# Djuna Barnes: Melancholy, Body, Theodicy

Zhao Feng, NG
Wadham College
University of Oxford

Supervised by
David Dwan
&
Ankhi Mukherjee

A thesis submitted for the degree of
*Doctor of Philosophy*
Faculty of English, University of Oxford
2020

# Acknowledgements

This thesis has been made possible thanks to the support of many. My gratitude is due to David Dawn, from the first for taking my project on, and for seeing it through to completion in spite of some rough sailing along the way. His critical attention has been indispensable, and has been one source of continuity over these three and a half years of discontinuities. I thank him for taming the melancholy in my own writing of melancholy, and for – as he likes to put it – being 'on my side'.

Others who have offered me academic support here at Oxford include Ankhi Mukherjee, who stepped in when it was needed, Jeri Johnson, Cathryn Setz, as well as Hannah Simpson. Much of the archive work undertaken in the writing of this thesis has also been facilitated by the help of others: I owe my thanks to the staff at the Djuna Barnes Archive, and in particular, Amber Marie Kohl, for her patience with my techno-idiocy and for presenting me with the scans of some crucial material; as well as to Isabel Howe, at The Authors League Fund, for her kindness and assistance in jumping through the copyright hoops; Paul Cougnard at the Fonds Jacques Doucet; and Curtis Small, for sourcing for the two sketches from the Emily Holmes Coleman Papers.

I am grateful, furthermore, for the financial assistance contributed by Wadham College towards some of the academic and medical expenses I found myself facing, and most of all to the Wadham 1610 Society, without whose generosity, in the form of a full scholarship, this thesis would not have been possible.

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Introduction | | 1 |
| 1 | Comedy I: A Queer God | 68 |
| 2 | Comedy II: *Ladies Almanack* and The Lesbian Sensorium | 128 |
| 3 | Comedy III: *Ryder*, Rape, and Recurrence | 184 |
| 4 | Tragedy I: *Nightwood* and the Eschatological Body | 236 |
| 5 | Tragedy II: *The Antiphon* and the Refusal of History | 295 |
| Conclusion | | 354 |
| Bibliography | | 369 |

# List of Illustrations


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| I.1 | Djuna Barnes, *Sketch of James Joyce* | 27 |
| I.2 | Djuna Barnes, 'All Because of Wendell!', *Ryder* | 55 |
| I.3 | Albrecht Dürer, *Elk* | 58 |
| I.4 | Thelma Wood, *Bushbuck Among Bamboo Trees* | 59 |
| I.5 | Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall of Man* | 60 |
| I.6 | Hans Memling, two panels from *Polyptych of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* | 67 |
| 1.1 | Francesca Belanger, 'Alas', in Barnes, *Creatures in an Alphabet* | 102 |
| 1.2 | Francesca Belanger, 'X', in Barnes, *Creatures in an Alphabet* | 102 |
| 1.3 | Francesca Belanger, 'Nigor', in Barnes, *Creatures in an Alphabet* | 103 |
| 1.4 | Francesca Belanger, 'Unicorn', in Barnes *Creatures in an Alphabet* | 103 |
| 1.5 | Raoul Dufy, 'La Tortue', in Apollinaire, *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* | 118 |
| 1.6 | Raoul Dufy, 'Orphée', in Apollinaire, *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée* | 119 |
| 1.7 | Jacques-Louis David, *Portrait of Madame Récamier* | 124 |
| 1.8 | Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque* | 125 |
| 2.1 | Djuna Barnes, 'Sweet May', *Ladies Almanack* | 146 |
| 2.2 | Louis Chalon, 'Abbey of Thelema', in Rabelais, *Five books of the lives, heroic deeds and sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel* | 156 |
| 2.3 | Djuna Barnes, 'Tree of Ryder', *Ryder* | 177 |
| 3.1 | Djuna Barnes, 'The Joke in the Tragedy of the Other Man's Life' | 201 |
| 4.1 | Joseph Ottinger, *Crucifixion* | 279 |
| 4.2 | Albrecht Dürer, print from *Apocalypse* | 292 |
| 5.1 | Emily Coleman, untitled drawing from 'Book of Drawings' ['Madonna and Child'] | 305 |
| 5.2 | Emily Coleman, untitled drawing from 'Book of Drawings' ['Man and Squirming Boy'] | 305 |
| 5.3 | Peter Paul Rubens*, Saturn Devouring His Son* | 306 |
| 5.4 | Carlo Crivelli, *Virgin and Child* | 307 |
| 5.5 | Hans Memling, *Saint Veronica* | 348 |
| C.1 | Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam* | 364 |
| C.2 | Bo Beskow, photograph of Djuna Barnes, *Dag Hammarskjöld: Strictly Personal* | 365 |
| C.3 | Photograph of Djuna Barnes leaning on her hand | 365 |
| C.4 | Hans Holbein the Younger, 'S', *Alphabet mit dem Todtentanz* | 367 |
| C.5 | Hans Holbein the Younger, 'Z', *Alphabet mit dem Todtentanz* | 367 |

# Introduction

Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine
(John Keats, 'Ode on Melancholy', 25-8)[1]

All other joyes to this are folly,
None so sweet as Melancholy.
[…]
All my griefes to this are jolly,
None so damn'd as Melancholy.
(Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* 1989-2000, 1:lxx)[2]

Melancholia, melancholia, it rides me like a bucking mare – (Djuna Barnes to Emily Coleman, 21 May 1938)

In the spring of 1940, confined in a sanatorium against her will, the 48-year old Djuna Barnes finds herself sparring with one 'German Jew of a psychiatrist', who, like some psychoanalytic daimon, would 'reappear' intermittently, 'a burr on a horses [*sic*] rump' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30

[1] Barnes's 1906 Everyman's Library edition of Keats's poems is held in the Djuna Barnes Archive, at the University of Maryland.
[2] In addition to the 1923 George Bell & Sons edition of the *Anatomy*, with markings in her hand, Barnes owned a second 1887 London publication, probably a second-hand copy given the extensive annotations in French.

March/1 April 1940). The diagnoses regarding her state of mind, emerging in reports for more than a year now through her letters to her friend, novelist and Catholic convert, Emily Coleman, amount however to a potpourri of medicine and invention. These exhaust the resources of endocrinology ('general melancholia with an hemmorhage for a menstruation […] funny – all from lack of thyroid and ovarian hormones!'), otorhinolaryngology and gynaecology ('melancholia up the gorge', and her 'private quarters shoved at with rubber gloves'), horology ('It is now my melancholy hour (one of them) four o'clock in the afternoon'), and neuropsychology ('The trouble with me is awful nerves, melancholia (change of life, dear) and madness').[3] If, in these collisions of suffering and whimsy, something of the quality of a psychosomatic pastiche comes through, this might not be surprising to a reader familiar with *Nightwood*'s 'mystic' mountebank, Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-Dante-O'Connor (*Nightwood*, 28).[4] Voracious in their assimilative tendency, prolific, regurgitative, and capricious in turn, these variations on the theme of melancholy seem to be as much a result of *passive* subjection to pain as well as an *active*, imaginative response to it. To the return to the psychomachia in the sanatorium, having fended off the first Freudian epigone, Barnes finds herself facing a second 'Dempsey of the sub-conscious' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 March/1 April 1940).[5] Parrying both with her 'great sense of humour', she refuses to 'turn [her] belly out', and dodges with disquisitions on 'Goethe, Bauer,

[3] See her letters to Emily Coleman dated 28 February, 3 March, 4 February, and 11 July 1939.
[4] Similar observations have been made of the manic *cento* of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), one of Barnes's key literary inspirations (Shirilan 2016, 47-53; Daniel 2013, 155-99).
[5] Jack Dempsey was an American professional boxer whom Barnes interviewed in 1921 (*Interviews*, 283-7).

Bachaus, Memling, Mozart, Beethoven and Proust!' – effectively vaulting the pit of depth psychology, 'refusing to talk about anything personal', to cover everything from German Romantic literature and music, contemporary musicianship and politics,[6] Early Netherlandish painting, French literary modernism, to post-Hegelian philosophy and theology.[7] The proliferation of sources is matched by an assimilative strategy. When, for instance, she writes – 'This sanatorium has put the final iron into my soul' – melancholic refrains from Keats are sounded,[8] even as she dons the mask of 'Alice in Wonderland' and weaves in citations from Plato and Shakespeare, spinning forth ever-expanding intertextual arabesques that, inevitably, return to that one mythic scene evoked in all of her major works – that of *the Fall*: 'You know, I could tear the world apart and spill the rotten seeds, and slap it back together again, and it might start all over again and be endurable until Eve once more bit into that apple..or whatever it was!' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 March/1 April 1940)

It is the argument of my thesis that the numerous and often incompatible configurations of melancholy, already an oversaturated concept of diverse provenance by the time of Barnes's birth in 1892, are nonetheless imaginative, somatic, and aesthetic responses to a precise existential predicament – that is, a specific mode of being situated – or *thrown* – affectively, bodily, and psychically,

---

[6] Wilhelm Backhaus, a German pianist, was awarded a professorship by Hitler in 1936.

[7] Bruno Bauer was a student of Hegel. His ironic ventriloquy of Hegel in *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts* was originally published anonymously (Moggach 2003, 3). See also his article, 'The Present Position of the Jews' published in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1852.

[8] 'My heart seems now made of iron […] You see how I go on—like so many strokes of a Hammer.' The latter half of this quotation is marked out in Barnes's Oxford University Press edition of *The Letters of John Keats* (1935, 370).

in the world, which the myth of the Fall enshrines. A *structural* consistency, that is, persists across most of its heterogeneous manifestations, holding forth against the intractability of its changing symptoms: from its embedment in the corporeal pathologies of Galen and Galenic science, the theological articulations of Burton and Saint Theresa, its affiliation with genius by Aristotle and Ficino, through the poetic formulations of Keats and Baudelaire into the modern world of psychoanalysis from Freud to Kristeva, 'melancholy' has exhibited a concern with a specific *structure of existence*.[9] Following Ilit Ferber's work on *Philosophy and Melancholy*, my approach to melancholy here considers 'the diversity of its internal configuration' across history – brought to wild excrescences over centuries – to retain at a basic level 'the structure of its innermost form': such a 'structural view of melancholy' addresses 'the different ways in which the melancholic state of mind determines the relationship between a subject and the world' (2013, 10). Melancholy, as such, pertains to how the subject-object interface is configured. The lineaments of this ontological structure, I hope to show, may be traced in this primal scene of the Fall.[10]

[9] For a historical overview of the various configurations of 'melancholy', see the anthology *The Nature of Melancholy* (Radden 2002). Lawrence Babb argues that the major models for melancholy in the Renaissance were Galenic, in which it featured chiefly as a pathology, and Aristotelian, as a feature of genius, to which English thinkers on the whole leaned (1951, 66). Gail Kern Paster and Douglas Trevor have argued instead for the prominence of the Galenic model (Paster 2004; Trevor 2004). See also Drew Daniel's reconsideration of these claims (Daniel 2013, 22-5).

[10] In referring to the Fall as a 'primal scene' or a mythic presentation of origins, I am following the psychoanalytic understanding of it as a secondary construction of a lost origin. As Ned Lukacher points out, these 'primal scenes', so-named in Freud's Wolf-Man case history (1918), are depicted following the 'remodelling' or 'reconstruction' of a putative origin, making for 'an always divided interpretive strategy that points toward the Real in the very act of establishing its inaccessibility' (1986, 19, 24).

While recent scholarship on melancholy has moved towards reincorporating its productive, performative, and even manic side against a hermeneutic tradition that has seen mainly attenuation, defeat, and paralysis, my thesis, in jointly articulating the themes of melancholy, the body, and theodicy in Barnes's writings, seeks to address three co-implicated themes that have seemed to remain submerged: i. the elements of *both* laughter and tears as embodied correlates to melancholy, conjugating hence its two seemingly oppositional poles (intimated in the 'bucking mare' rhythm); ii. the theological, in addition to ontological, coordinates that determine and are determined by the lived space of melancholia; iii. the various crises in embodiment it often entails, often projecting the body against the image of its *end*, whether in the finality of death or the infinitude of its resurrection.

Deploying different critical apparatuses, recent publications by Sanja Bahun, Drew Daniel, and Jonathan Flatley seek to locate the import of Burton's usage of 'melancholize' as a verb in its active dimension. Understood variously in terms of the 'symptom' (Bahun 2013, 5), 'assemblage' (Daniel 2013, 7-17), or 'a mobile machine of self-estrangement' (Flatley 2008, 7), melancholy encodes both suffering and, *with qualifications*, suffering's supersession. Melancholy, in all three cases, is understood against the horizon of its own overcoming, incorporating the aesthetic and political practices that, even as they retain the very traces of the melancholy that prompts them, take a minimal turn away from passive immersion. It is hence conceived in a state of dialectical tension between a condition of woundedness and its aftermath. Thus, for Bahun, the 'melancholic symptom' is both a mark of trauma and its partial 'cure', sedimented in the

formal properties of the artwork itself (2013, 9, 33), while Daniel's 'melancholy assemblage', in 'joining structure to fluidity', both charts and *produces* the 'ongoing, fragile, and reversible correlations between bodies and languages' (2013, 11). Along similar lines, Flatley's machinery of 'self-estrangement' – a kind of 'aesthetic technology' – dredges out the hitherto submerged and convoluted relations of history and politics to make these cognitively available, and which therefore, as a strategy of 'affective mapping', enables the modulation from depoliticised depression to reengagement – or, in terms sourced from Baudelaire, from world-withdrawn *ennui* to, as it were, *woke* and enraged *spleen* (2008, 4-6). A dovetailing of vocabulary in these three accounts is thus occasionally observable. The modulation from the structure of melancholic existence to a neighbouring or even oppositional one that bears its trace even as it is altered, minimally or drastically, is conceived as a kind of turn, resistance, or diversion – in short, a *differential repetition* – that is captured by the morpheme 'counter': if it constitutes, with, Flatley, a 'counter-mood' (2008, 5), it enables, with Bahun, 'mood-bending' and the practice of 'countermourning' (2013, 4). Melancholy, here, is understood as a constellation of history and art, the suffering involved in temporal existence, and the aesthetic response contained in the corresponding production of specific textual worlds.

There are certain ontological implications, then, to the distribution of melancholy across these two moments of suffering and praxis that I would like to extend here. 'Mood', or *Stimmung*, to recall, is Heidegger's term for the specific affective *relation* between subjectivity and world, the *interface* by which they are mutually disclosed and determined. As Giorgio Agamben explains: *Stimmung*'s

position 'is neither within interiority nor in the world, but at their limit. Thus being-there, insofar as it is essentially its own opening, is always already in a *Stimmung*, is always already emotively oriented […] *Stimmung*, rather than being itself in a place, is the very opening of the world, the very place of being (1997, 92).' Melancholy's involvement of both a 'mood' and a 'counter-mood' may hence be understood as a constellation of two distinct modes of being *interfaced* with the world, and hence, a re-articulation of the very *relation* between subjectivity and being by which both are constituted in the first place. In the expanded terms of the metaphysical discourse that Barnes inherits, the 'world' or 'being' that is disclosed to the subject in this relation – as the totality of entities (bodies, persons, concepts, institutions) *and* their organising matrices – is often referenced as *Creation* itself, along with its prosopopoeic trace, the *Creator*. This theological frame, ever present in Barnes's works, situates melancholy precisely at the *relational interface* between the postlapsarian subject and the Creator/Creation. That these theological premises and corollaries are never far from Barnes's depictions of melancholy thus suggest a particular value here in my attempt to move beyond the level of a *symptomatology* – which reads, or even *reifies*, a clinical condition or cause from a set of observable symptoms via a backward postulate[11] – to an *ontological* consideration attentive to the changing interface between subjectivity and being. The *logic* that structures these symptoms, that is, is closely affiliated with the primordial relation that co-articulates the self and its world. As Darian Leader contends, given that pre-

[11] The kind of pragmatic modelling practised in modern psychiatry, based on clinical usefulness, can generate its own object of study, only tangentially related to the historical and literary uses of the term. This may be necessary, but produces its own normative definition. See, for example, the proposed diagnostic criteria in Taylor and Fink 2006, 349.

existing 'symptom pools' and 'idioms of distress' are available to the subject to draw on, configure, or extend, it is worth looking beyond 'surface symptomatology' to the 'structure of symptoms' – that is, the particular mode of the subject's 'relation to the symptom', 'how the subject speaks about their symptom', 'what place' the symptom occupies rather than its 'content' (2016, 27-8, 33). Critical sensitivity to ontological structures thus enables a departure from a symptomatological assessment on three counts: i. it respects the variability in symptomatic articulation, without taxonomising them according to a normative model prepared in advance and derived elsewhere – whether on the Freudian couch, in the Kristevan clinic, or out of the statistical data of modern psychiatry; ii. in going beyond the surface 'content' of these symptoms (linguistic and psychomotor retardation or acceleration, mordant self-critique, sleep disturbances etc.), it reads the *logic* in them as expressions and responses to particular modes of being interfaced with the world; iii. it considers the variability of this interface itself, and hence does not predetermine melancholy's 'counter-mood'.

These *ontological matrices*, alongside their possible *reconfiguration*, which situate the subject within its world, have largely been overlooked in the critical discussion of melancholy thus far: the analyses of Freud (1917), Julia Kristeva (1992), Željka Švrljuga (2011), Esther Sanchez-Párdo (2003), and even that of Bahun, tend to operate by *fixing* the relation of the melancholic subject to its world – often, in the paradigmatic one of 'loss' – with an examination, thereafter, of its resultant symptoms, ranging from the attempted, but 'impossible (re)merger' (Bahun 2013, 21), the 'doubt' placed on 'any project of

reparation', the converse exhibition of some degree of fracture, as well as accelerated speech and cognition (Sanchez-Párdo 2003, 18, 11-12). While Bahun and Sanchez-Párdo have focused on the specific conjugation of melancholy with the *historical* moment of modernism, my aim here is to extend the implications of an ontological understanding of melancholy. Some erosion here of the line dividing specifically 'modern' or 'modernist' melancholy and its pre-modern others may result from this – both intentional and unintentional – but would, conversely enable the separate advantages of, i. relaxing the stringent – and sometimes strained – formulations of various caesurae with the past; and, ii. of prioritising the structural consciousness that would not only provide greater legibility to the import of many of Barnes's anachronistic manoeuvres (which not only conduct traversals and syntheses across history, but often intercalate these with myths from *pre-history*), but also redirect critical attention to the articulating link between subjectivity and being – or creature and Creation/Creator – at the heart of the questions of melancholy and theodicy embedded in Barnes's aesthetic. Thus, while an extensive and scrupulous record of a melancholic modernism comes through in the analyses of Bahun and Sanchez-Párdo, I am avoiding the *strong* formulation of historical distinction these pursue.

It is arguable, furthermore, that history and ontology do *not* constitute mutually exclusive lines of investigation. As Jenny Edkins puts it, '*ontic* trauma' can 'reveal the inevitable *ontological* trauma' out of which 'reality' itself – alongside our foundational relations with time and being – is produced and structured (2013, 131-2). The losses that are *historically* sustained, often said to

be the very premise of melancholy, are, in Barnes, regularly referred back to an ontological level, articulated in terms of the postlapsarian subject's division from God and Being; melancholy's other face, however – its dialectical 'counter-mood' – is *not predetermined* here, whether in the foreclosure of 'remerger' and 'reparation', alongside the permanence of loss, or in the aftermath of the 'aesthetic shudder' (Flatley 2008, 82-3). Melancholy's involvement with a larger set of constellated 'moods' and 'worlds' – that is, distinct subject-object configurations – are evidenced throughout the Barnesian corpus. My thesis will map out the basic coordinates of Barnes's aesthetic responses to ontological injury as a minimal *yes* or *no* to life itself, coding thereby a *comic* or *tragic* judgement on life, alongside its theological corollaries, Creation and the Creator. Melancholy, here, is thus read in dialectical relation to the question of *theodicy* – that is, the vindication of God the Creator given the manifest evidence of suffering and evil in the created world. Barnes's own references to this motif in systematic theology are numerous, even if they do not always explicitly raise the name of God. Whether life is ultimately worth living or not is a question she returns to, vacillating from histrionic assertions to witty suspensions of judgement. 'Having life is the greatest horror', she writes to her mother, Elizabeth Chappell Barnes, on 19 February 1923: 'I cannot think of it as a "merry, gay & joyous thing, just to be alive" – it seems to me monstrous, obscene & still with the most obscene trick at the end' (cited in Parsons 2003, 1). Four years earlier, before her departure for Paris, she has already begun the process of preening her tragic credentials. As she pronounces in this 1919 interview for *Pearson's Magazine* by the New York editor Guido Bruno: 'We live and suffer and strive, envious and envied. We love, we hate, we work, we admire, we

despise…Why? And we die, and no one will ever know that we are born…Joy? I have had none in my twenty-six years' (*Interviews*, 386). If these assertions enclose a negative judgement on life, Barnes's own penchant for the epigram often leaves things hanging in the balance, as indicated in one of her late ones that has made its way onto the cover of Hank O'Neal's informal memoir: '*Life is painful, nasty and short....In my case it has only been painful and nasty*' (1990). Here, the Hobbesian dictum against life is reversed in a joke that ends up shifting the scales once more.

A dialectical structure thus unfolds in reading melancholy in relation to the question of theodicy: the suffering the subject comes up against in existence prompts the reflexive assessment of the value of life itself, alongside the possibility of its vindication. For Barnes, how one relates to life is closely articulated with the manner in which one is interfaced with the world; the frontier that both divides and connects the self and all that stands against it may be characterised minimally as *comic* – entailing hope and love, or at the very least, assent – or *tragic* – marked by hatred, refusal, or abjuration. As will be seen, the presentation of melancholy within the theological coordinates of the relation between the creature and her Creator gestures toward the understanding that the *phenomenology* of affect and embodiment is rooted in a *relational ontology*: the melancholic subject, that is, is always located in – or even 'thrown' into (Flatley 2008, 20) – her specific 'predicament' – to use a particularly resonant term from *Nightwood* – resulting in various existential modes of dysphoria or euphoria (*Nightwood*, 4, 13, 42, 51, 67). My reading of these melancholic affects and corporeal dynamics – from laughing and crying to

hybridisation across sex- and species-difference – will thus be co-articulated with these ontological structures.

My thesis hence attempts to demonstrate how melancholy, as understood by Barnes – gleaned from an apparently motley array of literary and artistic artefacts spanning early modernity (including Donne, Shakespeare, Browne), the Russian novelists of the 'Golden Age' (Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Goncharov), English and German romanticism and post-romanticism (from Wordsworth to Wedekind), Irish modernism (Joyce, Synge, Yeats), French decadence, symbolism, and their Surrealist outgrowths (from Huysmans to Breton) – is governed by insights into ontology and affect that are often mediated through theological symbols and motifs. Apart from Steven Pinkerton's recent work on *Blasphemous Modernism* (2017),[12] the theological mediations through which Barnes's aesthetic takes shape have hardly been addressed by scholarship in the last few decades, having fallen out of favour after early critical appraisals, including those by Kenneth Burke (1992), Emily Coleman, and one of her Swedish translators, Reidar Ekner.[13] The absence of any theological paradigm in Diane Warren's chapter-length review of the history of Barnes scholarship is perhaps symptomatic in this regard (2008, 1-22), registering a critical tendency

[12] Another notable exception is an article on 'Sacra/Mentality' by Elizabeth Freeman (2014).

[13] See Barnes's response to Emily Coleman's unpublished essay on *Nightwood* in the Djuna Barnes Archive. Reidar Ekner compares Matthew O'Connor to a Christ figure in his correspondence with Barnes (Ekner to Djuna Barnes, 12 November 1953). Even Suzanne Hobson's work in *Angels of Modernism* ends up collapsing Barnes's theological imagination into the sexological discourses of the period, in one instance nearly tempting her into a hypercorrection of *Nightwood*'s 'uninhabited angel' to an 'uninhibited angel', slipping in some of the sexological typecasting of transvestites as promiscuous, or even predatory (2011, 134).

that, more than a decade later, has seen little redress in the collection of essays on Barnes published in the edited volume *Shattered Objects* (2019). Bar Cathryn Setz's relocation of Barnes's late poetry within the metaphysical tradition, the cursory references to religion are often unsustained, its imaginative logic not quite unravelled (Setz 2019). Much of the theological lexicon that motivates Barnes's aesthetic – unstintingly infixed across her entire *corpus* – remains unread.

If something of a 'theological turn' – whether 'unarticulated' or otherwise – has been observed in modernist scholarship (Ayers 2017, 4), much of the recent work done in this area has been directed nearly exclusively toward male authors. Not a single chapter is dedicated to a woman writer in Anthony Domestico's *Poetry and Theology in the Modernist Period* (2017), Erik Tonning's *Modernism and Christianity* (2014), or indeed in the *nineteen* chapters of the multi-author volume *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse* (2014), co-edited also by Tonning along with Matthew Feldman and David Addyman. The collected essays in *Modernist Women Writers and Spirituality* (2016) is thus a welcome publication in this regard, including scholarship on a number of figures from the Parisian milieu of the 1920s and 1930s of which Barnes was a part, including Mary Butts and Hope Mirrlees, although Mina Loy and Barnes herself are notably absent. Even so, more substantial scholarship on Barnes's literary precursors and their relation to theology is nonetheless available: Proust and Henry James both feature in Pericles Lewis's *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel* (2010); Ellis Hanson's *Decadence and Catholicism* (1997) has been indispensable for its readings of Huysmans, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Wilde; and, whilst

scholarship on Dostoevsky and theology continues to proliferate, Rowan Williams's book-length study, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (2008), with its focus on time and narrative has been most relevant to my work.

In relocating Barnes within this tradition of religious thought, I do not intend to reproduce a certain gesture of disavowal that Barnes herself was increasingly disposed to in her later years – disaffiliating herself adamantly from the queer and avant-gardist lens trained on her writings and, indeed, her life, which she repudiated as reductive encroachments[14] – but to read, precisely, the logic within the aesthetic and libidinal configurations of her work *at the very level* where her theological ruminations, speculations, experimentations, and profanations operate. As will be seen, the ontological structure of the Fall, which strands the embodied subject in the existential zone of melancholy, implicating it in a range of corporeal effects and affects from laughing and crying to hybridisation across sex- and species-difference, presents itself as the framework within which these bodily symptoms might be read and reticulated alongside their aesthetic responses – that is, in the artist's counter-praxis. If, then, a greater theoretical consciousness, with changing emphases, has been brought to bear on Barnes scholarship over the decades – from queer theory (Boone 1998; Herring 2007; Glavey 2016), psychoanalysis (Sanchez-Párdo 2003; Švrljuga 2011; Carlston 1998; Rupprecht 2006), post-humanism (Goody 2007),

[14] See, for example, her letter to Christine Koschel, dated 15 April 1969: 'I am not a "modern" after all! Which sound [*sic*] strange for one who is considered avant guard [*sic*]!' To Silas Glossop on 15 February 1978, she adds: 'Nor am I a "Surrealist" or [Hippy?] or Dada etc'. Barnes's reported disdain for 'women writers' – and lesbians in general – tendentiously relayed in O'Neal's memoirs (1990, 117, 169-72), has since received more anecdotal support in Herring 1995, 255. See also Taylor 2019, 193.

critical theory (Miller 1999), feminism and gender (Gilbert and Gubar 1989; Scott 1995; Faltejskova 2010), to intertextuality (Caselli 2009), and affect theory (Taylor 2012; Nieland 2008) – one of the aims of my study here is to retrieve the theological frame that nonetheless remains largely unarticulated, and in resituating the insights of previous scholarship within this perspective, modify, extend, or even redirect, their import.

An indication of Barnes's relation to theology may be suggested by the following comments from her letters: on the one hand, her avowed interest in only three topics in life – 'beauty, art and religion' (cited in Herring 1995, 221) – and on the other, her non-sectarian, non-orthodox, and hence critically imaginative relation to the tradition. She writes to Elémire Zolla on 23 April 1968 after the publication of *The Antiphon* drew attention and praise from a number within the Catholic community: 'I am afraid I shall have to disappoint you..I am not Roman Catholic. If I followed the family, I would be, on my mother's side, Episcopllian [*sic*], on my fathers [*sic*], Protestant (he was "nothing") – I am head-first for the Mysteries.' Less cautiously, to Coleman she remarks in a 30 October 1938 letter: 'Catholicism is the D.T's (probably) of the best souls.'[15] Part of my contribution to existing Barnes scholarship hence lies in archival work, demonstrating Barnes's relation to her multifarious sources, including those of a religious stripe, which cover extensive ground, from Augustine and Aquinas to the neo-Thomists in France (Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, acquaintances of

[15] In the same letter, she references her self-diagnosis with 'the D.T's': 'I have animals roving round my room in the dawn; things crawling, to my horror, on the walls'.

