a land that I will reveal to you.” For Joyce, however, the law of the “higher father” of the church is just as ungrounded as the law of more immediate patriarchal structures, for they are established upon the same fiction, the “apostolic succession” of “paternity”: “Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten [...] founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. [...] Paternity may be a legal fiction” (9.844).

Notably, while hagiographies of Columbanus stress his devotion to the “higher father” as his motivation for pilgrimage, Joyce never articulates the saint’s motivation this way, nor does Joyce even suggest an object toward which Columbanus strives. Rather, the Columbanic model is instructive because it exemplifies the necessity of extricating oneself from all nets of Ireland, even one’s family, if one is to exceed narrow nationalisms. Joyce insists in his revision of the Columbanic legacy that the tradition of Irish pilgrimage was always fundamentally about escape from the social apparatus, about “exile,” rather than evangelizing in subservience to said apparatus—a claim that, as outlined earlier, remains controversial in parsing the motives of revered saints like Columbanus but certainly holds true for the masses of criminals, debtors, and beggars that voluntarily undertook or were forced into perpetual pilgrimage in order to escape social obligations or criminal sentences. “Exiles” were at once the most innocent and the most guilty children of Ireland; their decision to leave its

shores might be the most freely taken or the most harshly imposed. The resonances with Joycean exile are blatant: the degree to which Joyce’s own “exile” was truly a matter of compulsion or election is a basic question of Joyce scholarship, yet put in this context I think clearly a reductive one. For Joyce, the pilgrim’s election and compulsion prove to be as definitionally codependent and invertible as paternal authority and its subversion of itself.

Indeed, these two invertible dyads—the guilt/innocence of the patriarch, his compulsion/election to become an exilic pilgrim—tend to become superimposed in the Joycean catalogue. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce made much of the penal ambiguity of the Irish pilgrimage: the perpetual pilgrims’ “highly continental evenements, for meter and peter to temple an eslaap, for auld acquaintance, to Peregrine and Michael and Farfassa and Peregrine, for navigants et peregrinantis” are motivated alternately “after nonpenal start, [...] sansfamillias” (398) or under judicial compulsion from the “perplexedly uncondemnatory bench (whereon punic judgship strove with penal law)” (90). Sometimes, the compulsion for pilgrimage is “nonpenal” but suspiciously “sansfamillias”; at others, the court’s attitude toward the patriarchal pilgrim may be “uncondemnatory,” but only “perplexedly”; and in this ambiguous judicial scenario, “punic judgship” is allied with “penal law.” It is also worth noting that the Latin term *peregrinus* that Joyce heavily puns on in these passages carries the same dikastic and etiological ambiguities, signifying both “ascetic pilgrim” and “condemned exile” in its usage in Irish hagiography (Charles-Edwards, 104), and in the Roman Imperial period referring both to foreign travelers and to the disenfranchised *barbari* whose lands had been subsumed by imperial expansion.

In this Joycean framing, Stephen’s “apostolic succession” of Columbanus as an exilic prototype, and Columbanus’s own excuse that he was leaving Ireland on Father Abraham’s example, both enact this inherently subversive, creative logic of repetition against the rigid restrictions of law. Both are exercises in what Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* describes as “challenging the law as secondary, derived, borrowed or ‘general’; denouncing it as involving a second-hand principle which diverts an original force or usurps an original power. [...] By adopting the law, a falsely submissive soul manages to evade it and to taste pleasures it was supposed to forbid” (5). Challenging the immediate demands of law and social convention as secondary (in particular, to Christ’s teachings) was of course the *modus operandi* of the perpetual pilgrim.



Columbanus justified his departure from his dying mother by quoting Christ's imperative: "Have you not heard," was his only answer, "the words of the Saviour: 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me?'" (Metlake, 23-24). Columbanus's departure, however, was by no means an obvious inheritance from the Christian saintly tradition. Augustine himself—whom Columbanus had read but showed little interest in (O'Hara, 164)—condemned North African gyrovagues as heretical, accused them of selling false relics, and referred to them pejoratively as "*circumcelliones*" ("barn-circlers") for their tendency to be found begging among peasants (Wood, 42). Like the Wakean jury, anyone weighing Columbanus's justification of his actions as mere repetition of Christian example might well be ultimately "uncondemnatory," but only "perplexedly." The innovations of the Irish *peregrinatio* do not represent a simple reenactment of historically condoned saintly models, but a creative, subversive repetition.