Coleman and admiring correspondents of Barnes)[16] and Germany (Josef Pieper, 'that remarkable Catholic writer'—Barnes to Emily Coleman, 22 October 1961), Protestant thinking from Luther to Paul Tillich, Martin Buber's Judaism,[17] the process metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, to varieties of French mysticism medieval and modern, including Marguerite Porete and Simone Weil. As I hope to show, melancholy, imaginatively bound with postlapsarian existence in Barnes's works, situates it in dialectical opposition to theodicy, with its associated notions of reconciliation and, possibly, redemption. This, I argue, necessitates their joint articulation. In the following, I move on to account for, first, the question of theodicy and its relation to art, and next, the ontological structure of melancholy alongside its corporeal implications of laughing, crying, and hybridisation.

[16] The Maritains are occasionally mentioned in the Barnes-Coleman correspondence. Jacques Maritain includes an extract from *Nightwood* in his A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts (1953), of which Barnes held a copy. See also their brief exchange on *The Antiphon,* in which Maritain records his 'deep interest and admiration' (Maritain to Djuna Barnes, 12 November 1958).
[17] On being included in Bo Beskow's book on Dag Hammarskjöld with Saint-John Perse and Martin Buber, Barnes writes: 'isn't this glory enough […] I mean the mere mention of us within a volume on so good a man (Barnes to Natalie Clifford Barney, 12 April 1969).'

## The Question of Theodicy

The question of theodicy is often understood as the vindication of God in the face of evil.[18] If the historical emergence of the term itself – a combination of the Greek *theós* (God) and *díkē* (justice) – may be credited to Leibniz in the early eighteenth or late seventeenth century, the themes it broaches find sustained accounts already in Augustine, Aquinas, and the Hellenistic Fathers, and continue to be grappled with in the context of the Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the modern world, through writers as diverse as William King and Alexander Pope, Keats and Hegel, to Dostoevsky and William James. As John Hick's historical account of the various theodicies proposed in Western thought suggests, however, most of these attempts at confronting the problem of evil fall under the rubric of an Augustinian or an Irenaean 'type', with the former premised more emphatically on the notion of the Fall – and hence more retrospective in its orientation toward perfection – while the latter privileges an eschatological approach, in which humanity is created imperfect *ab initio* in order to develop, over time, toward perfection.[19] Barnes herself encountered the works of some of these writers throughout her life, though, as with a number of them, the term itself is not raised explicitly. The apparent irreconcilability of an omnipotent,

[18] Paul Ricoeur offers an effective summary: a theodicy is the affirmation, without contradiction, of 'three propositions' that are on the surface incompatible – that is, i. God is all-powerful; ii. God is absolutely good; iii. evil exists (2004, 20).
[19] Hick recapitulates the 'contrasts and agreements' between the two types of theodicy in 2010, 262-5.

omnibenevolent Creator and a created world riddled with evil and suffering is nonetheless brought up in a 10 January 1936 letter to Coleman:

> We condemn God, saying why has he planted evil in the world, if he is all powerful and all perfection, but what do we know of his design, it is His, and for that we should be a little reverent. (Cited in Herring 1995, 305)

In this one instance, at least, a possible reconciliation with 'evil' is intimated, with the 'design' here, withdrawn from human ken, functioning as a reference to God's management of the world in the Divine Economy.[20] More detail concerning this 'design' emerges in a later letter, as the lineaments of a divine 'plan' are conjured up, and simultaneously questioned. She writes to Coleman in 1938:

> Why angels were made men that they should grow is a mystery to me, does the long falling down make them better? It shouldn't, but perhaps in heaven (?) angels are to that place what babies are to our world, they must grow up, for tho [sic] children are pretty dreadful (they are not those n[i]ce pink bottomed little angels that people like to make out, they squash flies and tear dragons [sic] wings off, and occasionally drown their brothers and sisters in a frenzy of childish experiment and amusement) but they are not learned, <u>is</u> learning the <u>whole</u> plan? (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 13/16 October 1938)

A more concrete outline of a theodicy emerges here: elements from the Augustinian and Irenaean traditions are conflated in an account that locates imperfection or incompleteness at birth within a lapsarian structure. If, in John Hicks typological scheme, the Augustinian inheritance insists on the prior state of perfection from which humanity is said to fall whilst the Irenaean emphasis is

[20] For a genealogical account of the Divine Economy, see Agamben, 2011a.

on the analogy between divinisation with the child's maturational process – from, that is, the image (*imago*) to the likeness (*eikōn*) of God – Barnes folds this binary over in a speculative thesis. Imperfection is given its sinister aspect, with a suggestion of natural evil embedded in the child, who is to develop – or 'grow up' – according to the 'whole plan'. '[L]earning', in the sense of a *Geistesbildung*, accounts for the formative process by which the imperfect self achieves divinisation. Creation, flawed as it is, is thus relocated within a teleological frame as a region compounded of good and evil for the sake of the divinisation of humanity. Hick in fact takes over Keats's terms in his attempt to unfold 'a theodicy for today' from a 1819 letter that Barnes is likely to have come across in the latter half of the thirties when her own letter to Coleman was written: 'this world', Keats suggests, is perhaps not so much that '"vale of tears" from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven', but rather, '"The vale of Soul-making"' (Keats 1935, 334-5; see also Hick 2010, 295).[21] Evil and suffering, it seems, constitute the trials by which individuals are 'school[ed]' into souls: 'Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?' (Keats 1935, 334-5)

Barnes's interrogative suspension of the claims made in her letter, however, suggests that the mystery of evil is not fully exhausted by such a teleological theodicy. Another major poet of English Romanticism is similarly held to account for his evasion of the presence of 'evil' in the created world:

[21] In the same 13/16 October letter to Coleman, Barnes reports: 'I was reading Keats [sic] letters last night'. She goes on to quote a passage she 'marked, in 1936'.

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* (1819) is 'not evil enough' just as his 'Immortality Ode' has 'the devil left out' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938).[22] As will be seen, where neither the Augustinian nor Irenaean solutions suffice, the question of theodicy is reposed alongside the testament of pain, each time with yet another provisional response enclosed in the work of art. Far from a systematic account of evil's place in the world, Barnes's responses to the question of theodicy do not just fall short of any consistent theoretical elaboration, but also vacillate from joyous affirmation of the Creator/Creation to total condemnation of the same.

The 'systematic' dimension that is sometimes associated with the task of theodicy thus falls away in Barnes's own aesthetic responses to the mystery of evil. If theodistical thinking has been rejected *tout court* by a number of writers, this is quite often due to its perceived alliance with a ratiocinative disavowal of evil. William James's diatribe against 'the systematic theologians', their 'logical machines', along with the rationalist theodicies of Hegel and Leibniz, are in fact repeated in Ricoeur's more recent assessment (James 1982, 446).[23] Theodicy, for

[22] Peter Bell, who is in fact schooled in suffering in Wordsworth's poem, eventually steps out of 'ten months' melancholy' to become 'a good and honest man', with the following lesson learnt:

> The heart of man's a holy thing;
> And nature, through a world of death,
> Breathes into him a second breath
> Just like the breath of spring. (*Peter Bell*, 1319-20; 1251-5)

[23] William James is often discussed in the Barnes-Coleman correspondence. In 1937, Coleman reports having 'borrowed' *The Varieties of Religious Experience* from Barnes, which Coleman 'read so passionately […] in NY'. In her 15 December 1938 letter to Coleman, Barnes references William James's letters ('as I remember them, I read them with the letters of Henry James'). For an account of James's 'Pragmatist Antitheodicy', see Pihlström 2017, 4-7.

Ricoeur, is 'a combat in favour of coherence', and, as such, a systematising enterprise within an 'argumentative framework' and an 'onto-theological mode of thought' (2004, 65, 20-1). Its 'first summit', is thus Leibniz's notorious theory of the 'best of all possible worlds', the target of many Voltairean vituperations after the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, and its 'second', that of Hegel's 'totalising dialectic', which, with 'a rational *hybris*', reads history as a long series of fracture and meliorative repair, in effect positing 'a vision of the world where pan-tragism is ceaselessly recuperated into pan-logicism' (2004, 50, 48). Against these ontotheological attempts to conceptualise suffering, both James and Ricoeur insist on rethinking the existence of a form 'radical evil'.[24] The inability of theodistical thought to encounter 'the enigma of real suffering, of *irreducible* suffering' thus leads Ricoeur to propose, via Karl Barth's notion of a radical negativity irreconcilable with God and Creation ('*das Nichtige*'), a renewed negotiation with a world indissociably linked to evil and suffering, through 'thought, action, and sentiment' (2004, 51-65). This takes him close to Paul Fiddes's account of the three interrelated approaches to suffering in modern theological thought: the ''theoretical', 'practical', and 'aesthetic'' (2013, 169). As Fiddes notes, however, their coordinated response may nonetheless constitute a 'fragmentary 'theory'' and a 'modest theodicy' (2013, 188). Theodicy, in its 'weak' sense, that is, aside from Ricoeur's rendering *stricto sensu*, names a persevering engagement with a world in which '*irreducible* suffering' not only persists, but cannot be explained away. Whether explicitly stated or implicitly

[24] The phrase is derived from Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793). See Kant 2018, 53. James reads 'radical evil' alongside 'insane melancholy' (1982, 163). For an account of Ricoeur's relocation of 'radical evil' into the realm of 'moral teleology', see Wall 2005, 84-8. See also Bernstein 2002.

coded, the response to such a fallen world, where minimally affirmed, records a positive – *if qualified* – judgement on Creation and the Creator, and where refused, repudiates these in a negative judgement, making impossible or illusory, any 'theoretical', 'practical', or 'aesthetic approaches'. Theodicy, in this sense, names a basic reconciliation with existence, a positive judgement on life in spite of evil and pain – even if in the minimal sense of a deferral of final court; an anti-theodistical vision, on the other hand, implicated in a negative judgement, *decides on* the worthlessness, falsity, even evil, of Creation and the Creator. In situating melancholy before the theodistical question, I read Barnes's works as aesthetic responses to life that incorporate in them, both formally and thematically, a *judgement* on the value of existence, whether positive and reconciliatory, or negative and non-reconciliatory.

As will be seen, while joy and pain may form the woof and warp of Barnes's wit, her individual works tend toward the enclosure of a specific presentation of the world as, *in the last instance*, commensurable or non-commensurable to human existence. My thesis, divided accordingly into these two halves, thus pivots on the issue of *reconciliation*, and Barnes's separate takes on it. Each production of a textual world, that is, exhibits a specific *relation* to the world, and may hence be said to encrypt a particular ontology, which, like an existential 'mood', presents a specific manner of being situated in the world: whether as love, hatred, patience, or aggression, the affective *interface* between self and world is always co-implicated with a specific ontological structure. The two basic configurations that I take up here, based on a *final judgement* on the question of theodicy, are the comic and the tragic.

In her 4 February 1939 letter to Coleman, Barnes quotes two long passages from the last volume of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, including the following lines on the 'interior book of unknown signs':

> art is the most real of all things, the sternest school in life and truly the Last Judgment. This book, the most difficult of all to decipher, is also the only one dictated to us by reality, the only one the 'imprinting' of which on our consciousness was done by reality itself. […] The book written in symbolic characters not traced by us is our only book.[25]

The chaff of love, politics, and society winnowed from his life by this point in *Le Temps retrouvé*, Proust's narrator isolates 'art' as the ultimate 'real'. As the 'Last Judgment', it presents life from the perspective of the end. Eschatologically reconsidered, existence is purified into the 'book' in the hand of 'reality itself', 'imprint[ed]' into 'our consciousness'. 'Reality', in this sense, having inscribed itself into the subjective vessel of the mind, returns to itself via a hermeneutic detour, reading off the 'trace[ry]' of 'symbolic characters' and 'unknown signs' in a process of exegetical repetition: we read ourselves as written. Writing and reading are collapsed here into the book of the self, which, as a book that is both already written and to be written, is produced – later passages clarify – as a '*transcription*' or even '*tradu[ction]*' – that is, a form of textual repetition from a hieroglyphic script of the real ('*livre intérieur de signes inconnus*') to that laid out in legible signifiers before us (Proust 1990, 203, 351). The exact nature of this 'repetition', however, proves to be a recurrent point of vacillation in Proust: it is both a matter of 'deciphering [*déchiffrer*]' and '*un acte de création*', both passive

[25] See also Proust 1990, 186.

and productive. Suggestively, both are compressed in the further proposition of art as a kind retrograde or crabwise motion, a '*marche en sens contraire*' that reads the phenomenal world against the grain ('*les apparences qu'on observe [...] traduites et [...] lues à rebours*'—1990, 186, 203).[26] For Barnes at least, art as the eschatological repetition of life leans toward the side of a *differential* retake – a *creative reconstruction* rather than decryption, that is, as the productive repetition of existence in the light of the end itself, within a textual body that reconfigures, reorganises, and revaluates. As with Ricoeur and Frank Kermode, for whom art 'refigures time', or alternatively, brings it into significance by restructuring sequence (*chronos*) in view of a critical moment (*kairos*), art rewrites life from eschatological 'vantage ground' (Ricoeur 1985, 27; Kermode 2000, 45-7).[27] That which has been lived *in time* is reviewed in an aesthetic last judgement *at the end of time*.

This perspective on art as a judgement on existence, already theologically inflected in Proust, is directed more specifically toward theodistical concerns in Barnes's portrayal of Joyce as, among his other quirks and kinks – including his penchant for 'anis-pernodsuze et fine—[the strongest concoction known to man]', 'opopanax', 'iron finger rings', 'pointless jokes', and, it seems, pointless

[26] This tension between 'remembrance' and 'production' comes to the fore in Deleuze 2008. For a concise account, see Mengue 2010, 25-32. Against Deleuze, however, Mengue's reading of Proust's 'platonisme explicite' – 'sans contestation possible' – pushes *La Recherche* in the direction of an 'idealist' repetition of the pre-existing real (2010, 32-5). For more nuanced accounts of this idealist strain in Proust's aesthetic, see Bersani 2013, De Beistegui 2013, and Bowie 1999.
[27] Some of Barnes's notes to her memoirs of Paris are collected under the heading, 'Vantage Ground' (*Collected Poems*, 235-42).

excursions to the brothel[28] – the literary descendent of not only Proust (said to be '[h]is literary father'—*Collected Poems*, 244) but also Job and Dostoevsky:

> Joyce was as poor as Job […] Tall and thin, with an ancient dignity, a flat back head that ran scrupulously into the line of his neck, a patch over one eye, a fine nose, a small, martyred, satirical, and stubborn mouth. There you have Joyce, the Grand Inquisitor come to judge himself and his generation. To question him was to receive a cold, terrible gaze. Joyce alone could question Joyce. (*Collected Poems*, 238)

If the question of theodicy often returns to the Book of Job, this is because, as Ricoeur points out, it unfolds a 'lamentation become plaint, and plaint brought to the level of contestation (2004, 31-2).' Job, simultaneously just *and* suffering, punished beyond sense, weighs down on the economy of salvation to the point of fracture. G.K. Chesterton thus remarks on the 'the riddle of the book of Job': 'Everywhere else, then, the Old Testament positively rejoices in the obliteration of man in comparison with the divine purpose. The book of Job stands definitely alone because the book of Job definitely asks, "But what is the purpose of God? Is it worth the sacrifice even of our miserable humanity? Of course, it is easy enough to wipe out our own paltry wills for the sake of a will that is grander and kinder. But is it grander and kinder? Let God use His tools; let God break His tools. But what is He doing, and what are they being broken for?"' (cited in Žižek 2009, 52) Job's lamentation, brought to the pitch of a 'contestation', verges on an audacious counter-judgement on the Lord Himself, who, feathers ruffled, demands in the wild lines of the concluding theophany: 'Wilt thou also disannul

[28] 'He carried the calendar of saints wherever he went, even into the red light district, where he often talked to the madame of the beauty of Greek art, pushing the girls off his knees with the stern reprimand, "*Je suis un prêtre.*"' (*Collected Poems*, 251)

my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?' (Job 40:8) The exegetical history of the book of Job need not detain us here; the main takeaway for us is Barnes's portrayal of Joyce as martyr and judge – as he who suffers in life and judges in writing, who returns to the Creator, in artistic form, his take on Creation.[29]

As with Job, the parable of 'The Grand Inquisitor' in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* which Ivan presents to his brother, Alyosha, effectively brings the gavel down against God. 'I hasten to return my ticket' – that is, to freedom and existence – Ivan claims, repudiating all visions of a world in which suffering could be erased in a 'higher harmony': 'It is not worth one little tear of even that one tormented child […] with her unredeemed tears! […] I want to remain with unrequited suffering […] *even if I am wrong* (Dostoevsky 2004, 244-5, 246-64).'[30] In Barnes's last play, *The Antiphon*, this inquisitorial role is handed over to Miranda, artist and daughter, in a settling of accounts with her predecessors, celestial and terrestrial. Her mother, Augusta, thus responds to her judgement with the exclamation: 'To think I have a daughter for Inquisitor!' (*Selected Works*, 195)

[29] See also her impression of him, recorded in her interview: 'a remark made to me by a mystic flashed through my mind[:] "A man who has been more crucified on his sensibilities than any writer of our age"' (*Interviews*, 65).
[30] See also Fiddes's account (2013, 177-8).

*Figure I.1* Djuna Barnes, *Sketch of James Joyce*, c.1913-39. © The Authors League Fund.

What Barnes's association of artist and judge points to is a notion of the artwork itself as a *response* to life and its theological corollaries, the Creator and Creation: it is, in short, the *antiphon*. This takes my observations close to

discussions in narrative and aesthetic theory regarding the 'antitype' and the writing of history. The typological relation that structures Biblical narrative informs Northrop Frye's studies on the 'theory of modes' – that is, his critical 'anatomy' that unfolds into the two primary forms of the 'comic' and 'tragic' (1990, 33-70). Frye's concerns lead him to a similar discussion of 'repetition', divisible into its *conservative* and *creative* aspects, broken down here into its Platonic and Kierkegaardian strains – that is, respectively, *anamnesis* or 'recollection', which nostalgically recapitulates static ideas in their purity, and a kind of 'repetition forwards', 'not the simple repeating of an experience, but the recreating of it which redeems or awakens it to life, the end of the process […] being the apocalyptic promise: "Behold, I make all things new."' (1990, 345) Frye's focus is thus on the properly historical dimension that 'typological thinking' enables, which is 'revolutionary' insofar as it departs from a cosmology of eidetic stasis, all of whose phenomenal mutations are essentially, *sub specie aeternitatis*, void: the 'typological structure and shape of the Bible' makes 'its mythology diachronic' (Frye 1983, 82-3). Existence, brought to fulfilment in the 'antitype', is thus reconfigured according to patterns of meaning, bringing the past into historical relation with the present. Hayden White considers this a form of 'reverse causation', by which current consciousness rearticulates that which it has succeeded chronologically according to its concerns and obligations, contributing hence toward a '"construal" of a relationship between a past and a present' (White 2010b, 270-1). That Frye is able to relate the 'mode of thought' encrypted within the typological relation to the kind of awakening that Joyce's Stephen Dedalus seeks suggests that this 'theory of history' is precisely one that is predicated simultaneously on a kind of *counter-history*, one that runs in

reverse, or even *à rebours*, against the flow of time, in order to re-centre life in relation to a particular end-point, magnetising it, as it were, into a field structured round specific *eschata* – that is, the 'last things' at the end of time (Frye 1983, 80-1). To wake up from the nightmare of history is to re-envision it against its inexorable sequence from the 'vantage ground' of a now-point. Repeating forwards thus names a retrospective consideration of the past within the coordinates of a new constellation, an aesthetic reckoning that, as such, is not only *creative* in the content it selects, in the medium of its presentation, and its formal articulation into patterns of causation and significance, but also, in this very process itself, constitutive of a *judgement* on the value and meaning of the past.

Giorgio Agamben, in his reading of the Pauline typological relation as 'messianic time', isolates it as an 'area of tension' that 'clasps together and transforms past and future, *typos* and *antitypos*, in an inseparable constellation'. This constitutes a 'conversive movement', by way of the de-completion of the supposedly complete past and repletion of the incomplete present, leading him to propose: 'Messianic time is a summary recapitulation of the past, even according to the meaning of the adjective in the judicial expression "summary judgment."' (Agamben 2005, 74-6) Writing, in this sense, by typologically relating past and present, functions as an aesthetic 'last judgement'. Barnes's antiphon, considered in this light, is a return in reverse to the sending of the Creator, which, in sounding out the lacunae of the created world, re-calls past time in a summative repetition, via a literary act that runs against the grain of the book of life. The world, traversed by its joys and sorrows, is thus siphoned off via

a final either/or into damnation or grace, as spelt, ultimately, on the sibylline leaves of the artist. 'For earth […] her dapple is at an end', it might be said with Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'Lét life, wáned, ah lét life wind/ Off hér once skéined stained véined varíety | upon áll on twó spools […] black, white; | right, wrong' ('Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves', 5, 10-12).[31]

Here it is possible to bring our previous discussion of 'moods' into conjunction with Frye's 'modes'. White's concern with distinguishing the latter from 'even genre' (2010a, 251) is justified by Frye's own emphasis on the 'pregeneric elements of literature' in excess of the various generic conventions of a specific literary form: 'If we are told that what we are about to read is tragic or comic, we expect a certain kind of structure and *mood* but not necessarily a certain genre (Frye 1990, 162; my italics).' Modes, therefore, name the manner in which portions of life are encapsulated within a specific textual world, and, to this degree, wrenching them from their historical location into the reformulated body of the artwork itself, with its own 'structure and mood'. Understood in the Heideggerian sense, 'moods', too, name the manner in which *Dasein* is situated in a particular world and coordinated existentially with it, determining – or attuning – the very mode in which the world is disclosed to us. As Heidegger writes: '[w]hat we indicate *ontologically* with the term *attunement* [*Befindlichkeit*] is *ontically* what is most familiar and an everyday kind of thing: our mood [*die Stimmung*], being in a mood [*das Gestimmtheit;* lit. 'mooded-ness'] (2001, §29).' As the way in which we are interfaced with the world, 'mood' opens

[31] See the two editions of Hopkins held in the Barnes archive (Hopkins 1931; 1953).

up and structures the very coordinates of the world in which we are situated. The work of art, then, enclosing as it does the movement of history with a counter-historical vision from the eschatological vantage point of the antitype, produces a textual world that depends, in its very production itself, on a basic ontological determination [*Bestimmtheit*] or attunement [*Gestimmtheit*] – that is, a structuration in terms of *mode* and *mood* – and in whose thematic and formal properties, articulated the way they are, a basic judgement on existence may thus be found: an either/or of *comedy* or *tragedy* – that is, a yes or no to the Creator and Creation.

Taking into consideration Pinkerton's observation that it is a 'transgressive typology' that informs the blasphemous aesthetic practice of a number of modernists, Barnes's antiphonal response to Creation is not ultimately reducible to an orthodox soteriology (2017, 11). Leaving the typological relation open to aesthetic configuration avoids the prospect of ontotheology that Ricoeur, as much as Heidegger, finds limiting. If, for Heidegger, the threat of ontotheology consists in an overdetermined response to the question of Being, effectively 'forgetting' Being with a hubristic and totalising configuration of history, a 'transgressive typology' on the other hand encloses *a* world – rather than *the* world – within an artwork that does not have to stand in as the final antiphon to existence in general.[32] Such an attempt has in fact been classed by Frye as a fallacy of 'existential projection' – that is, an unwarranted

[32] 'According to Heidegger, Being involves concealment or hiddenness in two ways: first, insofar as it directs man to one realm of answers and hence to one interpretation of the world, it closes off all other interpretations, and, second, insofar as it directs man to answers at all, it directs him away from the question itself (Gillespie 1984, 140).'

extension of the mood/mode enclosed in the artwork to the world at large (1990, 63). While written, therefore, from an eschatological vantage point, each work of art is ultimately an isolated end that history once again reopens with time; instead of a *general* or even *fundamental ontology*, I am proposing here an account of *regional* or *particular ontologies* of the comic and the tragic, each of which may be ruptured once again with the re-emergence of the question of Being – or, more specifically for my thesis, the question of theodicy.

I return to the problems of such ontological baggage in my conclusion. What I hope to avoid here is the tendency to carry over prior metaphysical commitments into the discussion of these literary modes. Even Frye's modal theory, expanded into his mythological archetypes, is shaped within the contours of a 'U-shaped divine comedy', which, as Fiddes has shown, is not only an imposition of Augustinian theodicy, is a doubled imposition insofar as Augustine's reading already counts as an imposition on scripture, one distinct from, for instance, an Irenaean or Hegelian theodicy (Fiddes 1991, 47-52). Given this, Fiddes notes, tragedy threatens to be reduced to a repetition of life *without difference*: 'To make its effect, tragedy only has to tell the story of natural human life, in its state of alienation, without moving on to redemption' (2000, 16-19). My focus on melancholy as a stalled predicament before the contrary prospects of comic reconciliation or tragic closure can only be foreclosed by the importing of these prior metaphysical answers. The decision – the judgement on existence – is not predetermined, but enclosed in the last instance in the work of art.

It is arguable, for example, that there is essentially no strong theory of tragedy in Hegel or Hegel-inspired meditations on the topic. As formulated in his *Lectures on Fine Arts*, both the tragic and the comic ultimately recover from conflict a 'sense of reconciliation' that ushers in the next stage of the dialectical progression of history: while the tragic is ostensibly on the side of 'substance' ('In tragedy the eternal substance of things emerges victorious'), which negates the errant subject, and the comic on the side of 'subject' ('In comedy, conversely, it is subjectivity […] which […] retains the upper hand'), which negates the world, both ultimately proceed to a higher unity (Hegel 2010, 1199-236). Insofar as the Hegelian system is framed within a rational theodicy, history will continue to direct itself toward its comic resolution. Similarly, Rowan Williams's discussion of *The Tragic Imagination*, embedded as it is within the general comedy of Christian temporality, rounds up with the strained concession: 'The awkward conclusion […] is that the tragic imagination is always framed and informed by the comic (2016, 154).' For Williams, what the resurrection of Jesus signifies is the inauguration of 'the new world', that is, 'the final phase of the history of God's relation with his people': 'God and the world are now […] settled in the full and final shape of their relationship. […] The end has begun (2017, 62-3).' To articulate the consequences of this in the terms that have guided our discussion so far, post-Resurrection history is, for Williams, locked into its final ontological coordinates: the 'new world' is also a 'last world', and, as the ultimate answer to the question of Being, constitutes a quintessentially ontotheological claim. The interface between self and world, creature and Creator – 'God's relation with his people' – has also come into its final configuration in this variant of the end-of-history thesis: it is, as it were, 'decisive[ly] fix[ed]' (2017, 64). The final *mood* and

*mode* of the world is settled: it is comic. In the same vein, insofar as both Bahun's notion of 'countermourning' and Flatley's 'aesthetic shudder' – derived from Peter Homans and Adorno respectively – are founded on a minimal investment in futurity, 'melancholy', for both, is ultimately reabsorbed into the comic mode.[33]

Similar limitations may be observed in readings that situate Barnes's writings within the context of the Bakhtinian carnival. While the Barnesian oeuvre may be replete with 'grotesque' bodies, these bodies are situated in distinct affective and aesthetic worlds and can only be subsumed within the comic ontology of Bakhtin's carnival with a certain degree of distortion. As Bakhtin emphasises, all tragedies pertaining to the physical body are ultimately reduced to insignificance in a larger universe of comic renewal, affiliating 'Rabelais's world', as it were, with a 'utopian principle' (1984b, 314). The 'grotesque body' is thus to be conceived in terms of a 'double body': the 'individual body' is never considered alone but projected against 'the endless chain of bodily life', thus embedding the particular, perishable self within the 'cosmic and universal' (1984b, 318). Bakhtin's reconstruction of Rabelais's world is in fact founded on the heterosexist premise of a macrocosmic body, even if this is at times disavowed: for mortality to be recontextualised within the framework of the 'immortality of the ancestral body of mankind', the tragedy of the distended, crushed, excrescent, and ectopic organism has to be predicated on –

[33] See also Derrida's account of 'demi-deuil' (1987, 335). Like Bahun's 'countermourning', Derrida's 'semi-' or 'half-mourning' – Jennifer Rushworth notes – 'challenges the originally binary model of Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'' (2016, 8).

not just the 'historic, progressing body of mankind' – but also 'the biological body' that Bakhtin claims to be of secondary importance (1984b, 367). The attributes attached to this 'grotesque body' betray a bio-futurity that is never uncritically assumed in Barnes: such a body, in Bakhtin's characterisation, is 'pregnant and regenerating', 'fecundates and is fecundated' (1984b, 352; 319). Jane Marcus's account of Barnes as 'the female Rabelais' thus ends up with a characterisation of *Nightwood* as a 'comic epic', with the 'carnivalesque' pitted against everything from the Levitican taboo, Freudian psychoanalysis, to German fascism, functioning at times as a 'revolutionary', even 'redemptive' cure-all (1991, 221; 247). Barnes's tragic imagination is thus absorbed into the general comedy of the carnival: 'Barnes writes scatology as ontology. She affirms being by celebrating the Below, the belly, the bowels' (1991, 226). A rejoinder may be offered here, however, by way of Doctor O'Connor's citation of another French writer of the Middle-Ages: 'I am no Rutebeuf, I have no panacea' (*Nightwood,* 17).[34]

[34] Readings of Barnes with Bakhtin have proven popular. In another essay in the same collection, Sheryl Stevenson notes Barnes's 'parody of the carnivalesque tradition' (1991, 91). Alex Goody has also extended the Bakhtinian carnivalesque down a DeleuzoGuattarian line. Despite her prefatory caution, Goody similarly frames the tragic bodies of *Nightwood* within a comic ontology: suffering and damage here are given an emancipatory spin and read as 'absolute deterritorializations', enabling 'lines of flight' out of the 'sovereign rational subject' (2007, 173; 150). Goody considers the works of both Barnes and Gertrude Stein to resist not just 'rationalization and *embourgeoisement*', but also 'the Fascist politics of the 1930s', via these 'deterritorializations' (2007, 171). Barnes herself, however, in her 1945 review of Stein's *Wars I have Seen*, takes the latter to task for trivialising suffering: 'You do not feel that she is ever really worried about the sorrows of the people'. For Barnes, Stein has managed to turn the ruination of bodies and subjects into the occasion for an avant-gardist paean to desubjectivation: 'This book is said to be an account of the Nazi occupation; it is the occupation of Miss Gertrude Stein, technique in hand.' See Barnes 1945, 136-8.