Similarly, a strong contender for Stephen's central thematic "plot arc" in *Ulysses* would be his guilt about his explicitly Columbanic leaving of his dying mother for France and his refusal to pray for her before her death. Not only does this anxiety of Stephen's open the novel, it reappears precisely at what might be called the novel's "climax" in the "Circe" section, when Stephen hallucinates his mother's ghostly return. One need not be a committed Freudian to see, as has often been remarked, that Stephen's mother in "Circe" represents something like a quite literal "return of the repressed," her ghost mirroring back to Stephen his guilt about his peregrine rejection of social obligations and laws. In *The Nets of Modernism*, Maud Ellmann has elaborated the unfolding contradiction between Stephen's ambition to produce himself *ex nihilo* in *Portrait* and his increasing awareness in *Ulysses* of his intractable entanglement, as citizen and as subject, in the social fabric that produced him (3-13): this social fabric appears composed, on the one hand, of the nets Stephen aims to fly by, and on the other, of the far-reaching web of navelcords to which he owes his particular subjectivity ("The cords of all link back, strandtwining cable of all flesh," 3.37). In "Circe," Stephen confronts this contradiction most overtly through his guilt about his mother, who appears as a representative of this generative social fabric and the conventions that bind it together, specifically its obligation to sympathetic prayer, all of which Stephen has rejected. "I pray for you in my other world," Stephen's mother says through "ashen breath," "Years and years I loved you, O my son, my firstborn, when you lay in my womb" (15.4203). Stressing her devotion

even in death to the nets of social convention that are the "womb" of Stephen's subjectivity even as he refuses them, Stephen's mother herself enacts a kind of vicious repetition of a martyr's example, inverting Stephen's refusal to pray by praying for him even from beyond the grave. (Here she, as conceived by Stephen, could be said to desire not to reify the selfless prayer of the saints, but to repeat and maliciously pervert this prayer, in order to wound and to provoke guilt.) Contra the common nationalistic image of Columbanus, Stephen's "repetition" of the Columbanic model can be understood as precisely such a "fallen" repetition, to provisionally adopt, ironize, and move beyond the nets of his social production even as he must perpetually, ineluctably, confront them.

Beyond the personal repetition that characterizes Stephen's relation to Columbanus, Joyce also poses the historical and economic realities of modern Ireland as a "fallen" repetition of Columbanus's Ireland, in which a burgeoning surplus economy allowed pilgrims to escape along trade routes newly produced by commodity trading along certain Irish coasts. Accordingly, the literary imagination of the period became increasingly fixated upon ships, and poets and hagiographers expanded their vocabularies with new seafaring terminology, spurred on by the manifold types of foreign vessels that appeared in Irish waters for the first time (Loveluck, 20). Similarly, in *Portrait*, when Stephen first arrives in Dublin, his first inklings of his exilic impulse manifest in an imaginative fascination with a commercial network of sea-trade: "The vastness and strangeness of the life suggested to him by the bales of merchandise stocked along the walls or swung aloft out of the holds of steamers wakened again in him the unrest which had sent him wandering" (57). Similarly, Joyce's short story "Eveline" recounts a young woman's failure to escape Ireland ("Escape! She must escape!", 258) via the expanding network of transatlantic steamship lines to follow her love interest, Frank, who himself earns his income from these lines. Thoroughly ensnared in the social "nets" that Stephen aims to fly by, Eveline is captivated by Frank's sailor stories, which center on the escape routes afforded by the sea, depicting transitory encounters in foreign lands and a lifestyle of perpetual exile. Frank exotically colors these descriptions, as Adomnán did in his hagiography of Saint Columba, with extensive enumerations of the names of foreign vessels: "He told her the names of the ships he had been on and the names of the different services. He had sailed through the Straits of Magellan and he told her stories of the terrible Patagonians." (257).

Some Marxian scholars, most notably Terry Eagleton, have criticized Joyce's conception of politico-economic relations in history as insufficiently dialectical in its supposed extrapolation of specific Irish history to over-generalized universals: "The ironic overttotalization of *Ulysses* is a pedantic travesty of modern European aesthetics [...] dialectical mediation is disrupted: immediate and universal are either too comically close for comfort or riven apart" (36). It is true that in *Finnegans Wake*, and less totalizingly in *Ulysses*, Joyce saw this type of Irish exodus as an eternally recurring archetype of Irish history: *Finnegans Wake* makes frequent mention of the flight of the Irish "wild geese" following the Williamite War ("having flown his wild geese, alohned in crowds to wander on..." 49), and early in *Ulysses* Stephen remembers associating in Paris with the "Son of the wild goose, Kevin Egan of Paris" (3.164). It is also true that Joyce aligns more with Nietzsche's model of eternal return than with teleological historical models like Deasy's Christian teleology ("All history moves towards one great goal, the manifestation of God," 2.351) or more strictly "dialectical" materialisms with their apparel of Hegel-derived dialectical contradictions and teloi. But Joyce's conception of history and political economy nonetheless resonates with a more Deleuzian Marxism, in conceiving networks of capital within history as a determining force characterized by repetition and mutation, an "immanent system that constantly moves its limits and constantly re-establishes them on an expanded scale" (Pellejero, 102). As just outlined, the moments of Joycean "becoming-pilgrim," which repeat and revise the Columbanic "becoming-pilgrim," are always characterized by a sudden epiphanic broadening of a character's imagination qua geographic and commercial networks and sometimes even by a Marx-flavored intuition of Dublin's specific historical situation within and determination by global networks of commodity exchange ("the bales of merchandise [...] wakened again in [Stephen] the unrest which had sent him wandering...").

The compatibility of Joyce's revision of perpetual pilgrimage with a Deleuzian model suggests new possibilities, beyond the scope of this paper, for reading Joyce's approach to historical repetition in light of Joyce's emphasis upon the multiplicity and overdetermination of material realities and relations of power, rather than posing them within a dialectical relation. If the Joycean method were merely, as Eagleton charges, one of increasingly generalizable similarity—if the relation it emphasized between the political economies of Columbanus's Ireland and the Ireland of the twentieth century were one of simple

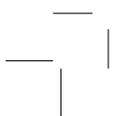
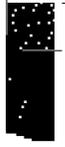
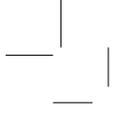
resemblance—this would indeed prove a reactionary (or at least counterproductive) flattening of difference into identity, no better than the citizen's deployment of the era of "Saints and Sages" to reify an essential, perpetually self-identical "Irishness" that is and always has been. But, as we have seen, Joyce's method is not an exercise of resemblance—which trades in generalities, universals, laws—but rather an exercise that produces ever-increasing difference, parody, and subversion by means of repetition. In "The Eighteenth Brumaire," Marx himself famously posed the relation between Napoleon and his nephew Napoleon III not as a dialectic but as a decidedly Joycean repetition of parodic paternity ("first as tragedy, then as farce"). Joyce's version proceeds by a Viconian generative degeneracy: "First as Christ, then as Columbanus, then as Stephen, then as... , then as..."