On the flip side, George Steiner, whose understanding of tragedy as the final negation of all salvational possibilities – 'redemption', 'social melioration', or 'messianic intervention' – ends up paralysing the interface between self and world into a 'dialectic of enmity' (2008, 32, 35). His reconsideration of his earlier work in *The Death of Tragedy* – which Barnes read – thus leads him to the awkward conclusion: 'Desiderated: an adequate theory of comedy, of the riddles of grief, singular to man' (2008, 44). For Steiner, tragedy's '*Ur-grund*' – a form of fundamental attunement, or *Grundbefindlichkeit*, as it were – is that of 'original sin': 'the necessary and sufficient premise, the axiomatic constant in tragedy is that of ontological homelessness (2008, 30).' As I go on to show with a reading of Baudelaire, however, Steiner's words here also read like a good definition of comedy. 'Ontological homelessness', while a premise of melancholic existence, is a necessary but *insufficient* condition of both tragedy and comedy: it is the artist's last judgement that brings this to typological fulfilment in her enclosed textual world. But she can also change her mind. In any case, we need not accord her the last word.

My approach, eschewing these metaphysical imports, seeks instead to articulate the various comic *and* tragic modes which are envisioned by Barnes in her various writings, without embedding them finally into a general ontotheology. As Agamben points out, a possible consequence of bracketing out the *end* of time as a predetermined destination – be this salvation or damnation – is a *suspension* of history before the question of its 'last judgement': 'The exclusion of concrete eschatology transforms historical time into a suspended time, in which every dialectic is abolished and the Great Inquisitor watches over

so that the parousia is not produced in history (2011a, 8).' Agamben's characterisation of the Grand Inquisitor here as he who permanently adjourns the final court of judgement thus casts him as an allegorical figure of melancholy as presented above: existence in this 'suspended time' – that is, in a zone of arrest before the question of theodicy – is life bracketed out in soteriological indecision, stranded, like O'Connor in *Nightwood,* 'in a melancholy that had no beginning or end' (*Nightwood*, 99). The Barnesian artist, however, vested as she is in the signature trappings of the Inquisitor, does not merely set the Creator and Creation within an *interrogative* frame, but also takes the further step to enclose these within a summative *judgement* of her own: relocating this historically withdrawn 'parousia' – a final reckoning and coming-to-presence of past time – within the artwork itself, which functions thereby as the typological completion of a de-completed history, she offers, in miniature, an aesthetically exhibited response to her predecessor. What is enclosed in each artwork is thus a provisional summation of the inherited world – as comedy or tragedy – a final account that nonetheless is available to be re-opened once more by the elapse of time itself – *if*, indeed, such time does continue to come.

Having positioned melancholy in relation to the question of theodicy, the rest of my introduction will consider the place of the body in this dialectic. As will be seen, laughing and crying have historically been conceptualised within the narrative of the Fall, and read as symptomatic manifestations of the melancholic body. My remaining words here thus address the corporeal dimensions of comedy and tragedy by locating a certain *continuity* – and *interval*

– between the body in tears and/or laughter, and the aesthetic decision embedded in a comic or tragic judgement.

## Laughing and Crying

In the memoirs of her time spent in Paris as an American expatriate among the literary and artistic avant-garde of the twenties, Barnes considers the appeal of the French polymath, Jean Cocteau: 'he set the tragic muse on the circus horse! Fratellini and Hamlet mixed; Greek legend, Christian morality, and the street fair were brought together (*Collected Poems*, 236).' Though attributed to Cocteau, neither the heady encounter of heaven and Hellenism at the carnival nor the miscegenation of stage clowns and tragic metaphysician is foreign to Barnes. The 'circus horse', like the 'bucking mare', saddles the artist with the pendular forces of the comic and tragic, rattling her back and forth from pole to pole. Among the drafts of the poetry of her later years, unpublished in her lifetime, a series collected under the header 'Laughing Lamentations' suggests that her own remark regarding the 'hilarious sorrow' of Dan Mahoney, the living prototype for the Matthew O'Connor of *Nightwood*, informs her musings on the nature of laughing and crying (Barnes to Daniel Mahoney, 14 November 1958).[35]

[35] See also Kannenstine's observation: in 'Barnes's work, laughter and lamentation, the comic and tragic, become distorting mirrors of each other (1977, xviii).'

The openings of two of these drafts are a sardonic portrayal of the body transported by these buffeting affects:

> When first I practised all my eyes in tears,
> With flapping nostrils like a blowing horse,
>
> Laughter under-water bow'd her head
> Like any peasant in a praying stall. (*Collected Poems*, 221, 224)

Pushing physiology to the fore, Barnes's depictions exhibit the hidden conjunction of laughing and crying in that common moment when the body transgresses its own boundaries through its orifices, tearing, snorting, blowing, sniffling, and siffling ('O siffleur, too sinful and too jubilant'—*Collected Poems*, 221). Intimations of sin and repentance, joy and guilt, throw passing light and shade over these images, unsettling them from the contours of any fixed affect.

This presentation of the body in *ex-stasis*, out-of-joint with itself and with God, owes something to the writings of the French symbolists, including Lautréamont, for whom Barnes professed admiration till the end of her life (O'Neal 1990, 48), as well as Baudelaire, in particular, his tract on laughter, *De l'essence de rire* (1855). The 'physiologists of laughter', Baudelaire claims, are in 'unanimous agreement' that 'the comic is one of the clearest marks of Satan in man'. It is, in fact, a 'symptom':

> human laughter is intimately connected with the accident of the ancient fall, of a physical and moral degradation. Laughter and grief express themselves through the organs that have the control and the knowledge of good and evil, the eyes and the mouth […] the laughter of his lips is a

> sign of as great a state of corruption as the tears in his eyes. (Baudelaire 1981, 143-6, 150)[36]

Laughter and tears, as symptomatic manifestations of humanity's loss of 'unity', evidence the disequilibrium of the body's relation to itself, defiling hence the very image of God: 'God, who desired to multiply his own image, did not place lion's teeth in man's mouth – but man bites with his laughter; nor did He place, in man's eyes, all the fascinating duplicity of the serpent – but man seduces with his tears (Baudelaire 1981, 143).' The body that is torn from itself, possessed by a diabolical excess to which it grants involuntary testimony in spasmodic discharge, in the form of an 'emanation' or 'explosion' of vapours and waters, is marked therefore with the 'sign of debility' as much as the 'diabolic': devil-ridden as much as melancholy-ridden (1981, 160, 144-6). Baudelaire, like Barnes, collapses both phenomena physiologically into 'a nervous convulsion, an involuntary spasm', with the consequence that other symptomatic paroxysms are drawn into the province of Satan: a 'sneeze', for example (1981, 146). Informed by similar insights, Lautréamont's exhortation in the *Chants de Maldoror* envisions the body pushed to the verge, breaching its borders in effluvial release:

> let it be then a melancholy laugh. Laugh, but weep at the same time. If you are unable to weep with your eyes, weep with your mouth. If it be still impossible, urinate[.] (Lautréamont 1924, 184-5)[37]

---

[36] Barnes owned several editions of Baudelaire's works. See *The Mirror of Baudelaire* (1942), *Baudelaire: His Prose and Poetry* (1919), and *The Essence of Laughter, and Other Essays, Journals, and Letters* (1956).
[37] This 1924 edition with an introduction by Remy de Gourmont is held in the Djuna Barnes Archive.

The various seizures of the body, its expropriation from itself and the subsequent emissions, exhibit the vicissitudes of humanity in the *status corruptionis* after the Fall. If the foci for these corporeal irruptions are the eyes and mouth for Baudelaire and Lautréamont, with occasional outposts at the nostrils and urethra, Barnes indicates Satan's residence in another of these fleshly recesses: melancholy, to recall, can be accompanied by 'an hemmorhage for a menstruation'. Barnes's frequent associations of the 'womb' with 'damnation' and the vulva as a 'curse' in later life are in fact prefigured by an early unpublished narrative fragment, likely based on her grandmother Zadel's death, involving the expulsion of cancerous matter, posthumously, from her vagina (Barnes, 'History of an American Family').[38] Melancholy, if imputable to a spiritual source, retains consequences in the flesh, as a body struck by crisis, ruptured from itself.

Crucially, however, as Baudelaire notes, the self-dispossession of the body when diabolically possessed, produces symptoms that not only sign affliction somatically, but also tentatively re-suture the fault-lines in its being. As with Bahun's theoretical reconstruction of the psychoanalytic symptom as 'both an indication of illness and the first attempt at healing' (Bahun 2013, 36), laughing and crying, in disarticulating the subject, simultaneously initiate a rudimentary restructuration.[39] Melancholic *ex-stasis* and return thus carve out, for Baudelaire, the narrative arc of a *felix culpa*:

[38] See also Herring's account (1995, 21-2).
[39] See also Sigmund Freud, 'Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety' (1926), in which a psychological symptom is said to be 'a sign of, and a substitute for, an instinctual satisfaction which has remained in abeyance' (*SE* XX, 77). There are

> And pray observe that it is also with his tears that man washes away man's sorrows, that it is with laughter that he sometimes softens man's heart, and draws it closer; for the phenomena produced by the Fall will become the means of redemption [*les moyens du rachat*]. (1981, 143)

It might be said then that for Baudelaire, a normative, even *reflexive*, practice of mourning is inscribed at the level of the body itself, which, when, thrown into ontological exile, restores its rupture from self-unity and its delivery over to 'damnation', through a form of repair that not only re-equilibrates the self at an individual level, but also relocates the convulsive, porous, body into communion with other stricken bodies as a link in the chain of salvational history. These physiological disturbances, in the normative body, thus chart the reflex arc of a soteriology. In the words of *Nightwood*'s O'Connor, a kind of 'creative misery' is intimated here, which 'comes from being smacked down by the devil, and lifted up again by the angels', framing laughter and tears within the theological coordinates of the Fall and redemption (*Nightwood*, 28). O'Connor, having plummeted into the *status corruptionis* of the created world via a guffaw, intends to exit from it in like fashion, fleeing the poverty of 'disqualification' to reach toward laughter's redemptive promise: 'Laughing I came into Pacific Street, and laughing I'm going out of it; laughter is the pauper's money (*Nightwood*, 29).'

---

also numerous studies on melancholy and cure in Burton, whose influence on Barnes has not yet been fully explored. For accounts of the incorporation of *both* laughing and crying in in his Democritus persona – a compound of '*Democritus Ridens*' and the weeping '*Héraclite Chrétien*' – see Shirilan 2016, 37-43; Gowland 2006, 252-93; Schleiner 1991, 209; Lund 2010, 138-66.

Barnes's characteristic move, however, is to the interrupt this soteriological arc. Just as O'Connor's envisioned comic conclusion to existence fails to come to pass,[40] so too is Nora left suspended between the two moments of expropriation and recovery charted by Baudelaire. Where the latter's account of salvific laughter effectively tears the organism from itself – leaving him, as it were, a 'shucked man' – in order to reconstitute him anew, this 'second husk' of the recuperated self is that which is withdrawn from Nora, stranding her on the wayside of the Baudelairean soteriological arc in an animal reduction:

> One missed in her a sense of humor. Her smile was quick and definite, but disengaged. She chuckled now and again at a joke, but it was the amused grim chuckle of a person who looks up to discover that they have coincided with the needs in a bird.
>
> Cynicism, laughter, the second husk into which the shucked man crawls, she seemed to know little or nothing about. She was one of those deviations by which man thinks to reconstruct himself. (*Nightwood*, 48)

As a 'deviation' from the redemptive destiny of Christendom, she becomes a 'reconstruct[ion]' of the very image of Man. The distance Barnes takes from the salvational account of laughter thus lies precisely in the ruination of its mourning reflex – or ritual even, when considered on a communal level – severing, as a result, Baudelaire's naturalised anthropology into two distinct moments marked by, first, the uncanny stigmata of *denaturalised* laughter and tears, displaced from their normative corporeal loci, and second, the waylaying and detraction of their remedial tenor. Urination and menstruation, as melancholic symptoms, thus function as 'aberrations of mourning', disruptions of the normative bodily

[40] For an account of 'wit's defeat' in *Nightwood,* see Milne, 2019.

responses to the self-division that diabolic possession entails (Rickels 2011). The logic of Freudian melancholy is, in this account, corporeally embedded: the inability to mourn is an inability to laugh and cry (*SE* XIV, 244-7). Where Baudelaire's 'rictus' of the 'damned' falls in line 'with the purest orthodoxy of laughter' (1981, 147), its distorted hieroglyph, branded on the corrupted flesh, makes its way from Lautréamont's plastered grin – a bleeding slit cut wide, 'split […] where the lips join' with 'a penknife whose blade has a keen edge' (1924, 5)[41] – to that contained, and (miso-)gynaecologically coded, in Barnes's apothegm in *The Antiphon*:

> Augusta: What's a woman?
> Dudley: A cow, sitting on a crumpled grin.
>
> (*Selected Works*, 140)

Existence – in particular, existence as women – names the postlapsarian corruptibility of the flesh. A vulvar grimace, perverted from the laughter and tears of redemptive history, leaves its bearer stranded in ontological exile. In *Nightwood*, too, the 'grin of the dead', a 'low riding mouth in an empty snarl of the groin', as Barnes's gloss to Signor Maffi makes clear, is an aborted laugh, transmigrated into a genital *rictus*, a '[c]urse against the female organ' (Barnes to

[41] The motive for this act is clear: 'I would have laughed like others; but that weird imitation was impossible.' After this surgical intervention, however, he notes: 'It was a mistake! […] The blood which flowed abundantly from the wounds made it impossible to ascertain whether it was really the laughter of others. But after some moments of comparison, I see clearly that my laughter does not resemble that of mankind, that is to say I am not laughing.' Later on, Maldoror performs a similar operation on the 'vagina' of an 'unfortunate child' with 'an American knife, made up of ten or twelve blades', eviscerating her '[f]rom this enlarged hole' (1924, 5, 148).

Agenzia Letteraria Internazionale, 8 October 1948).[42] Where the 1958 edition of *The Antiphon* associates Augusta's 'poke' with the 'Hemorrhage of time' (*The Antiphon*, 132), *Nightwood* turns loss into an eviscerating force on the bereft, 'dragging time out of his bowels' (*Nightwood*, 27) – once again locating the body as the living vessel through which the effects and affects of the fall into history are borne. Augustine's *in tempora dissilui* finds its corporeal foci.[43] These bodily orifices, insofar as they negotiate the transactions between self and other, may thus be considered the somatic junctions for the kind of interfacing that *Stimmung* performs as the disclosive premise between *Dasein* and its world. Laughing and crying, as O'Connor understands them, rupture rather than redeem communion:

> One cup poured into another makes different water; tears shed by one eye would blind if wept into another's eye. The breast we strike in joy is not the breast we strike in pain; any man's smile would be consternation on another's mouth. (*Nightwood*, 29)

Not all physiological 'emanations', ocular or buccal, record a remedial reflex: *Nightwood*'s Doctor invokes not just an incommensurability of symptoms, but also the inimical relations that ruin community. One man's pity is another man's pepper spray. If a certain degree of *formal* similarity is indicated in both 'pain' and 'joy', expressively recorded in the action of striking one's breast, the

---

[42] This association of the vagina with death is in fact made graphically in Memling's *Polyptych of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* (c.1485), where the cleft detail of a woman's labia in a central panel mirrors the toad attached to Death's genitalia on the left panel (*Fig. I.6*).

[43] 'I fall into dissolution amid the times' (Augustine 1912, XI.29.39). The Barnes Archive holds a copy of the first volume of the 1912 Loeb library edition of the *Confessions*.

gesture nonetheless is differentially repeated as its affective components change: motor similitude dissimulates the altered body, charged with sorrow or pleasure, making up two distinct moments whose conversive potential is stalled. Suffering is as non-transferable as happiness: whether aggravated into tears or smiles, the body here signals the formal moment of its self-expropriation, struck from somatic equilibrium, *without*, however, the corresponding salvific recovery gained in the making of the Holy Community, pressing out 'different water' from eye to eye, contorting, from one 'mouth' to the next, a 'smile' into 'consternation'.

Ironic sabotage is thus found appended to O'Connor's appeal: '*Misericordioso!* Save me, Mother Mary, and never mind the other fellow!' (*Nightwood*, 28) If grace is to be had at all, it would be thieved from one's neighbour. No 'communion of empty mouths' is established here to rescue these postlapsarian subjects into the socio-historical world of their *semblables,* stalled as they are in the melancholic limbo between division and recovery (Abraham and Torok 1994, 128).[44] As O'Connor later cries: 'all suffering does *not* purify – begging everybody's pardon'; it may in fact be 'composed wickedly', void of grace, a testament to 'pointless agony' (*Nightwood*, 124-5). The corrupted laughter of the damned, drained of salvific significance, is in fact made explicit in a line from the drafts leading up to the publication of *Nightwood*: 'Humour is supposed to be a saving grace, that is a lie, it is a tragedy (*Nightwood: The*

[44] In Abraham and Torok's account, the normative arc of 'mourning' relocates the subject, sundered from the mother-infant dyad, within the world of speech, taking her from breast to *logos* ('introjection'); 'melancholy', however, features as an aberration that supplants one 'mouth-work' with another ('incorporation'), as a 'regressive […] substitute' for disrupted mourning, which it retains nonetheless as its 'nostalgic vocation' (1994, 128-9).

*Original Version*, 311).' In the lines following this that do make it to publication, laughter is indexed again as a sign of the Fall: 'every nation with a sense of humour is a lost nation, and every woman with a sense of humour is a lost woman (*Nightwood*, 14).' Scattered across the Barnesian *corpus,* this laughter, conjugated as it is with sin and damnation, exhibits the melancholic dispossession of the body from itself, while, conversely, bracketing out its soteriological end. From the laughter of the 'Pope' in *Nightwood* to that of Roger in 'A Sprinkle of Comedy' (1917) and Pilate in 'The Terrorists' (1917), the diabolic testament of, respectively, the 'man who forgoes his angels' (*Nightwood*, 2), who reduces humanity to 'expert monkeys' (*Smoke*, 89-90), or, indeed, sharpens his 'melancholy' to 'robust hate' (*Smoke*, 161-2), is issued forth in cacophonous peals. Dislodged from the arc of mourning, laughing and crying, in their profane vicissitudes, traverse the body to leave in their wake a symptomatic trail, spangling the flesh of the melancholic with their uncanny traces – whether, i. catatonically frozen as the 'grimaces/ of the dead' or the 'discs upon […] eyes like/ Husks of tears' in *The Book of Repulsive Women* (*Collected Poems*, 51-2); or, ii. rupturing elsewhere in transmuted form, as the 'blood' from 'the horned-toad's eye' and the 'hemorrhag[ing]' nether grin in *The Antiphon*, or as the residues of 'breastmilk' in the 'man in tears' from a late verse fragment (*Selected Works,* 181; *Collected Poems*, 182).

At this stage, it is possible to resituate these bodily correlates of melancholy on a more theoretical level. Helmuth Plessner's philosophical anthropology, in addressing the 'belonging-together of laughing and crying', identifies both as limit expressions and reactions [*Grenzreaktionen*] to a specific

existential predicament (2003, 366). Both are responses to a particular disunity identified as humanity's 'eccentric position in existence [*exzentrische Position im Dasein*]', inhering in the 'double-role' that 'corporeal existence imposes on the human': 'he *is simultaneously* body and *in* i.e. *with* a body', stranding him in the liminal region between 'being-in and being-with [*In- und Mitsein*]', 'having and being [*Sein und Haben*]' a body (2003, 372-3). 'Eccentricity [*Exzentrizität*]' names the 'position of being simultaneously in the middle and at the periphery' (2003, 374). It is in situations of strain where the regular negotiations between being and having a body fall apart that the body collapses back into itself, in a form of self-seizure that retrieves, via a capitulation of its being-with-and-in-a-body into, simply, being-a-body, a provisional unity from its disunity. As with Baudelaire, laughter and tears both sign our self-dispossession, a 'loss of self-mastery', and suture us back to ourselves, as 'responses to a borderland scenario [*Grenzlage*]' – that is, a limbo where our regular negotiations between being-in and being-with a body are suspended (2003, 359, 378). As both 'self-betrayal' and 'self-maintenance', laughter and tears are limit responses to limit situations, a shattering of the 'organised unity of spirit, soul, body' that is also nonetheless, the last trick up the anthropological sleeve, demonstrating thereby a 'humanity' that consists in the ability still to 'cope where nothing more is to be done'. If the provisionally maintained 'body-soul-spirit unity' is given up in crisis, it is folded over now into that other unity of the body itself, gathering the 'ex-centric' subject back into vessel of the re-centred self (2003, 363-4).

Plessner's analysis, informed by the anthropological and zoological insights of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that likewise contributed to

Heidegger's existential analyses, points specifically to the *interface* between the embodied subject and its world.[45] His deployment of the Heideggerian term '*Bewandtnis*' or 'involvement' points precisely to the network of relations that structure any particular 'world'. For Plessner, an anthropological minimum is founded on a 'minimum of meaningfulness' – involving 'relations of meaning', 'possibilities of relating', and 'the expectation of connections and relations' – that enables the identification and interaction with various beings-in-the-world however provisional and amenable to change these semantic and syntactic systems are (2003, 360-1). This is the sense in which Heidegger's relational ontology is foundational: nothing 'is' without being situated within a particular context. That this strong relational premise, as the historical and existential coordinates within which inner-worldly entities are disclosed, includes the condition of 'care [*Sorge*]' for Plessner as for Heidegger, returns us to Flatley's analysis of mood and melancholy. As Flatley notes: 'One is never not-attuned; one is always in one mood or other. The world never presents itself to us as some kind of value-less set of facts or perceptions – things always appear to us as mattering or not mattering in some way (2008, 21).' One is always existentially involved in some way, situated within a certain predicament within which relations of affecting and being-affected, concerning and being-concerned [*sorgend-besorgt*] play out (Plessner 2003, 360). As Ilit Ferber puts it, 'mood […] is constitutive to the ontological structure of Being and not merely one of its contingent attributes (2013, 6).' By locating the limit phenomena of laughter and tears at the threshold between worlds – in effect, ferrying one from the 'ex-

[45] For the influence of Jakob von Uexküll (1864-1944) on Heidegger in particular, see Agamben 2004.

centric' position (being-in-and-with-a-body) to the re-centred 'person' (being-a-body) – Plessner points to a certain changeability in the way self and world are articulated and mutually disclosed. If, as with Baudelaire, the movement tracked here from fracture to recovery locates it within a normative remedial arc, Plessner's analysis nonetheless raises the issue of the altered subject-object *interface,* in this case, from mastery to tension and crisis, and then to equilibration.

To bring the foregoing discussion to a head then, extending Heidegger's *Dasein* into Plessner's embodied anthropology, 'melancholy', resulting from ontological exile, names the subject's exposure at the limit *between worlds*, of being *modally volatile* – by which I refer to the frangible threshold across moods – suspending the subject on the verge between one superseded world and another yet to be formed, at the brink, that is, between the caving in of one and the creation of another. Its embodied effects include, but surpass the convulsions that accompany laughter and tears, whose 'formal' similarities may thus be broken down into two moments: i. the disruption of a regular situation of embodied negotiation with the world; ii. the recuperation of one's being-human in the collapsed unity of the shaken body (Plessner 2003, 364). Moving away from laughter and tears into *comedy* and *tragedy* in an account of melancholy thus interrupts the two sequential moments of rupture and repair in mourning: if laughing and crying indicate normative, even reflexive practices of mourning, comedy and tragedy, as literary *mediations* following ontological exile, present no longer a predetermined *reaction* to a limit situation, salvaging the divided self within some divine (Baudelaire) or humanistic (Plessner) economy, but an

imaginatively and aesthetically inflected *response*, that is, as *judgement* and *creation*. Writing, in this sense, is situated where the soteriological arc of laughing and crying is disrupted, diverted into an aesthetic praxis that reroutes the reflexive action of the body through a cognitive detour – conscious or unconscious – emerging thence in mediated form, as comedy or tragedy. Where a *reflexive* reaction to crisis is predetermined (whether by psychomotor instinct or behavioural conditioning), a *mediated* response emerges after some degree of psychosomatic re-processing. The laughter and tears that have been *displaced* from their normative foci, whether to innervate other regions of the flesh, sectioning off the equilibrated body into tense aggravations, *or* to take a further turn toward comic and tragic writing, thus exhibit the work of melancholy as a form of interrupted mourning.

The ontological rather than symptomatological approach to melancholy that I am adopting here thus enables a useful structural configuration of its variegated field of presentation. Just as Ferber's consideration of the 'ontological structure' of mood and melancholy enables a 'vertical rather than horizontal direction of investigation', gathering together the 'history' of melancholic manifestations into various determinations of 'the relationship between a subject and the world', so too might such an approach constellate the manifold Barnesian variations on the theme into a recognisable pattern (2013, 10). The mythologeme of the Fall, understood ontologically as the rupture from unity or harmony, finds a plethora of ontic equivalents, whether historical or mythical. Where we fall *from* and *into* is subject to innumerable re-articulations. Ferber's reconstruction of the 'melancholic mood' from Heidegger, Benjamin, and Freud,

thus points to its 'non-intentional' structure: melancholy, in a strict sense, has *no* object that can be brought into full phenomenological presentation (2003, 8, 42-50).[46] As a loss to the second degree – a *lost loss* or a 'cognitively inaccessible loss' (Bahun 2013, 5) – its articulation is always based on a reconstruction. The ontological wound that the Fall names, casting the subject from union (with Nature, the Mother, God etc.) into its divided existence may be variously thematised. The *postlapsarian* condition in Barnes is thus, by turns, *post*-Romantic ('Wordsworth, these nature writers, seem to me to clean nature up too much'—Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938);[47] *post*-medieval, as derived from Edwin Muir's reading of Hermann Bloch ('the breakdown of the medieval synthesis'—Muir 1939, 28);[48] *post*-Reformation, following the 'crisis of the Christian soteriological narrative' that the Lutheran interrogation of the authority of the Church and the sacraments entailed (Weber 2015, 95-99);[49] *post*-Christian, taking up Rimbaud's lead in the vitiation of the sacrament of 'First

[46] See also Freud's claim in 'Mourning and Melancholia' that a 'loss of a more ideal kind' is involved in melancholy, suggesting 'an object-loss is withdrawn from consciousness': 'the patient cannot consciously perceive what he has lost […] he knows *whom* he has lost but not *what* he has lost in him (*SE* XIV, 245).'

[47] Barnes's brief analysis suggests that, for her, Wordsworth's poetry tends toward a conservative repetition of nature: 'Read the ode ['Intimations of Immortality'] […] it is beautiful, almost as if he had made the trees, lakes and moon himself, nature repeated, and thats [*sic*] just why I cant [*sic*] love it as you love it, its [*sic*] too new and pure with the devil left out, he feels himself cross, discontent, but he does not braid the two together. He does for a minute in Peter Bell.' The fullest account of 'melancholy' in Romantic literature, undertaken by Thomas Pfau, relates Keats to Hegelian 'Unhappy Consciousness', as a state of self-conscious alienation from a prior harmonious existence (2005, 309-78).