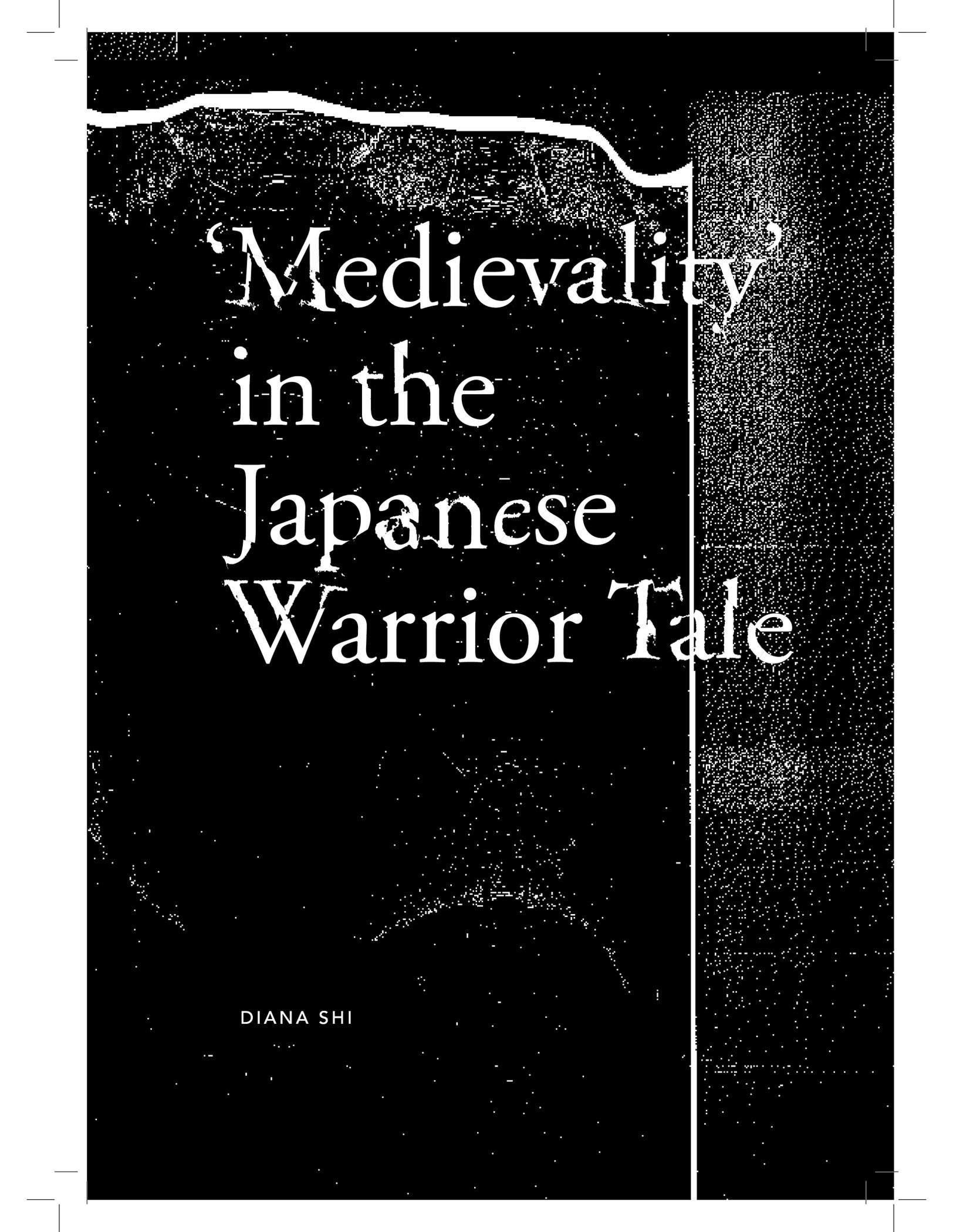
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‘Medievality’
in the
Japanese
Warrior Tale

DIANA SHI

'Medievality' in the Japanese Warrior Tale

Between Literacy, Oral Performance, and Visual Art

Diana Shi

The term “medieval”, suggestive of the Middle Ages, the bridge between ancient and early-modern times, is defined as the period from 1185 to 1600 in Japanese history. This period is marked by a departure from an imperial-aristocratic rule in Heian Japan (794-1185) to a warrior-centered regime. Unlike the Edo period (1600-1867) that follows, in which a politically unified Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa shogunate, the medieval period is an era of internal warfare. Thus, historically speaking, the “medievality” of the period in question can be construed as a period exhibiting political transitions between the periods that come before and after it: between internal warfare and political unification.

This paper focuses on medieval ‘warrior tales’ (*gunki monogatari*), particularly the Tales of the Heike (*Heike monogatari*, which started to emerge from the thirteenth century). These tales describe the political turmoil during the twelfth century that upturned Japanese society. Conflict erupted during a debate on imperial succession in 1156 (later known as the Hōgen rebellion) during which the courtiers Taira no Kiyomori and Minamoto no Yoshitomo supported cloistered emperor Go-Shirakawa’s claims against his challengers. The granting of large rewards to Kiyomori caused Yoshimoto’s resentment. Supported by other influential figures at court, Yoshimoto raised troops

against Kiyomori and Go-Shirakawa in 1160, an event which would come to be known as the Heiji Rebellion. The rebellion was swiftly put down, however, and Yoshimoto executed. Around twenty years later, Yoshimoto’s exiled son, Minamoto no Yoritomo, rose to challenge the Kiyomori and his Taira clan in the Gempei war (1180-1185). Following the changing of alliances by Go-Shirakawa, the Taira were defeated by the Minamoto clan, leaving the Minamoto leadership under Yoritomo to set up a military government in Kamakura (eastern Japan), which became a rival of the imperial court in Kyoto (western Japan).

Historians periodize a “medieval” Japan modeled on socio-political changes. But a further question arises: how do genres of literacy, oral-performance, and visual art popular in medieval Japan contribute to our understanding of the “medieval?” To answer this question, it is necessary to examine the textual culture of the medieval period in relation to the preceding and succeeding periods. The medieval English literature scholar, Elizabeth Scala, observes that the textual culture of the Middle Ages is that of a manuscript culture, and what constitutes the “medievality” of the texts produced under such a manuscript culture is the *intertextuality* of the medieval narrative structure, as medieval texts always ‘bear witness to an *other* text, most often figured materially as the textual ancestor from which it has been copied’ (Scala, 2002: 1). For Scala, medieval texts are far less stable than that of a print culture, which started to merge from 1476, the year in which Caxton introduced the printing press to England.

Like medieval English texts, the textual culture in medieval Japan is that of a manuscript culture typified by a large quantity of textual variants in the corpus of literary genres such as ‘tale literature’ (*monogatari*). The textual culture in medieval Japan differs from the preceding Heian period, in which literacy had been the privilege of the elite. During the medieval period, the locus of textual transmission, composition and reception shifted from the Kyoto centre to peripheral provinces or temples. The textual culture in medieval Japan is also distinguished from the succeeding Edo period, during which literacy, benefited by the development of printing technologies (e.g. woodblock prints), became integrated with commoners’ lives.

Yet, the word “text,” which is etymologically related to “things woven”, from the Latin *textus*, suggests that we ought to look at the dynamism of different elements within texts and should not treat medieval literary productions as autonomous works. Thus, unlike

Elizabeth Scala's analysis, which mostly concerns the *written* element of medieval textual culture, with a focus on the Tales of the Heike of the 'warrior-tale' genre, this essay argues that the salient feature which characterizes the "medievality" of medieval Japanese textual culture is textual variability and intertextuality not only on a written level, but also on oral and visual levels, to the extent that a literary text cannot be fully articulated without examining such multi-layered representation of medieval literature. The intertextuality of medieval texts problematizes both the notion of 'genre' and the binary of written/oral binary.

The 'warrior-tale' genre, one of the main genres of medieval Japanese literature, started to take form from the mid-Heian period. It may be more adequate for us to define it as a genre unified by its subject matter — historical warfare, the lives of warriors and the people close to them — rather than stylistic traits, since the development of the "genre" of the 'warrior-tale' owes a debt to traditions such as poetry, anecdotal stories, and oral-performances. Similar to works of medieval English literature such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, most war tales during medieval Japan were produced and transmitted through a number of textual lineages. This is most typified by the written variants of the Tale of Heike, a body of literary texts that emerged from the thirteenth century, relating the Gempei war fought between the Taira clan and the Minamoto clan. The Tales of the Heike is represented as the 'warrior tale' *par excellence*, in which the genre category of 'warrior tale' is almost defined in terms of the Tale of Heike. The hundred-odd variants in the Heike corpus are traditionally classified by scholars into the categories of recited lineage (*kataribonkei*, texts which bears strong markers of oral composition, transmission, and performance, represented by the well-known *Kakuichi* variant) and read lineage (*yomibonkei*, texts which are intended to be read, for example the *Engyōbon*, *Nagatobon*, *Genpei jōsuiki* variants).