[48] See also Muir's admiring assessment of Barnes in the same volume (1939, 149-50).

[49] In the Catholic Doctor O'Connor's portrayal, the Lutheran motto, *sola fide*, by personalising the soteriological relation, effectively corrodes the external signs and measure of grace: the 'Lutheran or Protestant church […] is the girl that loves you so much that you can lie to her'. Having 'started something he never thought to start', Luther himself 'went wild and chattered like a monkey in a tree' (*Nightwood,* 18).

Communion' in her poem of that title;[50] *post*-innocence, a Blakean theme, revisited by her own poetic revision of 'The Poisoned Tree' (*Collected Poems,* 97; Blake, 'A Poison Tree', 1970, 152); *post*-war, as recorded in her memoirs of the 'war of nerves' in France, when German invasion was imminent;[51] *post*-pastoral, as depicted in her anti-pastoral with its animals left out-of-joint with time and nature;[52] *post*-Sapphic, as in the disruption in *Ryder* of a sororal Eden by Wendell's appearance on the horizon, with 'thundering male parts hung like a terrible anvil' (see the result of this in *Fig. I.1* below—*Ryder,* 40-2); or even, with a sardonic inversion, *post*-post-fall, after the 'Dear Dead Days' of 'fallen women', a world that is now also *post*-religious, *post*-tragic, and *post*-love (Barnes, 'The Dear Dead Days'); as well as, of course, *post*-nature, reiterated in the early short stories through to her late works, encapsulated none too subtly in the title of a *Vanity Fair* contribution (Barnes, 'Against Nature').

Melancholy's association with an ontological wound that divides the subject from God – or any of His conceptual analogues – is thus, on one level, *structural*. The terms in which such a division is articulated, however, are plural and *historically* implicated. Charles Taylor's observation that modernism's aesthetic and philosophical projects reveal a symptomatic pursuit of

---

[50] Both Rimbaud's 'Les premières Communions' and Barnes's 'First Communion' end with Christ as an enervating force: an 'éternel voleur des énergies' for Rimbaud (2005, 108), and for Barnes, a receptacle for 'sexless', 'static prayer' (*Collected Poems*, 92).

[51] 'I came back to it [Hotel Académie] through a Paris that I had once lived in for fifteen years, and now it stood before me like a friend who had no memory. […] When Christ said that man must give up his worldly possessions to follow him he stated a fact. Man is now yet more desolate, for he must lose his possessions and his life with his convictions shaken (*Collected Poems*, 265).'

[52] 'The lonely adder hissing in the fern,/ The lizard with its ochre eyes aburn—/ Each is before, and each behind its time.' (*Collected Poems*, 82)

'unmediated unity' or 'merging with the other' is hence given diverse instantiation by Bahun: as 'a pursuit of "oceanic feeling" (Freud), longing for the "primal unity" of the infant-mother dyad (Klein), the homeless's search for "undivided totality" (Lukács), and approximation of Being (Heidegger)' (Taylor 1989, 471; Bahun 2013, 21).[53] In situating melancholy in the liminal region between a 'mood' into which one is already thrown and a 'counter-mood' that the artwork produces – that is, at a certain point of indecision where the everyday world recedes and that enclosed in writing is yet to emerge – I am placing the emphasis here on the *ek-centric* predicament of the subject, withdrawn from itself, its own body, and its regular negotiations with the world, without a corresponding relocation within any immediately available soteriology.

[53] As Stephen Mulhall has pointed out, Heidegger's ontological investigations are in some ways the transposition of a Christian anthropology of 'human beings as at once irremediably lost and open to redemption' into the existential register, and, to this degree, counts for a 'philosophical myth of the Fall' (2007, 56). Judith Wolfe also notes that Heidegger's terms, *Verfall* and *verfallen*, used to designate *Dasein*'s 'falling' or 'entanglement' in everyday affairs from which it is to extricate itself in authentic self-relation, are the usual German renderings for the *corruptio* of postlapsarian existence (2013a, 79).

*Figure I.2* Djuna Barnes, 'All Because of Wendell!', *Ryder*. © The Authors League Fund.

To some degree this understanding of melancholy as ontological exile also helps to explain the proliferation of animals and animal-human hybrids in Barnes's writings, artwork, and even dreams. Her 21 May 1938 letter to Coleman, in which she speaks of being ridden by melancholia, passes via a stupefying *non sequitur* into an oneiric account of a 'seal woman', who, as it were, 'told me to feel her':

> she was almost like a human, but prickly when you touched her, and she had legs and a pelvis, but nothing else, and she said she could not talk much because she was fish, she smelled like a fish, briny, and her brothers were ferocious puppy seal animals with puppy hair, they came up out of a lake to fight me, and one of them ate my only weapon, a long brush, and my cain [*sic*], head and all, under the waters of the lake a red and white dog seemed to be floating, but not dead, shallow blue water, under a line

> of trees – how is that for a dream? Animals, always animals, its [*sic*] sickening, and those babies of my mother'a [*sic*], and now its [*sic*] fish.

I will not attempt to take on the role of a 'Dempsey of the sub-conscious' here, but have chosen to cite this in full as an indication of how far existing scholarship on melancholy and modernism fails to make a note of, much less account for, the many conceptually rebarbative elements that are raised here and elsewhere by Barnes: species-difference, sex-difference, as well as their envisaged – and foiled – dissolution.[54] Some of these aspects are, however, retained in the apparition of the eland in *Nightwood* – often taken to be the cynosure of the Barnesian *oeuvre* – which I propose to read here to round up my discussion of melancholy and its tie to ontological division. From this, the logic that binds laughing, crying, *and* hybridisation across sex- and species-difference to the structure of melancholic existence may be derived.

The occasional tendency in modernist scholarship to construct various caesurae with the past has, it seems, obscured a feature of this description of Robin as a ''picture' forever arranged' which I hope to recuperate here. If, for Bahun, modernist melancholia – in opposition to its earlier incarnations – evidences an attenuation of the allegorical imagination (2013, 40), Daniela Caselli's suggestive epithet for it as Robin's 'birth of Venus' opens up for us an

---

[54] These motifs recur throughout Burton's *Anatomy*. See in particular his notes on 'Lycanthropia' (1989-2000, 1:133-4), and the 'Force of Imagination', where it is said of melancholics: 'some are turned to Wolves, from Men to Women, and Women againe to Men […] or from Men to Asses, Dogges, or any other shapes' – or 'have such absurd apparitions, as that they are Kings, Lords, Cocks, Beares, Apes, Owls; that they are heavy, light, transparent, great, and little, senselesse and dead (1989-2000, 1:252).'

alternative hermeneutic (2009, 120). The 'eland', on first encounter, is rather out-of-the-way as a choice for an animal. Joanne Winning has, however, convincingly shown its relation to Robin's prototype, Thelma Wood, silverpoint artist and Barnes's lover, in whose shimmering bestiary including lions, giraffes, and elephants one prominent 'bushbuck' is to be found. Following a letter from Barnes to Coleman in 1936 around the time of *Nightwood*'s publication, however, Winning notes that Wood's silverpoint, while catalogued in the archives as a 'bushbuck', is likely an eland: 'I have been having the most awful dreams lately, all about animals. I'm beginning to wonder what Thelma's Eland has increased in my animal aware spirit' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 13 August 1936; cited in Winning 2013, 316). Thelma's eland succeeds another, more than four centuries ago, by Albrecht Dürer, whose depictions of the Apocalypse Barnes held copies of.[55] As a major figure of both silverpoint art and woodcuts – a medium Barnes was particularly drawn to – Dürer's allegorical meditations on melancholy and eschatology are likely interwoven into Barnes's own.

[55] See Barnes's 1926 copy of *The Revelation of Saint John The Divine*. Dürer's *Melencolia I* is also discussed in the foreword by Ernest Short, who compares its 'mood' to Milton's *Il Penseroso* (1926, 5-6). *Nightwood*'s description of the melancholic Doctor with his 'pile of medical books […] water-stained and covered with dust' and disused instruments ('a rusty pair or forceps, a broken scalpel, half a dozen odd instruments […] catheter' etc.) likely owes something to Dürer's engraving (*Nightwood,* 70; Kaup 2012, 112-5). O'Neal also records that a postcard from the lover of her Greenwich Village days, Ernst Hanfstaengl, remains the 'only picture with any color in her apartment' in Patchin Place: this is Dürer's 'Violets' (1990, 130).

*Figure I.3* Albrecht Dürer, *Elk*, 1504, drawing. London, British Museum.

*Figure I.4* Thelma Wood, *Bushbuck Among Bamboo Trees*, 1928. © The Authors League Fund.

*Figure I.5* Albrecht Dürer, *The Fall of Man,* 1504, copper etching. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

In Paul Smith's revision of Erwin Panofsky's iconological interpretation of Dürer's elk as a 'symbol of melancholy', 'linguistic remotivation of animal names and of proverbial material' are incorporated to locate it within a soteriological narrative (2014, 312). Smith notes that the elk in Dürer's 1504 copper etching

'The Fall of Man' is modelled on his 1504 drawing of the same animal, beneath which is written, '*heilant*', an archaic of the German word for elk, *Elendt*, which also stands for 'sorrow', or *Elend*, in modern German: 'the word is derived from the Old Saxon *elilendi*, which is composed of **alja* ('other') and *land* ('country'). The original meaning of the word is thus: living in another country, which is the cause of misery' (2014, 312-3).[56] The Fall, signifying spiritual alienation, is at the same time exhibited in dialectical relation to Redemption: not only is the elk's hoof used in medication 'to treat epilepsy, 'the *falling* disease – just as Christ by his body cures mankind from the evil consequences of the Fall', being homophonous with the Redeemer himself – *Heilant* being the present particle of *heilen* (to cure) – Dürer's elk effectively embeds melancholy within an aesthetically exhibited theodicy (2014, 313). Barnes's reference to the 'eland' in fact segues into a 'unicorn', another dense Christological symbol of medieval iconography that Barnes would have been familiar with from her visits to the Musée de Cluny where the *La Dame à la Licorne* tapestries are housed.[57] These allegorical dimensions may thus be considered in Robin's own moment of 'awakening' in the Hôtel Récamier, one that consolidates mythic content to suggest species-difference as a form of ontological alienation:

> The woman who presents herself to the spectator as a 'picture' forever arranged, is, for the contemplative mind, the chiefest danger. Sometimes one meets a woman who is beast turning human. Such a person's every movement will reduce to an image of a forgotten experience; a mirage of an eternal wedding cast on the racial memory; as insupportable a joy as would be the vision of an eland coming down an aisle of trees, chapleted with orange blossoms and bridal veil, a hoof raised in the economy of fear,

[56] See also Friedrich, 1989, s.v. Elend.
[57] 'Have you seen the divine unicorn tapestries at the Cluny?' (Barnes to Charles Henri Ford, 10 April 1934; cited in Scott 1995, 72)

> stepping in the trepidation of flesh that will become myth; as the unicorn is neither man nor beast deprived, but human hunger pressing its breast to its prey. (*Nightwood,* 33-4)

The state of immersion Robin is in when we first encounter her is thus framed with reference to two timelines, ontogenetic and phylogenetic, that is, at the level of individual and of species existence. Doctor O'Connor is called in to resuscitate her therefore from a 'sleep' from which, not just her conscious subjectivity, but her species-being itself, is erased. The Robin roused from this particular slumber is worked into an image of her continued predicament, that of being precariously perched at the cusp of nature and culture: the point, that is, of melancholic indecision between worlds. Ec-statically located at the place of a 'turn', she remains an image of the exclusion from animality, without, however, correspondingly, a full absorption into humanity, and lodged therefore at the interface between, on the one hand, the primal myth of 'a forgotten experience' or a phylogenetic 'racial memory', and on the other, the 'economy of salvation' or Divine Economy said to govern human history. Ontologically volatile, an 'image' of transition rather than a designable being, Robin, as a 'mirage of an eternal wedding' is figured as an illusory copula forever straddling without quite bridging the caesura between animal and woman: she is the perennial turn of the 'beast turning human', an 'uncertainty'[58] broken, from one moment to the next, into a shifting holography of wings, horns, and hooves, draped equivocally with the sacral raiment of pagan and Christic devotion. Instead of a *felix culpa* that would recover her fall from immersion within the natural world into the

[58] Baron Volkbein hence remarks in relation to Robin: 'An image is a stop the mind makes between uncertainties (*Nightwood*, 100).'

salvational history or *Heil-geschichte* of human civilisation, Robin, like the eland, is stranded in an 'economy of fear', 'a hoof raised' in limbo, bracketed out from any teleological direction. Melancholy, as ontological exile, is thus allegorically presented here in an eland dressed in the spiritual ciphers of 'chaplet[s]', 'orange blossoms' and 'bridal veil', ruptured from the coordinates of its being to find itself egressed into a zone of 'trepidation', where instinctual life is lost to the enigma of the Word, *denaturalised* without being *divinised*, wedded neither to Nature nor to God, but reefed where the 'flesh […] will become myth'. If the 'Bride' of Revelation 21:9, the 'wife of the Lamb', is invoked here, its soteriological consummation is stalled. Robin's eland, in its esoteric paraphernalia, is sundered from the somatic unity of the animal – that is, being *in* and *as* a body – toward an absconded groom. Its mythological kin is the unicorn, inscribed with ontological lack, but reducible 'neither to man nor beast deprived', a symbol instead of the 'human hunger' for an illegible desideratum, an unthematised 'prey' that it presses close to, its 'breast' returned to visual, sonic, and semantic propinquity to itself – its primal self – as 'beast'. This ec-stasy thus provokes an 'insupportable joy', channelled not into laughter or tears, but held in the rapture of an opaque anti-epiphany. It is akin to Barnes's gloss to Pierre Leyris on her aporetic description of Nora as, on the one hand, 'an early Christian' who 'believed in the word', yet neither capable of further ascent or descent, but kept 'in one place', a 'body eternally moving downward' but 'immune to her own descent', traversed by the contrary forces of 'derangement' and 'equilibrium' (*Nightwood*, 46):

> I think it means something like this:—the force of mystery that keeps, like a cork on a geyser, an impermiable [*sic*] body dancing on the top of that it would drown in—bliss? beatitude? The knowledge of the unknowable? (un-know-able)? In other words, state of un-gifted (Cited in *Nightwood: The Original Version*, 220-1)

'Un-gifted', with connotations of being un-graced, suggests Nora's displacement from a divine economy of salvation, having hit the spiritual ceiling, without recourse, however, to a return to the 'bliss' or 'beatitude' of oceanic merger: 'A religious woman […] without the joy and safety of the Catholic faith', as O'Connor describes her (*Nightwood*, 54). That Robin, herself both a Catholic convert and one of the 'disqualified',[59] does eventually seem to sink back into nature, renders her initial 'awakening' all the more acute.[60] The 'insupportable joy' she inspires is much like the displaced waters of Nora's geyser, retaining the *ex-stasis* that laughter and tears, as limit reactions to limit situations, resolve. Torn from its psychosomatic self-coincidence, the melancholic being breaks out in spasms and secretions, breaching its own lineaments into the graduated spaces across sex- and species-difference. *Melancholy, then, names the place of a ruptured soteriology*: it is the still-point in an 'economy of fear', lived out in the transitional space between 'flesh' and 'myth', body and signification, and, finally, the *pause* before the theodistical question.

---

[59] There is also a suggestion towards the end that Robin leaves the Church: 'As she had taken the Catholic vow long before, now she came into church as one renouncing something' (*Nightwood*, 150).

[60] '[T]he silence that she had caused by her coming was broken again by insect and bird flowing back over her intrusion, which was forgotten in her fixed stillness, obliterating her as a drop of water is made anonymous by the pond into which it has fallen' (*Nightwood*, 151).

A zone of suspension thus opens up here between the 'mystery' of suffering and evil, and a decisive response: interrupting the two moments structuring the phenomena of laughter and tears, that is, between ecstasy and recovery, alienation and redemption, melancholy leaves its subjects stalled before an existential either/or – namely, a 'yes' or 'no' to the Creator and Creation. The artist's response, as a *mediated* rather than reflexive gesture, takes laughter and tears to the second power, in the *creative judgement* on life encoded in her art, whether as *comedy*, or as *tragedy*.

Each chapter of my thesis thus pivots on the question of theodicy, offering, paradoxically, a 'last judgement' that is not last, but capable of being overturned – perhaps once and for all, perhaps not. The affirmative response, however minimal, is recorded in the first half dedicated to Barnes's comic imagination, and the negative response, in the second half reserved for tragedy. The first two chapters consider comedy as reconciliation by presenting Barnes's alignment of God and artist/woman via i. their common, bungled attempts at creation (*Creatures in an Alphabet*), and ii. the conjunction of the divine and human will (*Ladies Almanack*). The third chapter reads *Ryder* as a comic text that disables reconciliation in the present whilst projecting it across an 'opening' into a future, retaining, thereby, a minimally affirmative judgement on existence. Finally, my last two chapters on tragedy (*Nightwood* and *The Antiphon*) argue against all remnants of a theodicy, emphatically refusing any reconciliation with the world as it is or as it might be. The tragic judgement on life concludes with the 'bad news', as it were, of a world in which 'Death' – rather than 'Life', eternal or otherwise – is ascendant. As will be seen, the body that is implicated in the

soteriological crisis of melancholy comes up against a similar aesthetic determination. If the volatilisation of the lineaments of the flesh – leading up to the phenomena of laughter and tears, alongside sex- and species-hybridisation – is an index of the corporeal effects and affects of the Fall into divided existence, such an ontological suspension of the self is likewise typologically completed in the artwork in the form of *comic* and *tragic* bodies. 'Animal-drag' and the 'decreation' of the organism, chapters 1 and 2 show, present a joyous affirmation of the volatile body in embedding it within the infinite changeability and creativity of the Creator/Creation itself. Chapter 3 places the emphasis on the 'open' body, re-orienting it away from the false attainment of wholeness in the present toward the future via acts of 'disincorporation'. A fuller critique of the 'pleromatic' or 'whole' body is undertaken in chapter 4, with the recognition, however, of the body's final consignment to death, silence, and finitude in *Nightwood*, while chapter 5 extends the notion of finality to a wholesale 'refusal of history' itself, collapsing the Judeo-Christian universe of comic time into the tragic cosmos of the pre-Socratics. Body and Creation, here, are reversed into the 'uncreate' (*Selected Works,* 223).

*Figure I.6* Hans Memling, two panels from *Polyptych of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, c.1485, oil on oak panel. Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

Chapter 1

# Comedy I: A Queer God

## The Death of God – or Not? A Bathetic End – or Start

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' (Genesis 1:1). Against this pronouncement of cosmic inauguration, the following deflationary response is found in Barnes's childhood copy of the Bible: 'This is merely a statement' (cited in Caselli 2009, 85). Comic timing, bathetic rejoinder, deadpan dismissal – these elements, compressed into a pithy inscription, are part of a deflationary logic in Barnes's comic writings, from her early works, *Ryder* (1928) and *Ladies Almanack* (1928), to her posthumously published *Creatures in an Alphabet* (1982). The rebuttal, however, works two ways: it announces triumph, but also defeat. Whatever the intentions of the younger Barnes were, the later Barnes would not have been blind to the presence of a Cretan Liar paradox at play: 'this is merely a statement' is also merely a statement. Bathos here is double-edged, undermining the underminer, infecting both source and target. Revolt against God fails out of the statement's own self-indictment; yet, out of this failure, another comic moment is born: this self-conscious self-sabotage shoves failure into the foreground, dressing it with an air of deliberation, thus

turning this second bathetic fall into another comic success. Revolt, ironised in this fashion, guarantees a doubled joy: first the fall of God, then one's own fall. As it turns out, what is encapsulated in this one-liner – 'annotated in a young hand' according to Daniela Caselli, a hallmark of Barnes's lack of 'reverential investment in the source' – will go on to characterise much of the latter's comic writing, up until the posthumously published *Creatures in an Alphabet*, which, as we will see, seems to take us back to a second childhood and a second unsuccessful stab at God (2009, 85).[1] Midway – three years after the publication of *Nightwood* in 1936 – Barnes comes up with another 'statement', this time to Emily Coleman, in a letter dated 3 March 1939: 'you can't re-work God, which is a womans [*sic*] eternal effort.' Even so, one could at least make a *bon mot* out of it. How bathos charts a way out of the pathos of a foiled revolt, transforming failure into comedy, is the focus of the following pages.

There is, scattered throughout Barnes's work, a persistent tension between the creative subject and all that stands against it – whether as history, nature, social mores, the empirical body or aesthetic tradition – that is often articulated in the universalist terms of an entanglement with 'God' and 'Creation' – one which has, however, largely gone unnoticed by critics. Alienation – or 'the way of existential unconditionality' (cited in Caselli 2009, 2) – to adopt the terms of a 1967 German review of her work, is formulated within a theological frame as an *agon* between creators prior and belated: God and poet; God and woman; God and lesbian; God and literary or sartorial iconoclast. This finds a neat formula in

[1] Barnes writes to Borroughs Mitchell in a letter dated 7 April 1971 a propos her poem: 'I thought of the verses for a children book, when I started it. That was some years back (cited in Caselli 2009, 109).'

the trite chauvinism of John Holmes: 'Djuna do you want to be a woman or an artist? MAKE UP your mind!' (Emily Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 27 August 1935)

Alienation charts the antagonistic relation between subjectivity and the world it inherits, suggesting that a fundamental rift between desire and God's cosmos makes it impossible for the subject to locate itself and find satisfaction within the given coordinates of that world. The theodistical condition of reconciliation, which is alienation's inverse, suggests on the other hand a fundamental commensurability between subject and world, of being at home in God's cosmos. In a chapter on 'Art and Theodicy', Raymond Geuss explains Hegel's take: 'As human beings we have a fundamental – in fact Hegel calls it an 'absolute' – human need to be genuinely 'at-home' (either *'zu Hause*' or '*bei sich'*) in the world, where 'the world' includes not just the natural universe, but also the social, cultural and political world in which we live (1999, 80).'[2] Thus, in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit,* 'Comedy' is taken to refer to this reconciliatory aspect in which alienation is overcome through historical process, and the external world, previously inimical to subjectivity and desire, is recuperated into an expanded self-consciousness: 'What this self-consciousness beholds is that whatever assumes the form of essentiality over against it, is instead dissolved in it […] It is the return of everything universal into the certainty of itself which, in consequence, is this complete loss of fear and of essential being on the part of all that is alien (1977, §747).' Michael North hence makes the claim that '[f]or the

[2] See also the book-length study of Hegel's notion of reconciliation [*Versöhnung*] – limited, however, to its social aspect – in Hardimon, 1994. For an account of Hegel's 'Reconciling Spirit' that is not submitted to a secular reduction, see Hector 2016, 126-78.

Romantics', comedy was 'quintessentially modern', a factor of historical process and an actualisation of freedom in the world:

> In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, comedy stands at the culmination of the process of spirit's self-conscious realization, in which the abstract and the alien are revealed as mere aspects of self-consciousness. The resulting "self-certainty" is, according to Hegel, "a state of spiritual well-being and of repose therein, such as is not to be found anywhere outside of this Comedy." In this view, comedy is to be found not at the dawn but very close to the end of history, as one of spirit's freest and highest expressions. (2009, 6)

Without invoking Hegel, but referring back to the Divine Comedy of Christendom, Northrop Frye's 'archetypal' analysis of genre ends up with a conceptual scheme that is not entirely different in its evocation of a reconciled world: comedy takes us back to a 'green world', which is analogous to both 'the fertile world of ritual' and 'the dream world that we create out of our own desires' and that 'human life tries to imitate', and which hence charts 'a sequence of stages in the life of a redeemed society (Frye 1990, 182-5).' At the end of history is the happy ending, what Aristotle calls the *oikeia hēdonē* – in literal terms the 'home pleasure' – of comedy (Aristotle et al. 1995, 1453a31-34; cited in Segal 2001, 10). For Segal too, '[d]reams, "country matters," and revels are all licensed indulgences of fantasy, releases from Civilization and its Discontents, with all's well that ends well' – that is, '[t]he essential human comedy is an odyssey from estrangement abroad to reunion at home (2001, 1-9, 26).'

If, however, modernist alienation has often been associated with a form of 'transcendental homelessness' (Lukács 1971, 41, 61), comedy's attempt to

compress both the future and the past into the present – a dream at once eschatological and atavistic – is as often exposed as just that – *a dream*. Where Segal reads 'the death of comedy' as the result – or even *symptom* – of an 'anesthesia of the heart on a global scale' and the end of all 'revel, renewal, or rejuvenation' (2001, 452-6), critics such as North and Tyrus Miller have shifted the accent from comedy-as-genre to comedy-as-laughter, causing a mutation at the heart of the term 'comedy' itself, which is now read as the persistence of life in an increasingly automatised world. What Segal remarks of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* becomes a generic principle: 'The drama will have no happy ending. Indeed, it will have no ending at all (2001, 452).' I will return to these critics later, but for now note the accent they place on the *unreconciled* dynamics of object – the mechanised body and world – and a minimal form of subjectivity – which generates what Miller terms 'a dialectic of dissolution and defensive stiffening' (1999, 51). Comedy's failure takes us back to the separation of self and world, the expulsion from concord and the inception of alienation, recalling the condition Hegel names 'unhappy consciousness'. Of the laughing subject of late modernism Miller hence writes:

> The mind's recognition of the world's alterity is also a self-recognition. The mirthless laugh is the event of this recognition. It is the trace of consciousness confronting its minimal condition […] the genesis of consciousness *as* unhappy consciousness. (1999, 60)

To adopt Adorno's terms in *Minima Moralia* then, the modern comic is more *symptom* than *sublimation*. Where sublimation, for Freud, presents a potential – even if partial – reconciliation between the pleasure and reality

principles, Adorno refuses this compromise, names this 'reconciliation' false: 'Artists do not sublimate […] Rather, artists display violent instincts, free-floating and yet colliding with reality, marked by neurosis (Adorno 2005, 212-3).' As Geuss emphasises, in Adorno's aesthetic theory, the accent is on a 'negative theodicy', and its resultant affect, a 'resistant melancholy, a sad refusal to participate in society ' (1999, 100, 103).

In the following, I consider Barnes's aesthetic response to this melancholic predicament as a turn away from alienation to reconciliation, productive of textual worlds in which a comic 'counter-mood' is set forth in spite of the recognition of alterity. The belated creator, that is, encapsulates in her writing a 'counter-judgement' on the work of her predecessor – *the* Creator – one that reaffirms the world in all its contingency, presenting, as such, a theodistical take on existence inclusive of the persistence of imperfection. The result is a certain embrace of a queer God, who, chronically ham-fisted, prompts us to ascribe the universal evidence of dysmorphia, dysphoria, and dysfunctionality in the created world, back to its *transcendental* cause: creators belated and antecedent here are united in their incorrigible corruptibility. As Barnes puts it in a notebook jotting that dates probably from November 1917: 'Even God could not keep straight the things he had planned in a line—' (cited in Miller 1999, 243). This chapter, while treating Barnes's comic writings of animals and women (primarily *Creatures in an Alphabet* and *Ladies Almanack*) as texts structured within a reconciliatory model, does not however present her art as either a vindication of spiritual history (Hegel) or of mythic procession (Frye), nor does it expel us back into alienation (Miller), at whose extreme end lies neurotic revolt

(Adorno). Reconciliation occurs not through the substitution of desire's end with 'socially desirable achievements' – which is how Adorno tends to read Freudian sublimation – but rather through a reconceptualisation of desire that shifts its *raison d'être* from its *object* to its *movement* (Adorno 2005, 212-3; Whitebook 1996, 217-62). This, I argue, is at work at the level of the writing itself in *Creatures in an Alphabet*, where eros is interwoven with bathos. Comedy thus transforms failure into the *writing of failure*, and in so doing, modulates desire, which is everywhere thwarted, into a comic everywhere, where each foil is fêted and fun made out of each fall. Prior to this, however, a different kind of laughter – a laughter of revolt rather than reconciliation – will be observed in some of Barnes's other work and the evidence these give of her relationship to a group writers whose influence on her is often noted but unexamined. I am speaking here of Dostoevsky, along with the 'existentialism' that has been associated with his work, French Symbolism, as well as its later Surrealist developments. The lines linking laughter to revolt and reconciliation will thus be charted.

Early in Barnes's career, in December 1914, revolt already takes on its metaphysical shape in a poem published in *The Trend*. 'The Personal God', as its title suggests, opens up an affective space of intimacy situated in opposition to the external world. A sense of cosmic injustice, embedded in inherited social norms, provokes the seemingly modest project of shaping a private ethic, which is formulated as an alteration of the very body of God. If the created world the subject inherits is hostile to its ethical demands, then intimacy would be the subject's means of making a home out of this hostility – a poetic act of domestication that re-makes God in the image of private desire. The revolt

against the 'Creeds of a kind we've always had/ To crouch by our dim fireside' thus takes shape:

> We stick to the same old pattern,
> All daubed and kissed and marred,
> But I'll use my own gray plaster
> And I'll build me a personal God.
>
> (*Collected Poems,* 32)

The details adduced here are desublimating. God and God's work will no longer fall outside the ambit of personal desire. Now 'human', rather than divine, He shares our common imperfections. A mark of grotesquerie is thus introduced, commingled with a solicitude that is almost emasculating:

> I'll breathe out his flaccid belly,
> I'll cup out his sightless eyes,
> I'll sob in the labor bending,
> As I handle his plastic thighs.

By making God personal, he becomes by turns aged, avuncular, and neo-nascent, and hence, sympathetic and solicitous rather than authoritarian. Intimacy becomes palpable. Modelled on familial relations, the artist's craft interweaves intricacy with care, with bodily proximity here charging detail with affect: 'breath[ing] out', like a glassblower or a nurse tending to a wound, and 'cup[ping] out', where hands touch and attempt to heal an impotent body, colour the ethico-aesthetic project with domestic care, caught here in a pose of lamentation as a figure bent and sobbing as if over an infant. A God who is loved will be a God who loves – a desublimated, human God:

My God shall giggle in spite of himself,
In the way of a personal God.
[…]
He'll believe in no written pity;
Nor yet in a written wrath;
[…]
He'll ask no patient toll of tears
Nor the terrible toll of the knees.

A giggling God is here opposed to ossified ritual, whether coded in scripture or as bodily commands. In this remaking of the world according to a personal ethic and aesthetic, it may however be noted that two separate discourses – not always compatible – are employed to vindicate artistic creation over social conformity. At times, a religious discourse of true and false gods is deployed. The Gods embodied in the mores of modernity being 'duplicates', the poet's true God makes his judgement: 'And because your Gods were duplicates/ He shattered you on his knees.' At other times, it is a discourse of human compassion over authoritarian rule that is manipulated into a vindication of the poet's project: 'So, when all of you flock to your fancy,/ The god that is always the same,/ My God shall halt and be human/ And his judgment shall halt and be lame.' The words may rhyme ('same'/ 'lame'), but the infirmity the poet builds into her God ensures his difference. Morality, the manifest concern of the poem, and the justification for the making of a personal God, is thus presented under two potentially incompatible aspects: truth and religious authenticity on the one hand, which suggest a departure from 'duplicate' idols to the 'real God' the poet discovers or fashions – who 'shatter[s]' the false – and concern for compassion and suffering on the other, which in turn suggests that authenticity becomes a

secondary concern, to the extent of 'halt[ing]' before 'judgment'. A certain inconsistency begins to fracture the ethical base of the poem, generating a sense of disquiet which emerges in increasingly manifest contradictions: 'he shall be rash of judgment', the poet first claims, though, several lines later, it is said, 'his judgment shall halt and be lame'. It is thus possible to record a certain dissonance in the throwaway phrase, 'for better or worse', at the poem's conclusion, a subtle encoding of a degree of untenability in the poet's self-contradicting ethical ground:

> I'll work my clay as I find it,
> All hushed as it lies in the sod,
> And he shall be built for better or worse
> In the way of a Personal God.
>
> (*Collected Poems*, 33)

The non-convergence of the two value systems embodied in the separate discourses of idolatry and compassion, placed under pressure in the poem, ends up finding relief in a gesture that, given its tonal ambiguity, could be read as resolve, resignation, or even petulance. Such concerns to justify the poet's work are thrown out of the window, and the project of fashioning a personal God, initially grounded in questions of ethics, and extended into aesthetics, becomes self-legitimising – a poetic effort that *outgrows* the moral demands that seem to have been the initial stimulus. With this closure, what is at stake in the creation of a 'Personal God' can be said to not only involve but also *exceed* the demands of morality, truth, compassion, and aesthetics that impel recreation. Desire here is pushed toward the metaphysical, in the sense that its socio-political and empirical dimensions do not exhaust it. To make a personal God is to rework

Creation itself, and, by implication, the Creator – the primal predecessor of the belatedly creative poet. The material of Creation – 'all hushed as it lies in the sod' – is thus gathered and remade into a personal deity. The idolatrous element in asserting the body the poet creates (her corporeal *antitypos*) over the body of God (his authored *typos*) is brought out in another poem published two years later in the *All-Story Cavalier Weekly* entitled 'To an Idol', where we find the announcement of – if not the death of God himself – at least that of his cosmic machine. This is the idol's uncanny face:

> And yet behind abysmal leer
> And faulty frown,
> Throbbing faintly out of space
> That shadows drown,
> We hear God's grim machinery
> Run down.
>
> (*Collected Poems*, 62)

The project of fashioning a 'personal God' has now taken on the dimensions of deicide. Leaving behind the 'giggling God' of the previous poem, the 'abysmal leer' and 'faulty frown' of the idol here twists reform into revolt with a perversion of the divine visage. Desire, at odds with the world, thus negates it in the artwork. The making of a *second body* – that is, the belated body the artist sculpts or writes – entails the expiration of 'God's grim machinery' itself, nothing less than Creation and its repetitious mechanisms.

A bleak expression of the fundamental incommensurability between desire and 'Creation' is made by Freud in a famous passage in *Civilisation and its*

*Discontents* (1930), more than a decade after the end of the war at whose beginnings Barnes's poem was drafted:

> Its [the pleasure principle's] programme is at loggerheads with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. There is no possibility at all of its being carried through; all the regulations of the universe run counter to it. One feels inclined to say that the intention that man should be 'happy' is not included in the plan of 'Creation' (*SE* XXI, 76).

Among the possible responses to this state of affairs that Freud suggests are, i. a plunge into immanence, or the equilibration of desire and Creation through desire's own death – that is, 'killing off the instincts' and 'sacrific[ing] [one's] life' in order to 'achieve[] the happiness of quietness'; ii. the 'sublimation of the instincts', or 'shifting the instinctual aims in such a way that they cannot come up against frustration from the external world'; and iii. the negation of the world itself: since the subject 'regards reality as the sole enemy and as the source of all suffering, with which it is impossible to live […] one must break off all relations with it if one is to be in any way happy (*SE* XXI, 79-81).' When André Breton claims that poetry 'cannot rest until it has placed its negativist hand on the entire universe', he is taking Freud's third solution above to the edge, placing Surrealist revolt on the side of a universal negation of the created world (Breton 1998, 36). The name – or one of the names – that this revolt takes on is 'black humour'. In his anthology on the subject, in which Nietzsche, Swift, Poe, de Sade, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Jarry, Duchamp, and Apollinaire, amongst others, are included, Breton adopts Freud's 1927 analysis in his essay, 'Humour', alongside Baudelaire's *De l'essence de rire* to 'reduce' these disparate manifestations of

comedy 'to a common, fundamental idea' (Breton 2009, 25). According to Freud, Breton writes, 'the secret of the humorous attitude would rest on the ability that certain individuals have, in cases of serious alarm, to displace the psychic accent away from the *ego* and onto the *superego*, the latter being genetically conceived as heir to the parental function' (2009, 25). This is quite a faithful reproduction of Freud's claim that 'the subject […] hypercathects his super-ego' – that is, 'the humorous attitude […] consists in the humorist's having withdrawn the psychical accent from his ego and having transposed it on to his super-ego. To the super-ego, thus inflated, the ego can appear tiny and all its interests trivial […] *humour would be the contribution made to the comic through the agency of the super-ego* (*SE* XXI, 164-5).'

Although Freud's terms are absent in Baudelaire, the poet prefigures the psychoanalyst in suggesting a doubling [*dédoubler*] at work in laughter, especially in the case of 'a philosopher […] who has acquired, by force of habit, the power of getting outside himself quickly and watching, as a disinterested spectator, the phenomenon of his ego (Baudelaire 1981, 148).' The psychical accent, it may be said, has been displaced from the empirical '*moi*' or 'ego', to the supervisory consciousness that stands above or beyond it. Anca Parvulescu hence associates Baudelairean laughter with 'double consciousness', the 'self-division' that results from the 'accident of an ancient fall' (Parvulescu 2010, 75; Baudelaire 1981, 143). Baudelaire hence makes the trenchant assertion: 'Laughter is satanic'; 'the comic is an element of damnation and of diabolic origin' (1981, 148, 144). As the result of what Parvulescu calls a 'little, literal fall' and 'the big Fall, the Fall from paradise, the failure to amount to the requirements of

the grand design', laughter is the condition not of reconciliation, but of exile, duality and 'damnation', a testament to unhappy consciousness, and its distance from what Baudelaire himself names 'absolute knowledge' (Parvulescu 2010, 75; Baudelaire 1981, 142-3). Surrealist laughter is the inheritance of the fracturing of the psyche recorded in Freud and also the French symbolists, and the isolation of a superior self that stands in a negative relation to the entirety of Creation, including its own empirical body, and the phenomenal flux of contingent emotions which affects it and which it immunises itself against.

For Barnes, the avant-gardist face that is sometimes given to the spiritual insurrection against the inherited world, settled into its complacent stupor, extends further back into history. In an irate letter indicting the propriety and hypocrisy of bourgeois sentiment, the names she invokes extend back from the contemporary avant-garde, through the Symbolists, Decadents, and Romantics, to the Early Modern era:

> Of course it was idiotic, I am idiotic, why on earth Blake can be mad, Dostoevsky insane, Strindberg lunatic, Verlaine, Joyce, Rimbaud, Poe, Lamb, Marlowe et al dipsomaniacs, yet I must be as proper as a wren on a church I DON'T KNOW, but that is what everyone seems to expect of me, its [*sic*] only when you are dead that you are allowed your life; oh dear yes, people having read biographies of famous or less-famous people and even dare to have them on their table, when they would not have the same people at their table – oh the god damned smug, fat, pious, bloody world! (Barnes to Emily Coleman dated 11 July 1939)

What Barnes writes of Gertrude Stein in a draft of her memoirs of Paris entitled 'Vantage Ground' may also be traced in her work: 'to *épater le bourgeois* was her amusement (*Collected Poems,* 235).' As will be seen, however, Barnesian

revolt is as often raised as it is bathetically reversed, a logic she observes in a number of her journalistic pieces – including 'The Woman Police Deputy Is Writer of Poetry' and 'A Visit to the Favored Haunt of the I.W.W.'s' – as well as in her short stories, 'A Sprinkle of Comedy' and 'The Terrorists', both included in the collection *Smoke and Other Early Stories* (1982). The form of Satanic laughter of Baudelaire and Breton detailed above, affiliated with the negation of the body of God, is in fact conjured up in 'The Terrorists' where, however, its revolutionary pathos ends up dissipating rather prematurely into the bathos of an empty brag.

'The Terrorists' begins with a description of Pilaat as 'very melancholy, though vigorous' in 'early youth' (*Smoke,* 161). His life is portrayed in terms of stifling routine, a pervasive sense of mediocrity, and an aimless wandering that tends to be reabsorbed into the forms of day-to-day existence. Beneath all of this an oppressed desire that fails to find any articulation in a political, aesthetic or moral cause, ferments and is sporadically expressed in cryptic outbursts. His wife, who initially imitates his postures in a kind of bathetic repetition, suggests stagnation and a certain loss of the body. To her friends she thus makes the histrionic exclamations:

> You, the people – what do you know? – are you not being swindled on every side, and yet you submit? Ah, fools! Fools! […] You are always horribly conscious of your bones, and you begin to think that it is as it should be. You say this is life – bah! […] You wander, my poor friends, about the world like shadows. We must find you your bodies once again. (*Smoke,* 164)

Pilaat himself, in response to a neighbour's accusation – 'you lazy vagabond. In my country such people as you would be locked up' – answers by associating 'the cell' with what lies on the other side of normative civilisation: 'Locked up, is it? That is what I have against this country. They do not let you go home unless you commit something that makes you a little ashamed to say 'How do you do?' to the mother of all things, the cell (*Smoke,* 168).' Social conformity, Pilaat suggests, is a betrayal of some creative principle, sketched out with vague affinities to criminality and maternity. Lukács's claim that 'crime and madness are objectivations of transcendental homelessness – the homelessness of an action in the human order of social relations' is borne out here, where the individual finds himself abstracted from 'the ideal order of a supra-personal system of values', unable – prevented, even, by an alienated system of bourgeois values – from 'go[ing] home', which can now only present itself to the subject in revolt as a deauthenticated world (Lukács 1971, 61-2).

Pilaat's affiliation with the criminal underside of society is soon associated with that 'cult of evil' Benjamin considers endemic to Surrealism (2005, 214), and takes on metaphysical dimensions, making him an epigone after such nihilists and revolutionaries as Turgenev's Bazarov and Gubaryov, Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, Ivan, and Stavrogin, as well as Goncharov's Mark Volokhov from *The Precipice*, published in English translation the year before in 1916.[3] Initial concerns regarding political reformation expand once more into an

[3] O'Neal's informal memoir records Barnes's admiration for Lautréamont and Goncharov (1990, 48). For Surrealism's 'negative idealization of crime', see Roudinesco 1990, 21. See also Stonebridge 1998, 8.

*agon* between the belated creator and his predecessor, as revolt gets embroiled in the standoff between subjectivity and nature. Pilaat, who perhaps stands in the deicidal shadow of Pontius Pilate, thus delivers his plan to storm the body of Creation with, as it were, his lungs:

> Autumn […] is the season for destruction – but we are weak, miserable creatures, and we leave to nature all the tearing down of the scenery, and to her we leave all the building up of the same scenery next year and the year after for interminable and tireless and wearisome years. […] I would tear down the scenery better than all of them […] Than all of them I would rip the whole existing plan of nature to pieces.' – 'I would laugh aloud'[.] (*Smoke*, 169)

Nature is once more associated with femininity, and Autumn is figured as a 'shiver[ing]', 'implor[ing]' woman of 'horrible, ample shoulders', 'upon her knees and weep[ing] at [Pilaat's] feet', 'conver[ing] them with her insufferable tears.' Pilaat 'would invite her to suicide […] mock at the stains upon her cheeks' and 'glory at the dirt on the imploring knees', crying out to her: 'Destroy yourself, for we need a harp on which to sing the song of freedom' (*Smoke,* 169). Barnes's American terrorist, however, is at some distance – temporal, geographical, and cultural – from his European cousins, and waffles before the drive toward cosmic recreation, unable to actualise itself in consuming the world. In attempting to be 'set free', to be located in a 'beyond' where desire and world become commensurable through an act of universal negation, Pilaat falls flat into the bathetic trap he has set for himself. The narrator's description of him after his proclamation of revolt is subtle, but telling, suggesting that his claims are more posture than substance: 'He snapped his fingers and executed a pirouette on his heel, and sat down' (*Smoke*, 170). What might seem like the 'satanic laughter' of

Baudelaire or the black humour of Breton is quelled by plain routine as Pilaat and his gang are reabsorbed into mundane existence. By the end of the story, the arsenal they amass includes little more than 'a heavy paperweight', 'the broken leg of a chair' – pitifully material beneath such metaphysical ambition – and a laughter that is all bark and no bite, having traded satanism for soporifics. What the narrator with deadpan irony terms 'the feasibility of destruction on a large scale' concludes in the negative. The subject in revolt is cradled to sleep: 'Deep breathing took the place of cries, oaths, imprecations (*Smoke*, 171).' The bathos of the entire situation is registered internally by a female witness, whose perspective the reader is eventually aligned with. It is with Pilaat's wife that this tale of foiled revolt ends, who, like Barnes herself, would repeat their passions, at the end of the day, in the writing of comedy: 'She looked out of the window again; it was a splendid day. She thought of her favorite café, and she smiled as she contemplated one or two new phrases she would use in relation to life. She put Pilaat's book in her pocket. The coffee began to boil (*Smoke*, 172).' The laughter that would negate the world in a radical assertion of the subject is taken over by Pilaat's wife, who derives comic satisfaction out of these thwarted terrorists.

As it turns out, the *last laugh* is not to be had by the revolutionary subject in his the attempt to coerce the world into the image of desire. Doug Haynes, in comparing Surrealist negation with Hegelian 'sceptical self-consciousness', which 'actively negates, or holds as inessential and empty, objective reality in order to stand above it', hence observes that this desire to extricate oneself from the entirety of Creation in order to sustain the subject's radical freedom from all

inherited worldly constraints is often betrayed by a necessity internal to this negative logic itself (Haynes 2010, 109). Bathos, it seems, is the logical outcome of revolt. Since abstracting oneself from the world requires not just the negation of that world but also the negation of that *negative relation* itself, this unsustainable conflict presents the conditions for the subject's fall into a recognition of its ultimate dependency: it is free and self-certain only through its relation – albeit a negative one – to a contingent empirical world. As Hegel explains: 'What Scepticism causes to vanish is not only objective reality as such, but its own relationship to it' – that is, it is not just 'the determinate element' which 'vanishes', but also 'the moment of difference' (1977, §204). This disavowal, however, fails to be sustained. Hegel hence records the lapse of 'sceptical self-consciousness' from its attempt to abstract itself from the world into the inevitable admission that such a project is dependent upon a particular relationship to that world – that is, a negative one: 'it owns to being a wholly contingent, single, and separate consciousness – a conscious which is *empirical*, which takes its guidance from what has no reality for it, which obeys what is for it not an *essential* being' (1977, §205). This thus presents that bathetic cadence which Surrealism attempts to keep at bay but which Barnes brings to the fore. Bathos, Haynes suggests, is related to 'the recognition of a premature reconciliation', a false end to the cleavage between subject and object through a failed attempt to destroy the objective world itself – which Barnes often names, in opposition to 'woman' and 'poet', 'Creation' and 'God' – a false reconciliation which now comes to the surface and is acknowledged as such (Haynes 2010, 105). Surrealist black humour, read in this light, is a self-sabotaging comedy. Barnes's own disaffiliation from this *côterie* of the avant-garde becomes

emphatic later in life in an adamant correction of Andrew Field's attempted characterisation of her: 'Nor am I a "Surrealist" or [Hippy?] or Dada etc – only occasionally someone turns up with something happy' (Barnes to Silas Glossop, 15 February 1978).

I will conclude this opening section with one last example which locates the question of theodicy onto the body itself. To be at home in the world is first of all to be at home in one's own body. If, following Freud and Baudelaire, however, the concept of the 'body' has undergone its denaturalisation into the 'ego', or even '*les phénomènes de son moi*' – a spatial form or forms that stand apart from the spectating 'I' – is alienation then the mode of the subject's relation to its own body? Jacques Lacan is known for making this constitutive alienation in the formation of the ego explicit: given the prematurity of birth – '*ce peu de réalité'*, which is Lacan's appropriation of Breton – or, as Elisabeth Grosz puts it, the 'ontological "incompleteness"' of the organism, the infant *gains a body* only through its visual identification with its mirror-image, effectively exiting from itself and retrieving itself once again as an organised Gestalt (Lacan 2007a, 77; Grosz 1994, xi).[4] The 'constitution of the body' in psychoanalysis, as conceived implicitly by Freud and explicitly in Lacan, is always already supplemented by representation, always already prostheticised (Shepherdson 2000, 93-100). Further on, social meaning is attached to this incorporated imago, as the values embedded in language and cultural practices are passed onto the subject, which is constituted this time through symbolic alienation. This 'ego' is thus refined

[4] The translators of the *Écrits* lose Lacan's reference to Breton's essay ('Introduction au discours sur le peu de réalité') in rendering 'peu de réalité' as 'scant reality'.

into the 'ideal-ego' (visually alienated and retrieved) and the 'ego-ideal' (symbolically alienated and retrieved) (Lacan 2007a, 559-72). Founded as it is on a form of *differential repetition*, the 'body proper' – risen into shape, structured and encrypted with meaning – may thus be conceptualised as the *antitype* to the 'organism' traversed by a variegated field of drives. By means of an eidetic supplement, the embodied subject is reconstituted from the ontologically incomplete *corps morcelé*. An interruption – or even diversion – of these two moments of corporeal exile and return, wrenched from itself yet recovered in the mirror, however, reopens the self to the possibility of a 'transgressive typology'.

For Barnes, who is in the habit of associating the alteration of one's *dons de dieu* – the refashioning of a personal idol out of 'God's grim machinery' – with spiritual insurrection, this Lacanian psychomachia before the visual and cultural mirror is in fact given a deicidal inflection. In one of her *Theatre Guild* articles published on December 1929, 'Why Actors? Brother Sumac Searches for an Answer', a drama of transferential relations is staged between the titular character, in pursuit of life's answer, and the 'subject supposed to know' – in this case, a phenotypically ambiguous Tiresian seer – the bearded lady Doña Barbetta:

> Doña Barbetta, I ask you, why are actors and actresses, and for what are they good?
>
> Because I am a holy man, Doña Barbetta, I have seen many sorrowful things. Men wanting to be Napoleon, and women wanting to be Helen of Troy, and little children wanting to be policemen. Therefore this passion in the human heart to be something it is not, is no secret to me, yet it

> troubles me, for I am not sure if it is true aspiration or a terrible and unholy criticism of the Most High, and this I must know, for I myself have wanted to be other than I am. ('Why Actors', 42)

Brother Sumac's anxieties operate against the backdrop of a theological paradigm derivable – or distorted – from Judeo-Christian thought. The pious body – whether conceived in terms of an eternal self-sameness, in keeping with the natural 'order of things', or in terms of a redemptive trajectory from divine descent into re-divinisation, *kenosis* to *theosis* (as in the Irenaean motto, 'God made Himself man, that man might become God'—Lossky 2001, 97) – is, for Brother Sumac, repeated *conservatively* rather than *creatively*. To be other than one is, Barnes suggests, is to go against the self-identity of the God who, in Exodus 3:14, proclaims: 'I am that I am'. The constitution of the body, founded as it is on the typological relation, entails, however, both orthodox and heterodox possibilities: the creature's repetition of itself *as it is created* – returning it home, as it were, to the Creator – or its projection into a histrionic double, in the secular and mythic figures of a 'Napoleon', 'Helen of Troy', or – with a somewhat bathetic diminishment in this hubris of 'the human heart' – 'policemen'.[5] In-formed by an *eidos* and *logos* of divine provenance, the creature is repeated in the Creator's image; deviating from this, however, may count for 'a terrible and unholy criticism of the Most High'. The long line of Napoleonic epigones (from Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov to Joyce's Stephen Daedalus[6] – and Barnes's circus

[5] Given that *Nightwood*'s O'Connor is also a self-professed 'bearded lady', this turn away from 'Creation' also involves the dimension of sex-difference (*Nightwood*, 90). See chapter 4 for an extended discussion.
[6] The Daedalian artist, notably, is said to imitate Napoleon's 'plain style of dress' (Joyce 2000, 52).

lion[7] – all metaphysical insurgents in some sense, thus incarnate a logic of negation that comes to the fore, most explicitly perhaps, with the philosopher whose name has become indissociable with the 'death of God'. In Nietzsche's conceptualisation of the *Übermensch*, the inherited body is *overcome* precisely via the creation of a profane double: 'This ghost that runs before you, my brother, is more beautiful than you; why do you not give it your flesh and your bones?' (Nietzsche 2006, 21-22, 44) The *antitype* to God's body, reformulated variously as a 'personal God', an 'idol', in uniform, chiton, or maned, emerges here, as it were, as the many faces of the *anti-Christ* (Nietzsche 2010).

Bodily revolt, involving the negation of the organism in favour of the projected images of one's ego-forms, thus has metaphysical implications. When it comes to self-authorship, Barnes's 'mirror-stage' suggests that the negation of *physis* constitutes an infraction against God's body, whilst its recreation as *eidos* and *logos* – respectively in the visual and symbolic registers – suggests the triumph of the subject. Barnes's Oscar Wilde, in an early short story, 'What Do You See, Madam?', hence does nothing less than to stave off 'creation' through self-fashioning: the figurehead of decadent art is said to 'parr[y] off creation with a movement and a beard', effectively redesigning himself both gesturally and facially (*Smoke*, 47). Those who fail to 'rework God', on the other hand, are, like

[7] Its Napoleon-complex also involves a theatrical context (the New York 'Hippodrome') and treasonous connotations (graced by Judas):

> And, too, what lion has no wish
> Napoleonlike to fold his hands
> Upon his breast, to brew dread plans,
> Or to receive a Judas kiss?
>
> (*New York,* 190)

Barnes's Spinoza, caught in the capsule of an inherited self whose boundaries are fixed: *Deus, sive Natura – sive* prison. Characteristically, Barnes seizes the chance to reduce the philosopher into a deflationary vignette: 'Theres [*sic*] a man who got into his own mind and ran around it trying to find cover and a way out (cited in Herring 1995, 219).' But if, as we have seen, failure seems to be the universal outcome of the revolt against God and nature ('you can't re-work God, which is a womans [*sic*] eternal effort'), foiling the redemptive hopes embedded in the logic of negation, a reconciliatory end may be still be found in an affirmative turn towards these creative miscarriages. If the bathetic slip from the negative aesthetic recorded at various junctures in Barnes's existentialist, Symbolist and Surrealist predecessors and coevals is the common result of all such endeavours, the incorporation of this fall itself into the language of her texts transforms failure into an 'art of failure'. Distinguishing herself from Peter Hoare and Silas Glossop with sly delight, she notes to Coleman in a 24 June 1938 letter, that unlike these 'successful failures', she herself was – in a wry reversal – 'a failure of success!' If 'failure' has in fact often been co-opted into critical accounts of queerness and of late modernism,[8] I proceed, in the following, to situate these insights at the place of a fraught medieval inheritance observable in *Creatures in Alphabet*. As Jonathan Ullyot notes, citing Werner Hamacher: 'because it recognizes itself in the collapse of the old, modernity must make failure into its principle'; an 'aesthetic of failure' in fact divides as much as it relates the modern

[8] Jack Halberstam writes: 'Failing is something queers do and have always done exceptionally well; for queers failure can be a style, to cite Quentin Crisp, or a way of life, to cite Foucault' (2011, 3). See also Glavey 2016, 7-8. Beckett's 'Fail again. Fail better' is often cited to this end (2009, 81).

and the medieval in their respective attempts to negotiate the transitional axes internal to their epochal formation (Ullyot 2016, 2, 7; Hamacher 1996, 294).[9]

A certain review and recalibration of the world is in fact staged through the lens of failure in *Creatures in an Alphabet*, which, as will be seen, is co-articulated with a reconfiguration of libidinal structure. Subject and world, that is, are co-implicated in this alteration: the former is *re-thrown* in the latter as much as the latter is *re-disclosed* to the former – that is, in the *mood* and *mode* of the comic. If, as Peter Brooks suggests, the 'structure of literature' and the 'structure of the mind' seem to 'coincide' or 'correspond',[10] it may be said that the writing of failure, encrypted as it is within the textual features of rhyme, rhythm, metrics and tropes themselves, is articulated as comedy not merely on a thematic level, but more significantly, in the syntactical manoeuvres and metric pulses that make up the literary text itself, a feature that seems more pertinent where we are dealing with laughter, inasmuch as it features as a *psychosomatic* phenomenon. Where a trope may be said to initiate parallel movements in *text* and *psyche*, metre follows as an engagement of parallel movements in *text* and *body*: corresponding mishaps and missteps in the encounter between the embodied subject and the text it accompanies thus delineate the numerous

[9] Ullyot's immediate reference for 'the quest to fail' is the tense passage from 'a chivalric system, where virtue is gained by winning honor through battle, to a Christian system, where is virtue is gained through fasting, repentance, and the renunciation of chivalric virtues (2016, 8-9).'

[10] Brooks therefore emphasises that formalist attention to the text bears anthropological import: 'Part of the attraction of psychoanalytic criticism has always been its promise of a movement *beyond* formalism, to that desired place where literature and life converge and where literary criticism becomes the discourse of something anthropologically important. […] [I]n the case of psychoanalysis, paradoxically we can go beyond formalism only by becoming more formalistic (1987, 4).'

turns, convolutions, and byways on the rocky back-alley towards the queer God of *Creatures in an Alphabet* – 'smelling all zig-zag of patchouli', like *Ryder*'s Fat Liz, we might say (*Ryder*, 138). Artist and God, it seems, may be reunited in a common queerness. Bruce Gardiner has recently claimed that Barnes's '*Alphabet* entails no particular theodicy' (2019, 75);[11] my aim here – following Ullyot's observation that failure can 'change our criterion of hope and offer a radical possibility of redemption' – is to offer a reconsideration (2016, 17).