Although Tales of the Heike exists in large quantity of textual variants, it is also a corpus of texts with similar plots, narrating the rise and fall of the Taira clan. The similarity of the plots echoes Scala's idea that 'the utterance of a medieval text always recalls for us other texts' (Scala, 2002: 3). Nevertheless, the two textual lineages exhibit different ways of representing "history". For example, Selinger (2014: 19) argues that the recited lineage offers a 'western (Kyoto-based) political vision' as opposed to the 'eastern perspective' of the read lineage. Selinger observes that texts of the read lineage have a focus on the early days of Minamoto no Yoritomo's uprising, and finish with

celebratory prose, glorifying how Yoritomo brought 'peace to the four seas' by establishing the Kamakura government in eastern Japan as opposed to the recited lineage, which ends with the demise of the western military regime led by Taira no Kiyomori (Selinger, 2014:20). The differing visions offered by different textual lineages demonstrate several salient features of the textual culture in medieval Japan. Firstly, unlike mechanical copying in a print culture, which is able to produce nearly identical copies of a particular work, the person responsible for manuscript reproduction may introduce difference into the text. This can be seen in the Ellesmere edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, which regularizes the meter of Chaucer's verses (Scala, 2002: 2). Secondly, it shows how the complex play of narrative forces characterizes the "medievality" of the Japanese medieval textual culture, as perspectives offered by different textual variants function to *re-configure* the Gempei war which happened a century before the composition and compilation of the Tales of the Heike. Thirdly, while each variant is highly individualized, since the stories are filtered by the author's own interpretations of the Gempei "history", these overlaying variants provide us with varied representations of the same events, transforming the telling of the Gempei war into a communal and participatory literary tradition. Henceforth, as shown by the Tale of Heike, it is not adequate for us to treat medieval literary texts belonging to the genre of 'warrior tales' as autonomous works.

Moreover, we ought to look beyond the written texts as medieval Japanese literature had a distinctively oral characteristic. Before examining the oral-performative aspects of the Tale of Heike, it is firstly important to unsettle the common conception of the Heike as being strictly "prose" based on the fact that they are not represented on the page in poetic metrics. A careful reading of the style of the *Kakuichi* variant shows that it contains a variety of poetic forms, such as vernacular Japanese poetry (*waka*), popular songs in Heian Japan (*imayō*), and the use of parallelism, for instance at the beginning of the tale, which resembles antithetical couplets (*tsuiku*) characteristic of Sino-Japanese poetry (*kanshi*). Furthermore, descriptive narratives in the Tales of the Heike are interwoven with allusions to classical, courtly poetic traditions of the Heian period. For example, the 'travel scenes' (*michiyuki*, e.g. "The Journey down the Eastern Sea Road" in scroll ten) is a subcategory of the parting topos of the poetic tradition. Moreover, the oral poetic features of the Tales of the Heike trace back to the poetic orientation of Heian vernacular literature, where conventions of oral storytelling are evident in works like the Tale of





Genji (1014) (Shirane, 2007: 9). All of these suggest the slippage of genre between poetry and tale literature. The Tales of the Heike are epic-like, forcing us to question the adequacy of the binary categorization of the Heike corpus into read lineage/ recited lineage. The written and oral dimensions of texts are complementary.