## Animal-Drag and its Discontents

In a queer moment of unconsummated identification, woman and animal meet in the Denckman circus in *Nightwood*:

> Then as one powerful lioness came to the turn of the bars, exactly opposite the girl, she turned her furious great head with its yellow eyes afire and went down, her paws thrust through the bars and, as she regarded the girl, as if a river were falling behind impassable heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface. (*Nightwood*, 49)

[11] It is not entirely clear what Gardiner means by 'theodicy' here: 'though her *Alphabet* entails no particular theodicy, eleven of its letters insist on particular placement or confinement'. Not much has been written on Barnes's *Alphabet*. Apart from Gardiner's study, see also Caselli's poststructuralist reading (2009, 109-20).

Something between recognition and a missed encounter is staged here. Its significance, though muted, is marked by Robin's sudden departure ('Let's get out of here!'), with Nora's hand in hers. What elapses in this face-to-face confrontation is left unsaid, just as Robin, gazing into an image hovering between difference and similitude, seems to see something *invisible*. The threshold that divides her from her animal other emerges almost as a visible stain: more than the 'bars' of the enclosure, the 'surface' of the lioness's eyes seems to throw down a vitreous pall between them. Mutually captivated, this reflexive encounter suggests Robin's interrupted identification with the caged lioness, *her* animality, immurement, and pain perhaps, as intimated by the displaced tears. This proximity and division between self and other, focalised here into the thin edge of the corneal membrane, reprises the liminal zone of fire ('afire'; 'impassable heat') and water that marks the more general subject-object interface raised in the first volume of Proust's *A le recherche du temps perdu*:

> And wasn't my mind also like another crib in the depths of which I felt I remained ensconced, even in order to watch what was happening outside? When I saw an exterior object, my awareness that I was seeing it would remain between me and it, edging it with a thin, spiritual border that prevented me from ever directly touching its substance; it would dissipate somehow before I could make contact with it, just as an incandescent body brought near a damp object never touches its wetness because it is always preceded by a zone of evaporation. (2003, 86)

Figured here as 'a zone of evaporation', the 'thin, spiritual border' that holds apart the subject from the external world is attributed to the simultaneity of perception and *apperception*: 'my awareness that I was seeing it', the narrator

notes, lays a patina of alterity over the visible world.[12] As with Miller's notes on the 'mirthless laugh', consciousness here, encountering its own 'trace' in its intended objects, recognising itself in alterity, 'confront[s] its minimal condition […] the genesis of consciousness *as* unhappy consciousness'.

The subject-object interface that I have raised in relation to the ontological understanding of melancholy is thus considered here through the specific angle of species-difference. If identification appears to be permanently dogged by a margin of difference, the comic response exhibited in *Creatures in an Alphabet* lies not in its disavowal, but in its *foregrounding*. As will be seen, this comic display of failure enables a re-orientation of 'unhappy consciousness' – confronting its dislocation from a cosmos of alterity – towards a joyous affirmation of the body at odds with itself, re-channelling hence its reflexive dysphoria into the euphoria of a diversity of *foiled* identifications.

'Misrecognition', in fact, is Lacan's word for the subject's encounter with and approximation of its own external ego-imago (2007a, 80). As Judith Butler explains: 'The ego is formed around the specular image of the body itself, but this specular image is itself an *anticipation*, a subjunctive delineation. The ego is first and foremost an object which cannot coincide temporally with the subject, a

[12] Kant's scrupulous account of the apperceptive self (the 'I think' that attaches to representations) in the Transcendental Deduction is thus hardly surprisingly given that the Kantian subject is theorised into a radical fracture into its 'noumenal' and 'phenomenal' aspects: 'It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least would be nothing to me (1999, B131–2).'

temporal *ek-stasis*; the ego's temporal futurity, and its exteriority as a *percipi*, establish its alterity to the subject (1993, 44).' Reconciliation at the level of the body itself seems impossible where both a spatial and temporal interval opens up between the 'I' and the 'ego'. The image in the mirror is the phantasm that the subject is incapable of fully coinciding with: 'In the pursuit of realness this subject is produced, a phantasmatic pursuit that mobilizes identifications, underscoring the phantasmatic promise that constitutes any identificatory move – a promise which, taken too seriously, can culminate only in disappointment and disidentification (Butler 1993, 90).' Furthermore, this phantasm is not only a visual alienation but also involves a certain dis-location of the subject into an external socio-linguistic order, where it is fortified by its specific placement therein, anchored by its name: 'the *percipi* of man can only be sustained within a zone of nomination' (Lacan 1991, 169). The somatic unity of the Animal, it might be said, is ruptured by its expropriation into the domain of *logos*, leaving it, henceforth, stranded in unhappy consciousness: 'It is when the Word is incarnated that things really start going badly. Man is no longer at all happy, he no longer resembles at all a little dog who wags his tail or a nice monkey who masturbates. He no longer resembles anything. He is ravaged by the Word (Lacan 2013, 74).' Neither fully spirit nor animal, everywhere he turns are the shapes of himself, hideously multiplied.

In a recent study of 'queer ekphrasis', Brian Glavey suggests that the attachment to visual images in literature need not imply stasis, stagnation and a wish for transcendence destined to be thwarted, but assists in a revaluation of failure, of being 'copy' rather than 'original' (2016, 7). This brand of queer

ekphrasis thus 'encourages – rather than guards against – imitation and identification […] embraces its own belated- and relatedness and maintains an openness to failure (2016, 4).' Glavey hence makes the claim that 'Barnes's spatial form offers a precarious balance between too much and too little a sense of identity and, in so doing, occupies the middle register between negative and utopian conceptions of queer theory (2016, 18).' In moving between life and image, revolt and reconciliation, Barnes, Glavey holds, 'invokes an inter-media aesthetic attuned to both the eschatological, redemptive promise of form, on the one hand, and the importance of temporal contingency, on the other (2016, 57).' If Glavey's reading of Barnes, centred as it is on *Nightwood*, ends up polarising 'redemptive promise' and 'temporal contingency' into opposing commitments, the theodistical frame of *Creatures in an Alphabet*, I hope to show, situates reconciliation with God *at the level of* error and contingency itself.

Such failure almost inevitably finds itself pushed to the fore in relocating the theatre of identification into a cross-species context. Barnes's aesthetic investigations into the continuities, slippages, and breakages across the species thrives on the farcical exposure of the non-coincidence of Animal and Man – a hiatus between nature and spirit that is in fact already at the heart of the cloven psychosomatic aporia of the embodied subject. This histrionic exhibition, we could say, constitutes a form of *animal-drag*. A Surrealist precedent once again serves to mark the comic distance Barnes takes from the logic of negation:

> O Nature, poetry denies your kingdoms; what does it care for your properties, O things! Poetry will know no rest until it has laid its nullifying hand onto the entire universe. It is that eternal act of defiance of Gérard

> de Nerval walking a lobster on a leash through the Palais-Royal. (Breton 1994, 139)

In Breton's illustrative citation here of Nerval's domesticated crustacean, paraded in brazen 'defiance' over the face of Creation, 'Poetry' and 'Nature' are once again placed at loggerheads, with the former emerging triumphant only where its 'nullifying hand' brings the 'entire universe' to heel, emblematised, to begin with, with a lobster in the image of a Chihuahua in the image of Man. The caesura dividing nature and spirit, is in fact condensed into a formula elsewhere by Barnes: 'Animals and children: this is the state of creation; after that it is civilization (*New York,* 192).'

In his reflection on the works of the Surrealists and their Symbolist predecessors, Maurice Blanchot turns his attention to the presence of the 'nullifying hand' of poetry in the created world, observing, in his essay 'Literature and the Right to Death', that 'Adam's first act, which made him master of the animals, was to give them names, that is, he annihilated them in their existence (as existing creatures).' (1995, 323) The branding of the Word onto the bodies of Creation amounts to a 'deferred assassination'. Language, for Blanchot, is a postdiluvian phenomenon, whose inception takes place over the sunken city of God, transmuted into the spiritual abode of the belated creator, 'man'. Speech here, in the manner of the Surrealists, is predicated on the negative touch of the symbolic finger:

> The meaning of speech, then, requires that before any word is spoken, there must be a sort of immense hecatomb, a preliminary flood plunging

> all of creation into a total sea. God had created living things, but man had to annihilate them. Not until then did they take on meaning for him, and he in turn created them out of the death into which they had disappeared[.] (Blanchot 1995, 323)

For Blanchot, the animal dies into language, mortified as natural bodies to be recovered within the coordinates of significant world. The result of this desecration of the body of God, however, is the enclosure of humanity within the phantasmatic spaces of its own mind. Far from ushering in a world redeemed into meaning, the poetic Word here trammels him within patterns of sense: the world is henceforth stained by the shadow of his own apperceptive self, forever dividing him from the Real with an interceding a zone of significance. Blanchot continues:

> only instead of beings (*êtres*) and, as we say, existants (*existants*), there remained only being (*l'être*), and man was condemned not to be able to approach anything or experience anything except through the meaning he had to create. (1995, 323)

Sealed off into the projected spaces of his own mind, literary Man, as figured by Blanchot, suggests that the consummation of the Surrealist enterprise – which may, in some sense, *have already happened* – sets forth, not the redeemed City of the Poet, but a dystopian totality saturated *with and only with* significance: there remains only Being [*l'être*] – the singular monument (as the definite article here indicates) – as individual 'existants' – Blanchot's 'properties', 'things', and the 'kingdoms' of Nature, animals and all – recede into the underworld. But if this negative function of language is deployed in Barnes's poem, the dysfunctional passage from *physis* to *logos* that is everywhere

foregrounded makes of the Word less the organising cage into which life is coerced than a ramshackle enclosure from which the intractable contingency of the Real routinely escapes. Where the *modus operandi* of Breton's Surrealist crustacean, sauntering through the Palais-Royal, is characterised by the negative logic of 'black humour', Barnes's own creatures and their malapropos insertion into the alphabetic series raises a derisive finger at *both* nature and poetry, the order of *physis* and that of *logos*. Their collision site, as it were, gives rise to a menagerie of animals in civilisation's garb.

The alphabet in Barnes's poem thus functions as the flimsy imago of the animal. As the transfigured form of the creature, its culminates in the entry of the I-stanza – quite appropriately as 'The Imago' – in which the mortal body is dispensed with altogether, rarefied into the letter:

> When from mischief interdict,
> The Imago perfected rise,
> And lays its dool at Heaven's Gate,
> Then in this alphabet it is.[13]

The 'imago', or the animal *manqué,* as it were – that which never was among God's creatures – now emerges in the poet's new cosmos, a body without body. The conditions are of course that it is 'perfected', guarded from contingency and accident ('from mischief interdict'), and arrives disburdened of its 'dool' (a variant of 'dole') into the realm of *logos*. It is image without substance, alphabet without animal. So the poet claims. Yet 'perfect[ion]' is

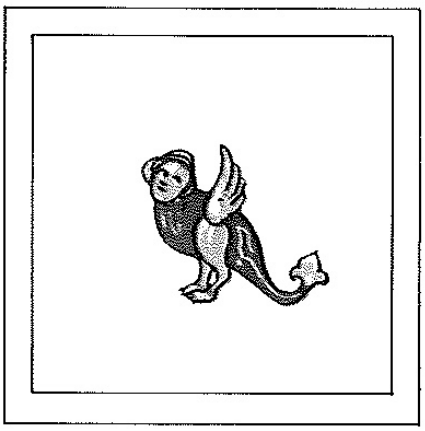
[13] All citations from *Creatures in an Alphabet* are from the first 1982 edition, with accompanying illustrations by Francesca Belanger. The pages are not numbered.

hardly an apt description of the workmanship here: both rhymes are only consonantal ('interdict'/'Gate'; 'rise'/'is'), creating more dissonance than similarity, whilst the grammatical incongruity of an 'Imago' that both 'lays' and 'rise [*sic*]' defies concord for the sake of, presumably, not just the contrived pickup to 'is', but also the metrical coercion into another masculine ending. *Nothing*, in fact, is quite right about this anachronistic bestiary, published in 1982, more than eight hundred years after the heyday of the genre, and stunted, furthermore, with only twenty-four stanzas – as opposed to the twenty-six letters of the alphabet – beginning with its botched opening – 'Alas!' – and lurching to its missing close in the absconded Z-stanza. If some sort of *scheme* is to be deduced from the rhymes here, it would have to be one schematically designed to grate on the nerves. These aural irritants, far from acting as the sounding board to the *musica universalis*, hit one more as the nails of a postgraduate demiurge on the blank slate of a negated world. They comprise at least three variants: i. the many consonantal rhymes in addition to the two already mentioned ('days' and 'is'; 'bird' and 'said'; 'sloth' and 'uncouth'; 'run' and 'popcorn'); ii. the cross-linguistic rhymes that require some phony tweaking – or a quick flick through a beginner's guide to French or Italian – as in, 'animal' and '*quadrille*', 'who' and '*solfeggio*'; and in iii. the rhymes that require a degree of anachronistic adjustment – or scholarly pretension – such as 'love' and 'prove', the Renaissance couplet exemplified, for instance, in Shakespeare's Sonnet 116.[14]

[14] 'If this be error and upon me proved,/ I never writ, nor no man ever loved.' (13-14)

Alas!

As there was nothing more to say,
The X has crossed himself away.
And as there's nothing new to prove,
He marked his exit with his love.



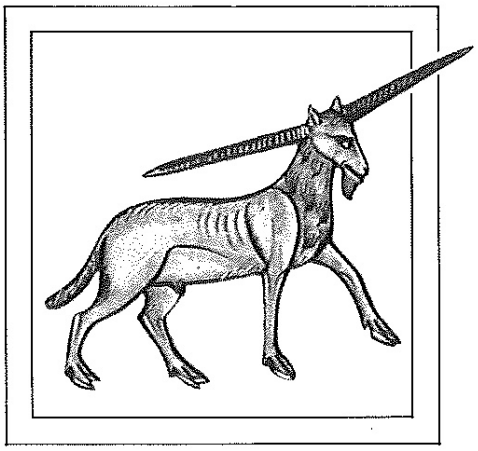
*Figures 1.1* & *1.2* Francesca Belanger, 'Alas' and 'X', *Creatures in an Alphabet*. © Saxon Barnes and Warner Lowey for the Estate of Djuna Barnes.

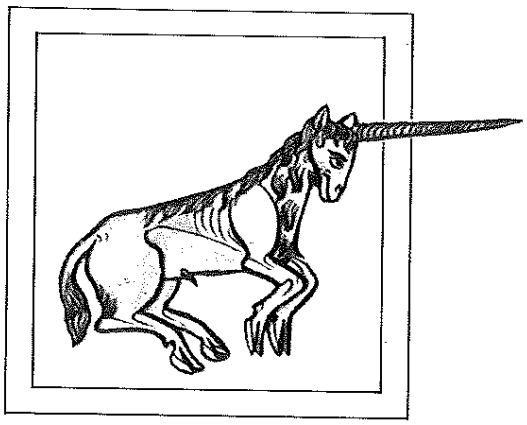
The illustrations for *Creatures* by Francesca Belanger, which received Barnes's approval, reveal the ludic assortment of anatomical curiosities resulting from the fraught relocation of the natural world into the significant image. The aesthetic enclosure of the animal within the alphabet – set in relief here by the square borders of Belanger's faux woodcuts, with Surrealist touches – denaturalises the organism without a corresponding divinisation in the form of Creation's cynosure. The scrambled morphology of these figurines, as in the 'A' and 'X' stanzas, thus seem to have been ham-handedly re-jointed from a warehouse of the various dislocated parts of the lay-figures of the created

world.[15] The printed frame that houses these 'Creatures' is, in fact, routinely breached. The inception of the Word, '[m]istranslated from the start', leaves *physis* and *logos* in an unresolved imbroglio – as it were, 'wrangl[ing] by the wall'.[16]

If ascension is your hope,
Ride not the Nigor (antelope)
But mount the springbok for the run;
It jumps straight up, like hot popcorn.

Unicorn, the one-horned beast
Mistranslated from the start,
(See Deuteronomy, at least),
An upright, but a much vex'd art.





*Figures 1.3* & *1.4* Francesca Belanger, 'Nigor' and 'Unicorn', *Creatures in an Alphabet*. © Saxon Barnes and Warner Lowey for the Estate of Djuna Barnes.

[15] In this light, Mina Loy's self-reference as a 'lay-figure' is taken by Barnes to suggest a kind of aesthetic preservation beyond the mortality of her body. Having received news of Loy's death in 1966, Barnes appears to leave the memory of her in a limbo between *physis* and eschatological form: 'I can't seem to think of Mina dead, because she never did seem made of just human flesh. As she herself said, she was a "lay-figure[.]"' (Barnes to Fabienne Benedict, 9 November 1966)

[16] In 'The Walking-Mort' (1971), another late poem by Barnes, a reflection on the 'resurrection' ends with the question: 'Or shall we freeze and wrangle by the wall?' (*Collected Poems*, 138)

The following dilemma is presented. On the one hand, the order of *logos* predominates, causing a scrambling of phylogenetic taxonomy in favour of the alphabetical series. 'The Walrus is a cow that neighs' effectively straddles three species; the 'Nigor' appears under the letter 'N' as a negative example ('Ride not the Nigor'), and is parenthetically clarified as an 'antelope' before giving way to another kind of antelope (the 'springbok') which then becomes the main subject of this stanza supposedly reserved for the letter 'N'; the 'Ocelot' is mentioned, it seems, because it begins with the letter 'O', although we could do as well with a 'panther'; and the 'Kinkajou' is said to be a 'hanging sloth' before this spurious elucidation reveals itself to be the result of a very cursory consideration of the animal's appearance: Kinkajou, sloth, 'Or any else that looks uncouth'. To be technical, the Kinkajou is classed under the zoological family *Procynidae*, which happens to make it more related to the Raccoon of the 'R'-stanza than any kind of hanging sloth, all of which are of the genus *Pilosa* and hence kin to anteaters. Furthermore, in cases where the rhymes are turned with more grace than strain, the effect is a linguistic takeover of the organic. The rhyming pair 'elephant' and 'plant' insists on a cross-kingdom identification based on aural rather than scientific grounds, just as 'junk' and 'trunk' join forces to transmute the hippopotamus into articles of culture and civilisation, while the 'cage' and 'page' of the Tyger-stanza suggest the textual capture of the natural world. As Gillian Beer, in an essay linking concerns of comedy, incarnation and rhyme, notes:

> Rhyme imposes a taxonomic order in which likeness of sound predominates over all other categories. […] Rhyme is not outside reason: it (in both senses) aggravates reason. But it outgoes reason in that it disturbs established semantic categories and refuses the hierarchies implicit in those groupings. (2010, 193)

On the other hand, however, this enlistment of the animal kingdom into a linguistic procession makes an open confession of its haphazard, opportunistic, and inconsistent stratagems. Given this, the absorption of the animal into the alphabet is held back by ironic distance; by displaying the dysfunctions and fault-lines in the order of *logos* itself, this latter, as the imperfect imago of the order of *physis*, is, in being de-idealised, dis-identified with. These animals, dragged up as alphabets, exhibit a farcical anatomy of nature in the full regalia of culture, disclosing rather than disavowing the disjunction between the creatures of God and the creations of humanity, the cracks, that is, in the mirror of the significant world. O'Neal, in fact, records that every stanza in the drafts leading up to the published poem was preceded by the following lines: 'O Mister Physter and Miss Peugh, what is creation coming to (1990, 91).' Physter, cousin to *physis,* and Peugh, a member of the ecclesiastical order perhaps – if only as furniture (pew) – are the right ones to ask, *and* the wrong ones to expect answers from.

The order of *physis* and the order of *logos,* supposedly structured according to a mirroring analogy, fall asunder here in this modern take on a medieval genre. Barnes herself was familiar enough with the bestiary to give it her own parodic spin. Apart from a twentieth-century compendium including Edward Topsell and Pliny the Elder in *The Elizabethan Zoo: A Book of Beasts both Fabulous and Authentic* (Byrne 1979 [1926]), she owned a copy of T.H. White's edition of *The Book of Beasts* (1954), a Latin bestiary of the twelfth century. Caselli records that a reference to the *Physiologus* – the *Ur*-text of bestiaries – is

scribbled on the dust jacket of her copy of *The Book of Beasts*. Interestingly enough, a misspelling in the title ('PHYSOOLOGUS') encrypts the spectacle of a 'zoo' in this anatomy of Creation (Caselli 2009, 112). It has been suggested that the *Physiologus* was first put together in Alexandria in 2AD in Greek, and as far as critical consensus goes, takes its place as the textual 'origin' of the Latin-English bestiary, although a long oral tradition extends behind it (George and Yapp 1991, 1-5). Wilma George and Brundson Yapp summarise the operating structure of the *Physiologus* as follows:

> the general pattern for each chapter in the *Physiologus* is: a quotation from scripture; one fact of natural history, or purported natural history, about the habits or properties of the animal; and the moral to be drawn from this for human life, sometimes supported by further biblical quotations. (1991, 6)

The *Physiologus*, that is, dovetails *physis* and *logos*. As in the medieval system of correspondences, within each cosmic particular finds its home, infinitely analogised down a vista of mirrors, this early anatomy of the world sections it into legible sequences which are thereafter woven back into patterns of semblance. The 'semantic web of resemblance' that medieval *convenentia* is founded on, Foucault notes, marks all of Creation with the prosopopoeic trace of the Creator: 'The truth of these marks – whether they are woven into nature itself or whether they exist in lines on parchments and in libraries – is everywhere the same: coeval with the institution of God (1989, 38).'[17] Each

[17] See also White's remarks in Barnes's copy of *The Book of Beasts* that '[e]ven words were hitched up and entangled with the universe': 'Everything held together, was logically coherent. 'Why? Because' was the leit-motif of the ages of faith, which paradoxically made them able to say, '*Credo quia absurdum est.*' It

apparition within this enchanted realm of beings, whether sentient or insentient, of the order of the spirit or of nature, is, at every turn, narcissistically reflected and replicated. This perfusion of Creation with the Word of God – rather than the 'nullifying hand' of the poet – is given in the Bible as a world replete with significance:

> But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? (Job 12:7-9)

Nature, here, *speaks itself*, graced with the Word it returns in harmonious antiphony. To recall, however, Barnes's critique of Wordsworth – in particular his 'Intimations of Immortality' – inheres in this very quality of 'nature repeated', 'pure with the devil left out': 'Wordsworth, these nature writers, seem to me to clean nature up too much' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938). In a cosmos hoovered free of *dirt and difference*, God's book and body fold over, essentially self-same, resulting in the set of phantasmatic formations through which culture becomes the mirror of nature, ethics of animal ethology, and teleology of function. Installing a mutually conversive copula between the Animal and the Human, scripture turns into a *conservative repetition* of nature: poetry, as such, is a return of *physis* to itself in verbal guise, a repetition of the

---

was sufficient if there was a link in pattern. The Creation was a mathematical diagram drawn in parallel lines […] things did not only have a moral: they often had physical counterparts in other strata. There was a horse on the land and a sea-horse in the sea. For that matter, there was probably a Pegasus in heaven. There were physical comparisons as well as moral ones (1954, 245).'

Real in and as so many legible symbols.[18] Already in the first French adaptation of the *Physiologus* by Philippe de Thaün, the insertion of language into the body of nature resonates through the internally rhyming refrain: the 'Bestiare' is a 'livre de gramaire' (De Thaün 1900, 1). In opposition to Blanchot's postdiluvian *logos*, an antediluvian language – 'current to everybody before the Flood: that is to say, Hebrew', 'the First of Languages' – is thus available to each and every animal in the *Book of Beasts*: names are attributed to animals 'according to the sort of nature which each of them had (White 1954, 70-1).' Though Latin and Greek are technically post-Hebraic languages, correspondences between name and essence may still be traced: animals are '*animalia*' or '*animantia*' due to 'the life of animation and the spirit of movement'; '[p]uer the boy is known as such because of his purity (*a puritate*)', whilst '[t]he tiny little girl (*puella*) is called so because she is a chicken (*pulla*)' (1954, 220-1). The comic potential embedded here would not have been lost on Barnes, even if it might not be entirely clear which of the latter two propositions comes across as the more ludicrous. '*Credo quia absurdum est*', White notes, 'was the leit-motif of the ages of faith' (1954, 245). The animal-drag that Barnes stages in *Creatures in an Alphabet* operates in fact via deft manoeuvres between analogy and essence, similitude and identity – as in the slip here from the 'boy […] known as such', to the 'girl' who '*is* a chicken', effectively tripping over the most innocuous of copulas into her animal *doppelgänger*.

[18] It is thus explicitly against the '[t]heoreticians in the Middle Ages' that Lacan formulates his account of 'misrecognition' in the mirror-stage: 'the reabsorption of man's ego […] by its reintegration into a universal good' or 'by the subject's effusion toward an object devoid of alterity' is belied by a 'vital dehiscence constitutive of man', which 'makes unthinkable the idea of an environment that is preformed for him' (2007a, 94-7).

Such bathetic transits between identification and dis-identification make up the histrionic farce of Barnes poem. If, in the wake of medieval cosmology, someone like Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), one of the most famous Anglican divines to advocate for the return of the practice of kneeling for prayer, could still make his case through the logic of *convenentia* by citing the work of the Creator, the same specimen, in Barnes, turns into a miscreated mongrel. Andrewes propounds: given that humans are not given 'knees like an Elephant, that cannot bend' – a claim that on its own already flouts zoological evidence – one ought to kneel whilst praying (Cooper 2011, 267). Here, function becomes teleology: in good-old Aristotelian fashion, the *ought* mimics the organ. The depiction of Barnes's elephant, however, takes a swipe at Creation; to add salt to the Creator's wound, it offers, at the same time, a patronising pardon:

> The reason that the Elephant
> Is both detained and at ease,
> Is because it is four trees
> That the Lord forgot to plant.

'Reason', it is assumed, is to be found behind the manifest incoherence of a beast that '[i]s both detained and at ease', halting, yet mobile. This teleological intimation, however, collapses into bathos, as the belated poet accounts for her incompetent predecessor in an act of supersession: the 'reason' involved is nothing more than a mnemonic lapse. The 'Lord', having failed to plant his trees, to anchor his creations not just geographically but also taxonomically, leaves them roaming, apprehensive yet free, across the border that divides the

biological kingdoms – that is, from stationary flora to motile fauna. The mirror between *logos* ('reason') and *physis* (ethology) shows up an incompetent hand, with the analogical relation exposed as some *post hoc* metaphysical chicanery.

In a similar vein, natural telos is suggested and brusquely erased in the Giraffe-stanza ('what it poles for, none can say –/ It's much too up and high away.') The function of the organ – this time the neck – turns out, quite possibly, to be a function without a goal, or with a goal so distant it fails not only to be reached, but also to be linguistically indexed. Anatomy, here, is dis-identified from purpose, its false imago. A similarly bathetic move is made in the Lion-stanza, this time, with the rather droll observation:

> Horrid hunger is the cause,
> That opens up the Lion's jaws;
> Yet what it tears apart for meat
> Is merely what its victims ate.

The food chain – never the best place to go scavenging for evidence of moral design – is cited here, somewhat apologetically, accompanied with some sheepish foot-shuffling. If a hint of moral accusation comes through in this stanza, it is just as quickly quelled by some flimsy blame-shifting and a flatfooted reference to the truism of a physical law. Creation involves a self-exculpating evil: lions are secondary vegetarians. The rebarbative concept of 'natural evil' that has provoked – and spoiled – so much theodistical thinking is intimated here

only to be dismissed as some inconsequential quirk of a carnivorous big cat.[19] Ethics and ethology now come asunder, leaving a queasy aftertaste in the wake of a sharp consonantal rhyme ('meat'; 'ate'), anagrammatically scrambled, with the 'm' synecdochally chewed off. Having wrenched moral sense from the natural world, the next stanza seems to vacate it of intentional meaning, taking us from moral dubiety to etiological confusion. Monkeys, inexplicably, vie for trifles and toss off treasures:

> In the zoo the Monkeys screech
> At any dainty out of reach;
> Yet let a corpulence be found,
> They whack it madly to the ground.

While Creation and its Creator may be heckled at every turn by the derisive demiurge of *Creatures in an Alphabet,* the distance between the poet here and her predecessors and coevals in the Symbolist, Surrealist, Decadent and Existentialist traditions may be marked by the transformation of unmitigated revolt into a kind of wit without substance, which fizzles out before any real commitment to cosmic recreation. This deflationary manoeuvre is heightened by the metrical pulse, which tends to foreshorten thought into gnomic pith, shutting rather than winding down these stillborn ideas. Bathos here becomes a guerrilla mechanism, a constant goad against God without any committed claims to supersede Him. Given that the transfiguration of animal into alphabet is

[19] Schopenhauer thus famously reads evil as 'positive' (rather than 'negative', a 'privation' of goodness) often by citing the food chain: 'This world is the battleground of tormented and agonized beings who continue to exist only by each devouring the other. Therefore every beast of prey in it is the living grave of thousands of others, and its self-maintenance is a chain of torturing deaths (2010, 33).'

continually thwarted, the belated creator, in negating the world of her predecessor, does not herself amount to much more than a quibbling sophist, something between a backseat driver and a metaphysical gadfly. Irony here redounds on the ironist herself, *undermined even as she undermines*, in a form of self-sabotage that leaves open gashes in the fabric of the physical *and* significant worlds – that is, *both* her inheritance, Creation, and her textually inaugurated cosmos. Instead of a pleromatic attainment of Being in the order of *logos*, the Word itself is debilitated. The confession is open: the rhymes are both ingenious and botched; the alphabetical series is set up and set aside; morality, intentionality and teleology are proven inadequate but not surpassed; taxonomy is disordered but never fully reordered.

Comedy comes out of this failure, along with a textually mediated laughter that might be, following Mikhail Bakhtin, termed 'reduced' (Bakhtin 1984, 163). Tyrus Miller reads this reduction, in which 'the track left by laughter' remains 'in the structure of represented reality' as an indication of 'a transitive relation between embodied laughter and textual forms' (1999, 55). The normative soteriological arc coded in the laughter of Baudelaire, making it at once a Satanic imprint on the body and a redemptive passage therefrom, is thus *diverted* here via an aesthetic 'reduction' into the formation of a textual world bearing the traces of its processed melancholy.[20] The *ek-static* body, divided from itself into a psychosomatic aporia involving an 'I' and its 'phenomenal egos', remains the archaeological residue of the text, which features now as the aesthetically *mediated* response of the poet to her predecessor, constituting

[20] See my introduction.

thereby the antiphonal return of *her* jury-rigged confection to *His* rickety handiwork. Along these lines, it may be said that in *Creatures in an Alphabet*, the convulsions proper to laughter are 'reduced', broken into regular intervals that are arranged and evened out into a steady metrical pulse whose end is forecasted with the beginning of each tetrametric line – from *spasms*, that is, to *scansion*. Most of the lines in the poem are in fact end-stopped, containing each semantic nugget within a predictable cadence, which works up a sense of anticipation that occasionally finds its punch-line – as in, for example, the Monkey-, Elephant-, and Hummingbird-stanzas – and occasionally does not, leaving some unresolved confusion lingering, where the metre has already reached its terminus. The Peacock-, Kinkajou-, and Raccoon-stanzas, which all end with questions, are illustrative in this regard, as well as the Yak-stanza, which concludes with a sense of having made an utterly pointless record of an arbitrarily picked animal:

> A bale of hair, the Yak he be,
> His bitter butter minged in tea;
> With all his craggy services,
> His lowly life Himalayan is.

This appears to be laughter at its most 'reduced', where the laughing has been properly 'muffled down to the minimum', diminished into a memory of a convulsive rhythm that is still retained in the metre, but which has not been provoked by any real or meaningful reason (Bakhtin 1984, 163). This is writing at its most bathetic, where the spectre of a joke seems to course through the stanza without, however, being forced into presence or exorcised – a dim

conjuration not of any semantic cause but cast by a metrical memory that is, by now, indissociably woven into the humorous pulse, beating time to an absentee wit. This is bathos redoubled: the bathos of bathos, where even the bathetic moment fails to arrive.

Something quite different then is at work here than in Miller's reading of the 'mirthless laughter' of *Late Modernism*. Where Barnes's laughter, 'reduced' here to a cadence of bathos by which all these human-animal, *logos-physis* identifications fall apart, enacting, as it were, a comedy of shattered mirrors, Miller's laughter may be read as a reconstitution of the ego – or, more precisely, the *proprioceptive* ego. Although Miller himself does not use the term 'proprioception', his references to Freud on ego-defence may be extended in this direction. Miller reads Freudian consciousness as 'a rigidified, deadened filter against experience', 'a hard outer shell' or 'a hull of inorganic armor around a vital core' (1999, 50). Along these lines, his characterisation of late modern subjectivity adheres to a minimal degree of affective attachment to the formal Gestalt of the self, what he calls an 'anthropological minimum'. This is linked to a 'self-reflexive laughter' which 'function[s] to preserve and shore up – to "stiffen" – a subjectivity at risk of dissolution'. In a word, late modern subjectivity presents the last restoration of an etiolated ego as shield, a rudimentarily encrusted layer that remains the last vestige of an integrated subject. This, then, is the final recourse in 'a deauthenticated world in which subject and object, figure and ground, character and setting are only weakly counterposed or even partly intermingled (1999, 62-3).' The establishment of the ego is thus a minimal form of self-excision from the world, the breaking away from immanence and

hence the inception of the state of 'unhappy consciousness' through the recognition of alterity. The ego here may no longer be the alienated form that the subject retrieves for itself through a *visual* frame, but it remains within a model of non-coincident reflexivity. Instead of ocular misrecognition, Miller leaves us with what may be termed proprioceptive misrecognition – a self-sensing that mis-captures the boundaries of an attenuated ego. Miller's formula – '*Rideo ergo sum*' – captures this well: I laugh, shudder, and stiffen – and in so doing, find the palpable lineaments of my self. In his words:

> Laughter, itself a kind of spasmodic automatism only marginally distinct from the laughable mechanism of our embodied existence, can help serve to convince us that a self, however minimal, is still there. *Rideo ergo sum.* The self confirms itself in laughter, persists in the interval between automatism and its comic reflex. (1999, 25)

Descartes's reflexive move, which *misrecognises* the thinking subject or thinking moment (*cogito*) as the thinking substance (*res cogitans*) is recapitulated here with a difference: laughing not only *implies* its transcendental condition of a laughing subject, but *generates* the very form of this substance. The laughing subject thus becomes the laughing ego, the 'body' it acquires by establishing its borders. In this commitment to the logic of the encapsulated self, the ego in Miller's account thus retains it as the 'symptom' of the subject – as Lacan characterises it (1988, 16)[21] – a testament to the dysphoria in the spaces between the 'I' and the its empirical avatars. The chrysalis of the self is thus fortified in terms similar to those ascribed to the Lacanian ego (*qua* 'rigid structure', 'fortified camp', the 'donned armor of an alienating identity'—Lacan

[21] See also Whitebook 1996, 122, 238.

2007a, 78) drawn and extended, this time, from Wyndham Lewis: 'ossature', 'shell', 'rigid stylistic articulations', 'shield', 'mimicry', 'stiffening', 'self-preservation' (Miller 1999, 49-51). Although the ocular dynamic has been replaced by a proprioceptive one, the reflexive constitution of the ego is retained, along with the 'ectodermic case' it sheaths itself with (Lewis 1989, 350).

While Miller attempts to extrapolate from Lewis's diction a general model of subjectivity operative in 'late modernism', the fact that it seems to be shaped by a masculine morphological imaginary makes Barnes's inclusion therein problematic. This motor unconscious of the masculine self becomes more apparent when read alongside Freud's 1922 essay, 'Medusa's Head', which formulates the defensive stiffening of the male subject explicitly as a response to his female other. The threat of castration in the petrifying gaze of the medusa is warded off through the very terror it incites. Stiffening is at one and the same time *reactive* – a response to a threat – and *recuperative* – a restoration of the ego's lineaments, within which the penis is safely ensconced. The threat of castration is thus accompanied by prophylactic stiffening – which also 'means an erection' – thereby reassuring the subject, through a stocktaking of his body parts, of his centre and circumference – that 'he is still in possession of a penis (*SE* XVIII, 273).'[22] *Je bande donc je suis*. Such a position is in fact satirised as a feature of geriatric masculinity by Barnes herself with a gnomic formula in her 1974 poem 'There Should be Gardens': 'He keeps alive/ By shivering'. This 'shivering' – the motor compensation for the erectile 'stiffening' no longer

[22] The Lacanian mirror-stage similarly involves the 'inexhaustible squaring of the ego's audits' (2007a, 78). Lacan's phrase – 'la quadrature inépuisable des récolements du moi' – may also be rendered as 'the stocktaking of the ego'.

available to him whose 'great bull-curl' is now a 'vanquished' appendix to 'a sullen bag,/ A sac of withered infants' – now features as the symptom of the ego in its eleventh hour (*Collected Poems,* 187). Where laughter, for Miller, presents the last guarantee of the bounded self, both the cause and symptom of unhappy consciousness, with Barnes, it facilitates the routine emancipation of the subject from the mirror of discontent via the volatilisation of its ego-forms.

At this stage, it is perhaps worth setting *Creatures in an Alphabet* next to another two bestiaries by one of the figureheads of the French avant-garde – at least one of which Barnes read during the composition of her poem – as a means of rounding off my discussion. Apollinaire's *Le Bestiaire ou cortège d'Orphée* (1911) provides in many ways an iconic instantiation of the Orphic demiurge who transfigures Creation in the image of the poetic word. In this procession of beasts, each animal enlisted into language is also – as in Blanchot's assessment – 'assassinated' and entombed. Among the accompanying woodcuts by Raoul Dufy, we are presented with a slain tortoise, out of whose vacated shell a lyre is made, offering us in a literal exposition the movement from organic body to speech and song. With a certain degree of patricidal intent, Apollinaire affiliates himself here with Apollo, Nietzsche's deity of the glorious form, whose golden lyre is bequeathed to Orpheus: 'Des animaux passent aux sons/ De ma tortue, de mes chansons (Apollinaire 2011, 4).' Tortue, or *torture*?

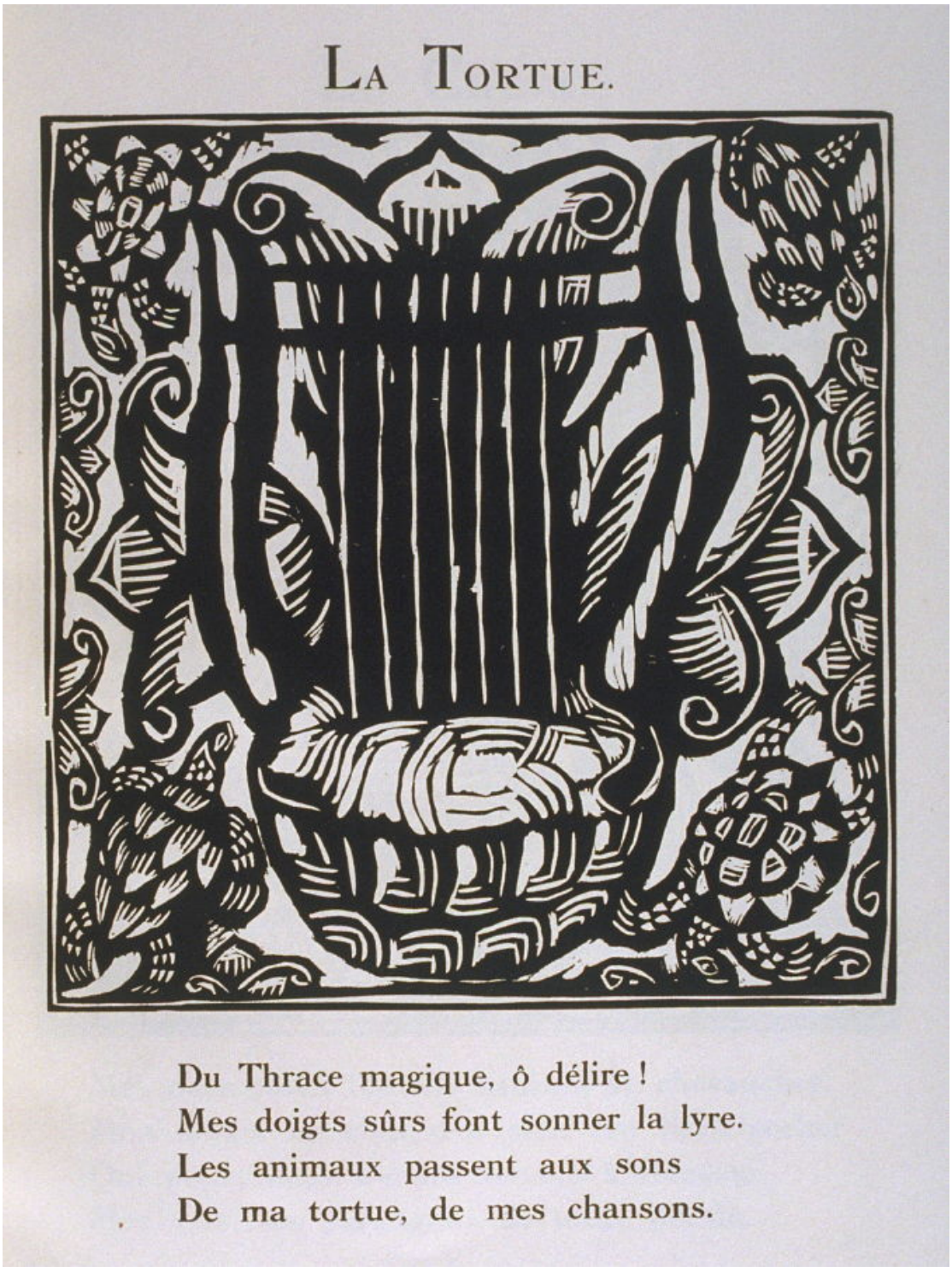



*Figure 1.5* Raoul Dufy, 'La Tortue', *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée,* woodcut. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

*Figure 1.6* Raoul Dufy, 'Orphée', *Le Bestiaire ou Cortège d'Orphée,* woodcut. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The motivating principle of this Orphic cortege is thus similar to what Leo Bersani has termed the 'anthropomorphic assimilation of the world' –

essentially, a conversion of Creation into the image of desire (2010, 139).[23] A later bestiary, published posthumously in 1925, brings to the fore the *erotic* dynamics coded in the psychomachia before the mirror, this time, however, presenting a libidinal configuration more in line with Barnes's poem.[24] Apollinaire's *Cortège priapique* seems in some ways to be both a demonstration and *reversal* of the phallogocentrism of the earlier *Cortège d'Orphée.*[25] If its first stanza begins as a paean to the poetic *logos* – not just Orphic here but Priapic ('Ce Dieu qu'on adore à Lampsaque') – it quickly veers off into a series of deflationary depictions of itself, becoming everything from faucet to parsnip and cucumber (Apolliniare 1978, 23). In the sequence 'Le Petit Homme', the opening sally – in priapic braggadocio – finds no climax: a foiled deixis ('Le voice droit'), it attempts self-presence only to be displaced into the simulacra of itself.

> Le voici droit je veux lui faire ma prière
> Mon vit ô mon fier vit jamais effarouché
> Mon jouvenceau discret c'est la godemiché
> Petit naveau d'amour c'est mon tube à clystère
>
> (Apollinaire 1978, 29)

The laughter here is *deflationary*: to adopt a Lacanian term for the passage from *physis* to *logos*, Priapus, in '*detumescence*', becomes 'le petit

[23] See also Anne Greet's reading of Apollinaire's bestiary in relation to 'l'aspect sadique des amours du poète' (1977, 91).
[24] The concept of an erotic bestiary is not without precedent. See, for instance, the thirteenth-century *Bestiaire d'Amour* by Richard de Fournival which departs from the moralising schema common to the period to an exploration of courtly and animal love (De Fournival, 1986).
[25] Léger Alype suggests that 'Le *Cortège priapique* est peut-être né, qui sait, du désir d'écrire un pendant au *Cortège d'Orphée*, un bestiaire érotique où eussent figuré les attributs de l'amour: et le priape, et la moniche, et le condom, et la femme en baudruche, et le godemiché (Apollinaire 1978, 14).'

homme' (Lacan 2011, 142-3). Beginning as his 'proud prick never frightened', it morphs into a discreet stripling, then to a boat of love, a dildo, and thereafter a clyster pipe. Here too, the poetic Word fails to capture *the beast*, producing a representational drift through which the penis is alienated in a hall of *curved* mirrors. Pitched back and forth between identification and dis-identification, Eros here goes ad-lib over the beat of bathos, splintering into a host of incongruent forms: the *punctual joy* of which Lacan speaks in relation to corporeal assumption ('jubilatory mimicry'), ends up dilating into a *serial joy*, in an alternating rhythm of ego-succession and ego-secession (Lacan 2007a, 151). A corresponding corporeal drift accompanies this protean ego, alongside the mutative passage of the poet's desiderata from vagina to anus, Marie and Marguerite to Ganymede and the cross-species 'femme en baudruche […] la vache que j'aime', recalling Zeus's own Io. Static identification, conversely, paralyses the body into a reduced statuette: its emblem – 'Cet éros pétri dans la glaise' – an ornament at the Luxembourg, is thus castrated by perhaps the worst insult a Frenchman could come up with – an English condom: 'Une feuille de vigne est sa capote anglaise' (Apollinaire 1978, 26). As Glavey observes, the impossibility of ekphrastic identity can invert the relation of subordination between 'image' and 'original': the 'sister arts', or better, 'sissy arts', of *mis*representation – a kind of writing amiss or writing awry – thus re-focalise the failure of eidetic assumption into the *differential margin* that sustains the aestheticisation and de-aestheticisation of the ego (2016, 7).[26]

[26] See also Bersani 1986, 9-11.

Placed next to the *Cortège priapique*, then, the opening invocation of lyric potency in the exhibitionist bluster of the *Cortège d'Orphée* becomes, in retrospect, *suspect*: 'Admirez le pouvoir insigne/ Et la noblesse de la ligne' (Apollinaire 2011, 2). This 'nobility of line', manifested in the towering Orpheus spanning the frame of the woodcut, may be – like the priapic 'Le voici droit' of the later poem – submitted to a bathetic fall. It is in Barnes's poem, in fact, that this logic of self-sabotage is raised into a principle. Failure is, in this sense, *transcendentalised*, in the image of a God who plans 'straight', perhaps, but mangles His blueprints in the execution, producing the *fabulous* shapes of the created world. If the terms of Apollinaire's self-advertisement, circulated on an anonymous flyer, situate his *Bestiaire* in the 'noblest humanist tradition', raising *physis* to *logos* in the 'finished words' of the lyric poet (Apollinaire 2001, 140), Barnes's own bestiary implicates both the belated creator and her predecessor in a common carnival of *unfinished* creatures, going zigzag in the zone of indeterminate forms before the cracked mirror of Creation: the 'ontologically incomplete' animal, that is, is not fulfilled in the alphabet, anchored in the order of *logos*, but shape-shifts into a series of transient hybrids, from the 'visor'-sporting Raccoon (at '*ombre* or *quadrille*') to the Camel in 'caliph'. In this affirmation of the Fall, euphoria resides in dysmorphia. None of God's creatures will, finally, reach themselves, self-coincident in the reflexive space of *physis* and *logos*. The Peacock's tail, here, an emblazoned fabric of ocelli, becomes the emblem of the body of God – no longer teleological but *teratological* – an Argus foiled perennially in its self-pursuit:

If among itself it go,
(As the Peacock's said to do),
With all its thousand eyes ajar,
Is it itself it's looking for?

In *Creatures,* the libidinal tie to the static image in the mirror is relaxed and redistributed over the entirety of the misshapen world. The diluvial *logos,* no longer an 'assassination' of antecedent creatures and creators, inundates a cosmos – *always already queer* – with a response of love. Barnes's return to a probe regarding her sexuality, recorded in a 27 October 1935 letter from Coleman, is thus telling: 'when I asked you if you considered yourself really Lesbian: 'I might be anything. If a horse loved me, I might be that (cited in Herring 1995, 58-9).' In fact, as it turns out, loving Thelma – herself transposed into the eland-unicorn-dog-robin aporia of *Nightwood* – is perhaps rather like loving a seal, or the 'seal woman' from the dream she recounts to Coleman in her 21 May 1938 letter.[27] Caselli reminds us that the Hotel Récamier that sets the scene for Robin's awakening in *Nightwood* also functions as an allusion to Jacques-Louis David's *Portrait of Madame Récamier* (Caselli 2009, 120), who now re-appears in *Creatures,* this time round, rotund, rump out:

The Seal, she lounges like a bride,
Much too docile, there's no doubt;
Madame Récamier, on side,
(If such she has), and bottom out.

David's Récamier, in fact, comes into its erotic apotheosis in Ingres's *Grande Odalisque* fourteen years later, with an equally recumbent subject – here,

[27] See my introduction.

however, *undressed* – giving to the turn of the head a less veiled air of seduction. The bottom of this odalisque is, in many ways, much more 'out' than its predecessor's. Criticised since its in appearance in 1814 and again in the Paris exhibition of the Salon of 1819 for its flouting of anatomical realism (Benjamin 2000), the distorted form in Ingres's painting is brought to a further degree of torsion in Barnes, this time, fattened up into another species, in the pose of a rather unconvincing come-on. Bathos once again diverts eros from the singular image, sending it tumbling down a line of cousin resemblances.

*Figure 1.7* Jacques-Louis David, *Portrait of Madame Récamier*, 1800, oil on canvas. Paris, Louvre.

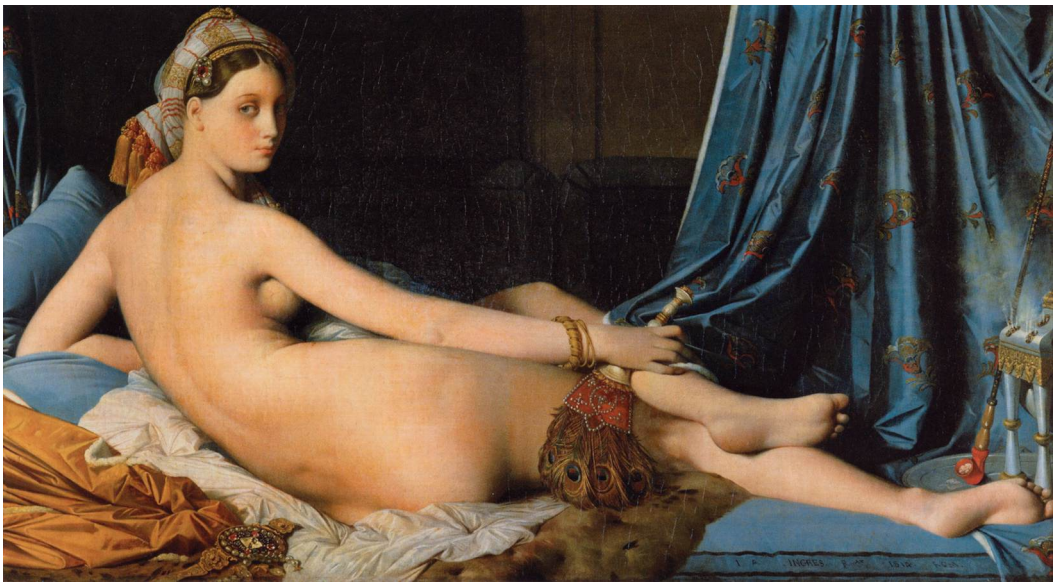


*Figure 1.8* Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas. Paris, Louvre.

The *agon* between creators old and new is now left behind. What emerges here, instead, is a queer allegiance between a self-sabotaging God, who spoils his own linear projects whether through ineptitude or a change of heart ('lame' or 'halting', as it were) and the artist with the pulse of bathos in her. Both are now aligned – or *bent* rather – in the direction of contingency, euphorically open to the dysmorphia at the heart of the cosmos – that is, 'the mad strip of the inappropriate that runs through creation', as O'Connor pronounces, who cites at this point a 'girl friend' of his 'who married some sort of Adriatic bird' as an example (*Nightwood*, 93). Barnes's early insight is thus recapitulated towards the end of her life sometime between 1971-1978, during the years in which *Creatures in an Alphabet* saw repeated revisions and abortions, when she is reported to make the following remarks concerning the creative process:

> When you're creating it's just you and God – then it's only God. The greatest ecstasy is when you're possessed and don't know why. It isn't like sex, it isn't like anything; nothing is comparable. (O'Neal 1990, 87)

Shortly after this, she confesses: she merely 'played at being a poet'. Various modalities of union are thrown up here: first, it is exclusive kinship in a realm of creativity (God and poet); then, it is the evacuation of the self, 'ecsta[tically]' relocated within God ('it's only God'; 'you're possessed'). But if it is suggested that this re-established oneness with Being could somehow overcome the predicament of the divided subject, these inspired pronouncements give way in the bathetic admission: the poet only *plays* at being poet-God. As it turns out, what *Creatures in the Alphabet* ends up foregrounding is that failure itself is worked into the fabric of creation: God, too, only *plays* at being God. With this continuity established between subjectivity, God, and God's body – now no longer 'at loggerheads' – a new reconciliation is possible. To return to the prefatory stanza of *Creatures*:

> *The adder in the grass can hiss*
> *The lynxes in the dark can kiss*
> *Each otter holds his otter's hand*
> *For this is how the Lord has planned*.

If first laid out in *straight lines*, they are italicised awry; and, though each 'otter' may think itself duplicated in 'his otter', he – along with his miscreated companions – will find himself tripping over the alphabetical anamorphosis into the shapes of his 'others'. *Creatures in an Alphabet* is in fact, in some ways, Barnes's own 'farewell to Creation': written as her life drew to its close, the

coded references to her past scattered throughout the poem – from the return of Madame Récamier and Laurence Vail (in the Raccoon-stanza), to the throwback to the imitation woodcuts of *Ladies Almanack* and her first bestiary of ladies in *The Book of Repulsive Women*, the resurfacing of the Blakean 'Tyger' that reportedly furnished *Nightwood* with its title (O'Neal 1990, 104),[28] and also, more recently, Hammarskjöld's praise of *The Antiphon* as 'Himalayan' (in the Yak-stanza)[29] – all these encrypt perhaps a review of her time on earth, in the light, after all, of a *happy end*.

[28] See also the fuller account given by Cheryl Plumb on the genesis of the novel's title (*Nightwood: The Original Version*, 211).
[29] Hammarskjöld's epithet is in fact referenced on the dust cover of *Creatures.* See also Caselli 2009, 256.

Chapter 2

# Comedy II: *Ladies Almanack* and the Lesbian Sensorium

In Barnes's 1934 edition of Proust's *Recherche*, the following passage in the second volume, *Within a Budding Grove*, in which the narrator comments on Odette's altered appearance, is marked out:

> But another reason for this change lay in the fact that, having reached the turning-point of life, Odette had at length discovered, or invented, a physiognomy of her own, an unalterable "character", a "style of beauty", and on her incoherent features – which for so long, exposed to every hazard, every weakness of the flesh, borrowing for a moment, at the slightest fatigue, from the years to come, a sort of flickering shadow of ability, had furnished her, well or ill, with a countenance dishevelled, inconstant, formless and attractive – had now set this fixed type, as it were an immortal youthfulness. (Proust 1934, I.271; cited in Caselli 2009, 14-15)[1]

Two forces beset the body here, one of dispersal and another of cohesion. These are accompanied by two temporal registers – namely, the organic time of age ('weakness of the flesh'), which is, in turn, resisted by an aesthetic stasis ('immortal youthfulness'). The contingencies of mortality that plague the body assume a certain prominence at this 'turning-point of life' – more precisely, 'au milieu de la vie' – as 'expos[ure]', 'hazard', and 'weakness' come to accentuate

[1] See also Proust, 1973, 186.

Odette's 'incoherent features [*traits décousus*]', exerting a deconstituting pressure over her countenance, now 'dishevelled, inconstant, formless and attractive'. Countering the thousand natural shocks that the flesh is heir to, however, are the composure and stability that the assumption of the ego-imago enables. Form becomes flesh as Odette achieves 'a physiognomy of her own', associated with an aestheticised timelessness. Having set in place 'this fixed type', her body is consolidated into 'an unalterable "character", a "style of beauty"'. A crucial hesitation on the narrator's part, however, on whether this acquired 'physiognomy' is 'discovered' or 'invented', will prove to be symptomatic of an ontological indecision regarding the form of the body in which the flesh is said to be contained or even constituted. Does this body-image pre-exist the organism, amenable to 'discovery' through fashion's tinkerings, additions, and modulations, or is it created – 'invented' – in the course of one's existence?