Furthermore, the relationship between the Tales of the Heike and the performance by blind minstrel-priests (*biwa hōshi*, lit. lute priests) reinforce that the Heike is of oral literature; they were orally composed, performed and transmitted. Similar to the travelling minstrels in medieval Europe, who performed songs and stories of existing or imaginary historical events, the minstrel-priests Japan originally served as chanters of sacred liturgies and as wayside entertainers telling stories, reciting poems, and singing songs. The origin of the Heike stories seem to be related to these minstrel-priests, as they are commonly said to have emerged from the thirteenth century, when large numbers of blind minstrel-priests congregated at the Shoshazan, a Buddhist monastic centre in Harima Province, perhaps out of a demand to gather and transmit stories about the Gempei war. There were two main strands of minstrel-priests which gathered at the Shoshazan, one type being those active especially in Kyūshū and eastern Japan who followed the troops and sang battle tales, another type were those attached to temples around Kyoto, who were mostly chanting Buddhist pieces to small audiences (Ruth, 1990: 536). The fact that the Heike stories are partly created out of the interactions among different strands of chanting as well as battle-tale songs from various battlefield regions essentially suggests that the Tales of the Heike are of an oral origin—it was composed orally and was intended to be performed and read out loud. This echoes Horton's (Horton, 1993: 172-3 in Fröhlich, 2007: 33) argument that 'though the vulgate version of the text was written down, its primary form of reception through the medieval period was through vocal performance'.

The analysis of the performative aspect of texts requires us to examine the reception of performed texts, as "performance" refers to a communal act, an act in which the transmission of a message is based on the knowledge that is shared between the performer and the audience (Fröhlich 2007: 36). It is important to first identify who were the audience of the performance of warrior tales. It is commonly understood that the commoner origin of the minstrel-priests suggests means that the performance of the tales was of a folk nature and was enjoyed by commoners.

To a certain extent this is true, however, the late fourteenth century warrior tale "Chronicle of Great Peace" (*Taiheiki*), for example, which was performed by sighted amateur performers (*monogatarisō*), was consumed by courtiers and warriors (Selinger, 2014: 18). Such a wide circulation of warrior tales among various social classes characterizes the transition of the textual culture in Japan from the Heian period to the medieval period, as during the medieval period, the locus of literary practices and audience were not only from the centre but also the peripheral, which was influenced by the changing political context mentioned at the beginning of this essay.

Furthermore, the oral-performance of the warrior tales, especially that of the Tale of Heike, had an important ritual function, which was to celebrate (*shūgen*) the restoration of order after the Gempei war and to pacify (*chinkon*) the souls of both the victor and the defeated (Watson & Shirane, 2006:2). Here, the exorcizing function of the texts shows that medieval oral-performance was also linked to ideology, as the chanting of the Heike aimed to offer salvation by incorporating the defeated into the new social order after the war.

The Tale of Heike, especially Kakuichi's variant of the Heike completed in 1371, gained a new "meaning" during the Southern and Northern Court period (1336-1392) centuries after the Gempei war. The general sentiment of pessimism and helplessness felt by the people due to warfare during the medieval period is epitomized by the Buddhist thought of the 'last dharma' (*mappō*) prevalent at the time, and during and after the Southern and Northern Court period, the significance of the ritual aspect of the Tales of the Heike lies in the fact that that it reassured and united those disillusioned listeners, thus bringing the past to the present, inviting the audience to participate in assigning "new" meanings to the past, making the Gempei war a war which subsequent wars were compared. The idea we are getting here is the making of a "communal tradition", which characterizes the "medievality" of the medieval Japanese textual culture: a culturally shared system of ideas and knowledge of how to re-contextualize the past was created through repeated oral-performance of a text like the Tale of Heike—'through the re-enactment of the already known' (Fröhlich, 2007:36).

The transmission of the Tales of the Heike reinforces the inseparability of the oral and written elements in medieval Japanese texts, as the stories were first orally composed, performed through oral performance and

then transmitted in writing. The question here is, what had been the motivation to transform the Heike tale-songs into authoritative texts with a definite author? What was the role of text in a medieval Japanese context?

The composer-performer Akashi no Kakuichi's version of the Tales of the Heike (1371) is being deemed by scholars as the most complete and authoritative variant of the Heike. In my opinion, propelled by the growing competition among the Heike performers (for example the Jōkata school), the motive for Kakuichi to create his own lineage of the Heike lies in his desire to assert his status as the author of not only *his* version of the Heike but *the* Heike texts as a whole, as in the second colophon of the Kakuichi variant, Kakuichi states that 'this book should not be circulated to the outside; the eyes of others may not see it' (Oyler, 2006:15). This demonstrates the exclusiveness of Kakuichi's art, and by the year of 1371, the Ichikata school of Heike recitation founded by Kakuichi's disciples had become firmly established. Therefore, one of the roles of text in a Japanese medieval textual culture was to assert the authority and status of an author and their schools of performance over generations. Such an oral-to-written transition is perhaps what characterises "medievality" of the Japanese medieval textual culture. Furthermore, Kakuichi's authorial claim of the Heike texts prompts us to reflect upon a medieval definition of "authorship", as the tales in his Heike was put together and edited by him, but they were not essentially originally written by him given the overlaying, large quantity of variants in the corpus of not only the Tales of the Heike but also of the early to mid-thirteenth-century warrior tales such as the Tale of Hōgen and the Tale of Heiji, as both of them had textual and performative histories closely related to the Heike, and had been part of the *biwa hōshi* repertoire, thus contributing to what Oyler calls a 'synchronic intertextuality' (Oyler, 2006:18). Therefore, perhaps the medieval definition of "authorship" is not about by whom or from where the text producer took the story, but rather who claims the "best" edition of the story, suggesting that the Japanese medieval manuscript culture is characterized by "variancy" rather than "originality".

Similar to the oral-performative aspect of the warrior tales, genres of visual arts, especially of painting, also reinforce multi-layered representation of the tales. To decode paintings is to decode the visual signs of paintings, which would only be "meaningful" through repetition; as visual signs is also a form of literacy like written words. The picture-scrolls (*emaki*) delineating

the scenes of various warrior tales such as the thirteenth century "Illustrated Scrolls of the Tale of Heiji" (*Heiji monogatari emaki*), adopt stylistic traits of the 'Japanese painting' (*yamato-e*) (flourished during the Heian period and was employed to illustrate Heian tales such as the Tale of Genji) and employ the 'open-roof' (*fukinuki-yatai*, showing scenes from above with a bird-eye view) composition, thus reinvigorating an earlier form of painting. Also, a close examination of particular scenes featuring warriors reveals that their faces are highly stylized and their appearance are drawn in similar ways. Such a highly stylized portrayal of warriors can also be seen from the "Illustrated Scrolls of the Chronicle of Great Peace" (*Taiheiki emaki*) produced in the mid-seventeenth century in the Edo period, suggesting that the historical events portrayed in the picture-scrolls of warrior tales were still very important for the painters and the people of later periods. This provokes us to think about the medieval definition of "originality", which can be argued as not referring to "innovation" but to an earlier "tradition", demonstrating how medieval literary texts are self-conscious, defining itself in relation to the classics. Furthermore, the highly stylized portrayal of warriors in picture-scrolls of different periods relates back the idea which I have proposed earlier: the re-enactment of a single text (literally, orally, and visually) re-conceptualizes the past and contributes to create a 'stream of tradition' of the re-telling of battle tales.

When examining the textual culture of medieval Japan, genres of literary, oral-performance, and visual arts cannot be treated separately, as their highly variant and intertextual nature suggests that it is not possible for one to fully understand a literary text without examining the three elements concurrently. The "medievality" of the medieval Japanese textual culture is manifested by the warrior tales in several ways: in terms of written texts, medieval writings are characterized by textual variancy with competing narrative forces. In terms of oral-performance, we see that strict boundaries between oral and written dimensions of a single text cannot be easily drawn, thus suggesting how troubled the modern notion of "genre" is when applying to medieval literary texts, and how the medieval textual culture saw a transition of oral-to-written; and finally, visual arts in the form of picture-scrolls reinforce the idea of multi-layered representation of a single literary text. Through the analysis of all three elements in relation to medieval warrior tales, it is clear that these dynamic textual elements contribute to transform the narration of war stories into a *tradition* which function to preserve, transmit, as well as re-create the wartime history in

the collective memories of the medieval Japanese people.

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