One specific manifestation of this ambivalence is recorded in Mina Loy's 1919 advertising pamphlet, *Auto-Facial-Construction*, which, as Christina Walter suggests, seems to have developed out of Bess M. Mensendieck's system of functional movement exercises (Walter 2014, 134). This project, characterised by Mensendieck as a 'sculpt[ing] in flesh', is in Loy's pamphlet energised by a rhetoric of authenticity or original selfhood – and hence, to rehash Proust's terms, less 'invention' than 'discovery' (Mensendieck 1954, 5). Fashion, and even civic duty, are cast here as antagonists to 'the original form of the face (intrinsic symbol of personality)':

> Different systems of beauty culture have compromised with our inherent right, not only to "be ourselves" but to "look like ourselves", by producing a facial contour in middle age, which does duty as a "well preserved appearance". (Loy 1997, 165)

Yet, if the autotelic dimension of a self returning to itself in auto-facial-construction is set in relief by the iteration of such phrases as 'the basic principle of facial integrity', 'the original form of the face', and 'the original facial contours', a marked note of dissonance is struck when Loy, cashing in on her 'specialised interest in physiognomy as an artist', speaks not just of the 'conservation' of the face, but, crucially, its 'reconstruction'. The interval that opens up between the 'facial-construction' of the title to the augmented term '*re*construction' signals a discrepancy – an indecision even – that is covered over by what Walter terms 'a sleight-of-hand substitution' (2014, 136). For Walter, Loy 'emphasizes that through her production process one manifests, paradoxically, a "constant and natural resource" of beauty, a kind of raw material rather than a manufactured good. This return to raw material refuses the implications of the commodity by making the production process circle back on itself to create a "natural resource" that was always already there rather than some kind of manufactured or constructed product (2014, 136-7).' The unity of self and body that is staged in this pamphlet as a return to facial origins thus takes a detour through an alienating process of self-fashioning. In this brand of dialectical synthesis, the self is rescued by (re)constructing an 'origin' that it comes to assume against the contingency of the untrained flesh, subjected as it is to 'the ravages of time (Loy 1997, 166).' 'Discovery' and 'invention' become one and the same process.

In the following, I argue that Barnes's *Ladies Almanack*, published in 1928, presents an intervention into the status of the body that escapes its entrapment within a dialectic of flesh and form, of living substance and transformative art. In mobilising an anti-representational aesthetic, Barnes's *Almanack* steps away from the consolidation of the body into its imagistic or muscular containers – whether 'invented' or 'discovered', 'constructed' or 'reconstructed' – to reach toward the drives, forces, and affects that circulate beneath and beyond the body's integrated form. Barnes's response to her contemporaries is both textually and paratextually indicated. In her 1972 foreword for the Harper and Row edition, a jocular challenge to Proust is suggested in her claim that her slim little almanac, a displaced instance of another medieval genre, the first fifty copies of which were hand-coloured by Barnes herself with Tylia Perlmutter, many of them 'hawked along the Left Bank' by her circle of friends, forms nothing less than the 'Neap-tide to the Proustian chronicle' – that is, the equal or near-equal to his seven-volume literary Gargantua (*Ladies Almanack,* 87). Loy may be seen as another target here with her appearance in the almanac as Patience Scalpel, the only heterosexual of the text, who laments the neglect of posterity within a Sapphic enclave where reproductive obligations and attendance to the future are traded for immediate pleasure:

> they love the striking Hour, nor would breed the Moments that go to it. Sluts! […] Are good Mothers to supply them with Luxuries in the next Generation; for they themselves will have no Shes, unless some Her puts them forth! Well I'm not the Woman for it! They well have to pluck where they may. My Daughters shall go amarrying! (*Ladies Almanack*, 13)

The Loy whom Barnes knew, and who in her 'Feminist Manifesto', drafted in November 1914, belabours not only the 'right to maternity' of '[e]very woman' but also 'her race-responsibility' – claims that are unlikely to appeal to Barnes who characterises her journalistic self in a 1916 article as '[o]ne of the birth controllers' – is parodically characterised here (Loy 1977, 155; Barnes, 'Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians').[2] Her advocacy in this manifesto for 'the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity through-out the female population at puberty' may be behind her 'Scalpel' and 'Patient' monikers and for Dame Evangeline Musset's own surgical misadventure, when as 'a Child of ten', she was 'deflowered by the Hand of a Surgeon!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 24)

*Ladies Almanack* takes some distance from the body chronicled by Proust and promulgated at times by Loy.[3] As I hope to show, the attachment to the organism at the level of its 'naturalness' or of its coherence and 'integrity' present in these writers under the guise of rediscovery and reconstruction is done away with altogether in Barnes's text. If *Creatures in an Alphabet* exploits the zone of dysmorphia before the mirror, this gap between the organism and its alienated image is abolished altogether in *Ladies Almanack.* By undoing the psychic structure that inaugurates the alienated relation between self and world, the subject-object interface is here eroded: melancholic division is thus

[2] Barnes is less restrained in her 6 June 1941 letter to Emily Coleman regarding Kay Boyle's 'bloody fecundity': 'revolting. She should have been born a rabbit and have written in lettuce. The trouble with that girl is, she's got condor blood, and looks it. There is really something wrong with her…her stuffing comes out in so many places that one wonders where she is bound.'

[3] As Walter goes on to note, however, Loy would later recognise that 'her method was ultimately hemmed in by bodily limits', leading her to turn her attention to the 'opaque psychophysiological forces' that 'bear on subjectivity' (2014, 139, 147).

reconfigured into the reconciled world of comedy. If, as Bersani notes, '[p]sychoanalysis has been the most authoritative modern reformulation of the Cartesian and the Hegelian opposition […] between Nature and Spirit or between the *res extensa* and thought' (2010, 140), the strategy of reconciliation in *Ladies Almanack* consists in articulating desire beyond the terms of the bounded ego, eluding hence the theatre of alienation between the desiring subject and the perennially receding horizon of its fulfilment. The theodistical gesture of Barnes's *Almanack*, it will be seen, consists in a fundamental exclusion of ontological alterity. The radical inclusivity of the term 'Woman' as it is deployed in the text, touched everywhere with homosexual suggestion, brings into being a world built upon what might be termed a *homo-ontology* – that is, a fundamental ontological monism in which variance multiplies within a cosmos of likenesses. Alterity here is to be conceived as moments rather than principles, transitory rather than axiomatic; it is produced but also passes away into sameness. We find here an actualisation of Lady Buck-and-Balk's wish, couched in terms 'a little Callous to Nuance': 'I […] would that we could do away with Man altogether!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 24) This is Barnes's second strategy in her art of comic reconciliation: if, in her writing of animals the processes of ego-formation are submitted to irony and bathos, in *Ladies Almanack* the ego itself is left behind in a world where alterity is refused at root, replete with desiderators and desiderata beneath and beyond the level of the 'human' as integrated subject. It is in this hall of universal self-encounter of 'Woman' that what I will term the 'lesbian sensorium' of *Ladies Almanack* is brought into being.

What I am sketching out here is a specific conjunction of dispersal and utopia, which has found significant development in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari. Their polemics against the body-as-*Gestalt* are in fact situated within a specific ontology that, in beginning in flux and returning to flux, arguably rewrites the soteriological narrative of Christianity. The crux here is a displacement of the anthropological icon – *imago Dei* – as the axis on which the cosmos pivots, from Adamic Man to postlapsarian corruption to be raised re-limned in 'glory' (1 Corinthians 15:43). From Adam to Christ, *kenosis* to *theosis*, these 'permutations of God-Man and Man-God' distribute grace according to the lineaments of the anthropomorphic avatar (Schults 2014, 103). 'Oedipus' is merely one of its names; 'Christ', in fact, is another (Schults 2014, 6-9, 25-35). Instead of returning God-Man to Himself in something like a 'U-shaped divine comedy' (Fiddes 1991, 49), the Deleuzian project may be characterised rather as a recovery of primordial creativity after its *fall* into the created forms of the material and socio-historical world. The soteriological arc is rewritten: the fall *from* the aboriginal cosmos – or 'chaosmos' (Deleuze 2013, 201) – of interacting singularities *into* form will be redeemed via the reactivation of these forces and intensities, rupturing the inherited world via 'aberrant movements' (Lapoujade 2017). As will be seen, this names the return not of the *Logos* (iconographically captured in Man) to itself, but of the *virtual* to itself. Utopia, here, is cast in an 'orthogonal' relation to both animal time and human history (Holland 2006, 13). We begin with the 'schizophrenic God', lapse into the created world, and disperse – via a reactivation of these primordial flows, affects, and intensities – in 'lines of flight' into rearticulated assemblages, and finally back into these imperceptible

singularities (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 77).[4] The Deleuzian 'glorious body', unlike Saint Paul's, is one 'which is divided into disjunctions' (Deleuze 2013, 322).[5] The encapsulated body thus features here as the sclerotic vessel into which life is vitiated and contained: whether as the created organism, or re-created in the image of Oedipus or Christ – otherwise put, whether as 'natural animal' or 'historical human' – its salvific horizon lies in the release of the life in it that has languished into its borders, hierarchically tamed, organologically fixed. As Peter Hallward observes, a crucial underlying theme in Deleuze's philosophy is 'the redemptive re-orientation of any particular creature towards its own dissolution': '[r]ather than a philosopher of nature, history or the world, rather than any sort of 'fleshly materialist', Deleuze is most appropriately read as a spiritual, redemptive or subtractive thinker, a thinker preoccupied with the mechanics of *dis*-embodiment and *de*-materialisation (2006, 3).'

This movement of 'decreation', as will be seen, is not unique to the DeleuzoGuattarian project and bears affinities with the mysticism of Meister Eckhart – as Kristien Justaert has shown (2012, 59-70) – as well as that of Marguerite Porete before him,[6] and Simone Weil after them,[7] both of whom

[4] Schults clarifies: 'the schizophrenic God […] designates *not* a psychoanalytic judgment about a clinical subject, but the *process* of break-flows and the schizzes of desiring-production (2014, 145).'
[5] The force of the divine is thus located in 'disjunction': 'To anyone who asks: "Do you believe in God?" we should reply in strictly Kantian or Schreberian terms: "Of course, but only as the master of the disjunctive syllogism, or as its a priori principle (God defined as the *Omnitudo realitatis*, from which all secondary realities are derived by a process of division)."' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 13)
[6] Porete's influence on Eckhart is now recognised; for an account of the way their 'paths into the nothingness of the Godhead both converge and diverge', see Lichtmann 2001.

Barnes read, at different times in her life. Before turning to Porete, it is worth indicating the *teleological* orientation of *Ladies Almanack*, refracted as it is from that which emerges in the overall DeleuzoGuattarian scheme. If, for the latter, all decreation – or molecular-becomings – even if they make passage via 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-woman' – ultimately lead toward a horizon of 'imperceptibility', returning cosmic singularities to themselves,[8] for Barnes, the *telos* of this disassembly is, rather, the lesbian sensorium itself, wherein the recombinant lesbian constituents of the world of the *Almanack* meet and flow, returning, thereby, the primordial Sapphic body to itself – via the detour of the material and socio-historical coordinates of the postlapsarian present of 1928 – in renewed guise. The City of the Goddess, that is, will rise from the molecularisation of the created world. Deleuze's 'utopia', or 'atopia', placed always at the limit of 'absolute deterritorialization', of 'becoming-imperceptible', or a 'desertification' of the created world, is reconceptualised in *Ladies Almanack*: here, God's body, instead of becoming-desert, *becomes-dyke* (Lapoujade 2017, 295, 308). The *precreated* and *postcreated* worlds – populated in the DeleuzoGuattarian chaosmos by a tohu-bohu of forces, flows, intensities, affects, percepts, singularities, atoms, molecules, imperceptibles, and 'non-existing entities' (Deleuze 2013, 322) – are all marked in Barnes's *Almanack* with a Sapphic trace. In the autotelic cosmos it produces, it is not just the movement of 'becoming' itself and its interim products that are definitionally given as the

---

[7] See especially the chapter on 'Decreation' in *Gravity and Grace*; a summarised account is given in Gustave Thibon's introduction, underlined in Barnes's copy: 'God became a creature in order to teach us how to undo the creature in ourselves' (1952, 28).

[8] 'If becoming-woman is the first quantum […] [t]he imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 325).'

action of the 'girl' – as in Deleuze and Guattari (2013, 322) – but the very *origin* and *end* of such 'becoming'. A seemingly paradoxical formulation emerges here of difference in sameness: in the eternal return of the (same) Goddess, the aleatory shapes of herself resurface, reassembled.

The comic counter-judgement to Creation in *Ladies Almanack* thus inheres in this: the ontological structure of melancholic existence, which divides the subject from itself, situating it oppositionally to the *res extensa* of its own body and the world at large, is collapsed into a homo-ontology whose elementary constituents are lesbian likenesses that everywhere re-encounter the fluxes of themselves. The reconceptualisation of Breton's *humour noir* as a catalyst for molecularisation in *Anti-Oedipus* is pertinent here: 'black humour does not attempt to resolve contradictions, but to make it so that there are none, and never were any (1983, 11).' Comedy produced in this mode erodes the subject-object interface in a return to the forces of the decreated – and ever-creating – cosmos. There are, here, no longer any Freudian or Bretonian hyper-cathected superegos presiding over the antics of the ego and its world, since such a cleavage is in the first place a psychic product, born of a specific mode of subjectivity under Oedipal rule. The affirmationist statement that emerges from *Anti-Oedipus* thus inheres specifically in the undoing of the psychic structure that embeds 'lack' itself at the heart of desire: by providing a genealogical account of the Lacanian subject and its *manque-à-être*, Deleuze and Guattari are able to claim that '[d]esire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression (1983, 26).' Another kind of Proustian

'body' thus emerges here, gestating the forces of a centrifuge, related to neither Odette's 'invention' nor 'discovery' of herself, but 'schizophrenic breakthrough': in the narrator's first kiss to Albertine, the latter's 'face shatters into molecular partial objects'. 'This very movement is humor, black humor', Deleuze and Guattari specify, associating thereby the convulsive release from the encapsulated self with humour's disassembling work (1983, 69, 318).[9] Instead of the Plessnerian retrieval of a certain kind of anthropological constant from the action of laughter, in the bodily recoil from a limit situation, 'black humour' here pushes beyond the formal envelope of the centripetal flesh.

A *benevolent* twist is thus given to the Biblical precedent of this brand of humour: the disparaging laughter at the foot of the cross, turned back against the infidels from Christ's ascent till the Day of Wrath, now names a redemptive shattering. If the 'mocking laughter of the ascended Christ', prophesied in Isaiah (30:14), Jeremiah (19:11), Revelation (2:27), and the second psalm,[10] involves a form of 'diasyrm' – or, 'tearing a man apart', as Michael Screech explains (2015, 40-3) – it now returns as black humour in the Deleuzian 'order of the Anti-Christ'. Here, it operates a 'disjunctive synthesis' of the affirmative variety – that is, 'positive and inclusive' rather than 'used negatively to secure identities […] by exclusive predication' (Deleuze 2013, 336; Schults 2014, 108, 144-7). The sub-individual components of the self, emancipated in their disjunction, are

[9] See also Claire Colebrook's reading of Deleuzian humour against irony: '[i]rony focuses on the subject', founded on a 'history of subjectivism', whereas 'humour' is presented as 'a destruction of subjective positions', capable of 'dissolv[ing] the body into parts without any governing intention (2004, 136-9).'
[10] 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. […] Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2:4-9).'

synthesised anew through the inclusion of elements from other heterogeneous series. It is here that the Deleuzian 'glorious body […] divided into disjunctions' is produced (Deleuze 2013, 322). As will be seen, these theological coordinates that frame the vicissitudes of bodily disassembly and reassemblage are reworked in Barnes's *Almanack* in analogous ways, yet teleologically directed rather toward a Sapphic end. In the following, I move on to address the two co-implicated factors involved in the conjunction of shattering, hybridisation, and *happiness*, as witnessed in *Ladies Almanack* – that is, i. its reformulation of the eschatological Kingdom into that 'Single Beatitude' or 'Garden of Ecstasy', otherwise 'known as Girls! Girls!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 12); and, ii. the foundation of this lesbian sensorium on an ontology of the *virtual* rather than an ontology of *history*.

## 'Girls! Girls!' – or Utopia

If the utopian dimension of *Ladies Almanack* is often acknowledged – from Kannenstine's characterisation of it as a search for a 'lost Eden' to Miller's assessment of its proposed 'transfiguration of the body' – it is as often elegiacally qualified, as buried past or foiled present (Kannestine 1977, 53; Miller 1999, 143). After all, utopia, it is often said, is the glimpsed 'good place' (*eu-topos*) only insofar as it is simultaneously the 'not place' (*ou-topia*). Miller's account of the 'mirthless laugh' of late modernism in relation to 'unhappy unconscious' leads him to the pointed assertion: 'Barnes herself offers no redemption to her

characters'. In effect, salvation at this stage in history is reduced to a more mundane form of salvaging – a desperate recovery of the ego from dissolution in 'a mortifying laugh that, in its shock, may momentarily arrest its fatal course (1999, 128).' Citing the 1927 suicide of Barnes's Greenwich Village friend, Baroness Else von Freytag-Loringhoven, Miller raises the redemptive potential of bodily transfiguration repeatedly forecast by the Surrealists and Dadaists, to conclude that these revolutionary hopes ultimately lean toward the pathos of a disastrous shortfall from utopia:

> The ribald humor of the baroness's fashion sense poised her sartorial gesture between a utopian celebration of the poetic transfiguration of the body and satiric protest over its reification as commodity and device, […] In her very person, on the one hand, von Freytag-Loringhoven anticipated the profane illumination of the urban world, the technological interpenetration of body and image that Walter Benjamin celebrated at the end of his "Surrealism" essay. At the same time, however, […] [t]he very freedom of her poetic sense in reinventing her appearance revealed an underlying eclipse of the self, a will to self-extirpation that would be definitively consummated by her suicide. (1999, 143)

Without denying the tragedy of the Baroness's life, it is possible, however, to question the extent to which this existential pathos finds expression in *Ladies Almanack*.[11] Miller's reading of Barnes sustains a critical sensitivity to a concept of the 'negative' derived from Adorno to yield moving accounts that, nonetheless,

[11] Miller's account may also be placed beside the more positive one offered by Alex Goody, who considers von Freytag-Loringhoven as an exemplar of the Dadaist 'mecanomorphic women'. Largely influenced by Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Goody claims that '[i]t is the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven […] who extends the cyborg potentials of New York Dada into a lived transgression of the boundaries of human-animal-machine': 'she disarticulated the New Woman and rearticulated her and the transformations and manufacture of femininity to the radically denaturalised flows of the modern (2007, 115-7).'

end up downplaying the tonal differences across the Barnesian corpus. His recent take on Barnes's other comic text, *Ryder*, thus locates 'disquiet' and 'negativity […] eating at the heart of language and its relation to lived and historical time', just as his earlier work negates redemption in *both* the *Almanack* and *Nightwood* (2019, 173). While compelling, this critical gesture is symptomatic, arguably, of a subscription to the *ontology of history* that lays out the Hegelian parameters of the aesthetic theories of Adorno and Lukács that Miller draws on. An *ontology of the virtual*, I hope to show subsequently, relocates the import of the 'negative', 'loss', and in fact, 'self-extirpation'. For now, however, it is worth recalling that utopian texts tend to de-emphasise the significance of individual death – whether by viewing it through the lens of the species, society, or of the cosmos itself (Jameson 1994, 122; 2005, 7) – just as comedy is said 'to bind death to life, affirming life in its impermanence (Gherovici and Steinkoler 2016, 8).'

The sources on which Barnes draws for her *Almanack*, considered alongside her own writings leading up to it, suggest her text's placement in the genre of utopian literature. In the sketches of her expatriate life in 'Farewell Paris', Barnes makes a reference to Allan Ross MacDougall's *The Gourmets Almanac*, in which she is listed amongst the dedicatees at the start of the book, and acknowledged again at its end together with 'Millia Davenport and Ossip Zadkin for the valuable books they loaned me' (*Collected Poems,* 255; MacDougall 1931, vi, 358). In addition to the many 17th and 18th century almanacs that MacDougall refers to in his book, the three publications of the French *L'almanach de cocagne* for the years 1920, 1921, and 1922, which, together with

MacDougall's almanac, list Jean Cocteau amongst their contributors, are identified as key source texts (Guégan et al. 1920a; 1920b; 1921).[12] Although it may not be possible to ascertain whether any of these were indeed one of the 'valuable books' that Barnes had passed on to MacDougall, it is likely that she had encountered them while writing her own almanac.[13] As Herman Pleij explains, the land of Cockaigne is a kind of medieval earthly paradise, part of 'the tradition of the *locus amoenus*, or "lovely place," that was a fixed topos of antique literature, usually used to glorify rural life or to portray the nostalgia of a lost Arcadia (2001, 216).'

*Ladies Almanack*, which Barnes proclaims to hail 'from the shores of Mytilène' – a synecdochal reference to the isle of Lesbos – invokes this paradisiacal dimension with a particular Sapphic inflection (*Ladies Almanack*, 87). The result of these intersecting topographies that set the scene for Barnes's women – ranging from Mytilène to Cockaigne, Arcadia to Eden, and even the erotic bohemia that Dame Musset's name conjures, approximating as it does Musetta from Puccini's *La Bohème* – is a relocation of the medieval *locus amoenus* to the textual incarnation of Natalie Barney's own garden on 20 rue Jacob, Paris, presided by its own Doric *Temple à l'Amitié*, which in 1927, became the seat for her *Académie des Femmes*, where works from anglo- and francophone women writers such as Barnes, Loy, Gertrude Stein, Rachilde, and Colette were read and

[12] See the numerous references to Cocteau in Barnes's memoirs of Paris (*Collected Poems*, 236-7, 246, 250). Her admiration for Cocteau is also recorded in O'Neal 1990, 27.
[13] A 1926 translation of Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's *The Physiology of Taste*, does, however, remain in the Djuna Barnes Archive. Brillat-Savarin is also mentioned in MacDougall's *Almanac* (1931, 38) and *L'almanach de cocagne*, featuring as the dedicatee of the third instalment (1920a, 103-4; 1921).

presented (Benstock 1986, 249). Described by Joan Schenkar as 'a place where lesbian assignations *and* appointments with academics could coexist in a kind of cheerful, cross-pollinating, cognitive dissonance' (2001, 164-5), Barney's salon might be taken as the localisation of a certain imaginative conjunction of Paris and paradise, preserved most notably in Jules Renard's quip: 'Ajouter deux lettres a Paris: c'est le paradis' (Renard 1965, 297). Such a topographical configuration is in evidence in Barnes's own satirical account in 'Vagaries Malicieux', published in 1922, in which the magic economy of Julie Taylor's 'having it all' operates.[14] Her opening portrait reveals this dream logic and its moral dodges:

> For years one has dreamed of Paris, just why, no man can tell, saving that no pear from an orchard stolen has been atoned for without the mental calculation: "A Frenchman would have understood; in Paris all would be so simple, so charming!" (*Vagaries Malicieux,* 5)

Theft, that is, is excused in the execution, since this American fabulation of a 'Frenchman' seems to know only of desire and its exigencies, not so much of its consequences or its discipline. Debt, material or spiritual, has no place in such a world, where redemption comes on the heels of sin, and the apple of Paradise – metonymically shifted here to the pear of Paris – may be 'atoned for' with a magic calculus that weighs off stolen thing with insincere thought. In this sketch of her first encounter with Paris, the first two subjects that are introduced are

[14] Taylor writes that the *Almanack* involves the 'uneconomical conceits' of 'having one's cake and eating it too', 'having it both ways', and 'having it all' (2012, 151-3).

characterised in terms of a careless profligacy in which pleasure and consequence are uncoupled:

> One of these gentlemen is very fond of cats and does a great deal of stroking in the season, the other is a playwright who is utterly reckless about the number of objects in Europe on which he casts what is known as his libido. (*Vagaries Malicieux*, 5)

The circumlocutory delicacy here is part of the result of a strategic deployment of Freudian terms, achieving the effect of a coy understatement of the hedonism associated with Paris. Further on, an allusion to the land of Cockaigne is inserted as the narrator remarks: 'each has eaten ducks in the only place where ducks die for the pleasure of it (I never found out where the place is)' (*Vagaries Malicieux*, 6). So the narrator protests. Yet self-roasting animals make up a prominent motif of the Cockaigne myth, where the entire cosmos serves itself up to man's appetite: 'wine flows in the creeks', 'white and brown bread compete for the honor of being the first to enter one's mouth', fish force their way into homes and grill themselves, roast pigs walk the streets, and roast geese fly into one's mouth, as Pleij records (2001, 283-5). Like the women invoked by High-Head in *Ladies Almanack*, these cosseted beings are the 'spinning Centre of a spinning World' (*Ladies Almanack*, 51). To these queen bees ensconced in their cosmic hive are dedicated the loves, labours, and losses of their subjects: 'Do not the Bees belly and blow, hone their Beaks and hoard their Honey to make her Negus and Nectar? The Worm, from Head to Heel, one long contriving inch that she may be wrapped in Silks and Satins, the Seal well

suppled for her Coat, and the Seed in the Dirt, fattening and bursting for her Delight?' (*Ladies Almanack*, 51)

Although 'Vagaries Malicieux' ultimately segues over to the satirical, the utopian dimension it intimates becomes the manifest principle in *Ladies Almanack*, which channels a diverse range of myths, pastoral, pagan, and religious, into the concretisation of an ontological space of ubiquitous satisfaction. Dame Musset's snide remarks to Patience Scalpel in the August chapter thus relate Sapphic practice to Christian salvation: '"What," said that good Dame, "can you know about it, who have gentlemaned only? Recall, and remember, my Love, that the Camel is forever facing a Needle, but cannot go through it, and a Woman is much nearer the needle's proportion in her probabilities than a Man."' (*Ladies Almanack,* 50) Barnes's habit of using nouns as verbs functions here as an instrumentalisation of the male body ('gentlemaned'), which is measured rather unfavourably against the bodies of women, being as they are more likely to facilitate one's way to spiritual and erotic bliss. '[I]t is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God', quotes Matthew of Jesus (Matthew 19:23-26); but it is with the body of a woman that one is more likely to pass through this needle's eye, so Musset contends. Along similar lines, but this time making use of a more Arcadian than Christian trope, a pastoral scene is staged pictorially as an introduction to the May chapter.

*Figure 2.1,* Djuna Barnes, 'Sweet May', *Ladies Almanack*. © The Authors League Fund.

Here, a cherub rides the sun's rays, a flower in her fist, to bless a sleeping pair of women lovers, around whom the beasts of the universe appear to coexist in harmony, including a capering goat and horse, a bovine couple, and a lion with a serene rather than threatening aspect. Beams of glory radiate from the mattress of the sleeping pair – the bower of bliss in this pastoral – according to a tradition of religious iconography in evidence also in the collection of folk art from fifteenth-century France up to the Second Empire published in Pierre-Louis Duchartre and René Saulnier's *L'imagerie populaire* (1925), which Barnes names an influence. The figure on the left, ribboned at the waist, similarly emanates an

aura of divinity with one hand raised in benediction. It is with this graphic display of beatitude, from which loss and separation are dismissed, that Patience Scalpel's comically intrusive comments are prefaced: '"What", said Patience Scalpel, "can you women see in each other? Where is the Parting of Ways and the Horseman that hunts?' (*Ladies Almanack,* 31) Heterosexual routine – burlesqued here as a kind of division of labour that also involves physical division – is juxtaposed with the contiguity of women's bodies. As a later formula has it: 'A man may rage for the little Difference which shall be alien always, but a Woman tears her Shift for a Likeness in a Shift, and a Mystery that is lost to the proportion of Mystery (*Ladies Almanack*, 57).' Patience Scalpel's reproach is of course a rather comic commentary on the scene that is taking place, which is succinctly narrated in the following terms: 'amid the Rugs Dame Musset brought Doll Furious to a certainty (*Ladies Almanack*, 31).' This 'certainty', however, does not turn out to be the *Endlust* that Dame Musset initially thinks it is ('that's all there is, and there is no more!'). Doll's cry – 'But oh!' – invites her continued ministrations: 'Down Woman […] there may be a mustard seed!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 31) Not quite the most obscure reference in this almanac, this 'mustard seed' seems to indicate some sort of G-spot or another particulate region of pleasure not yet reached by Musset. The parable of the mustard seed recounted in Matthew (13:31–2), Mark (4:30–2), and Luke (13:18–19) comes to mind here, where the Kingdom of Heaven is allegorised as an expansion from particle to cosmos. The third book of Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, dealing with 'the analogical structure of nature', perhaps offers a summative account of the medieval *convenentia* exploited also in *Creatures in an Alphabet*:

> And perhaps just as God made man in his own image and likeness, so also did he make the remaining creatures after certain heavenly images as a likeness. And perhaps every single thing on earth has something of an image and likeness in heavenly things, to such a degree that even the grain of mustard which is the smallest of all seeds may have something of an image and likeness in heaven. (Origen, VIII.208; cited in Curley 1979, viii)

This mustard seed, charged with its biblical associations, presents a particulate manifestation of heaven on earth, an atom of God's omnipresence ensconced somewhere in Doll Furious and now hunted down by Dame Musset. What do we make of this mustard seed transmuted into a comic and cosmic orgasm, if not the reterritorialisation of medieval correspondence theory as a kind of lesbian sensorium, in which every pleasure, every particle of the universe, announces this queer God's presence in her body of Creation? What Hallward observes of Deleuze's philosophy is pertinent here. There is, in the latter's work, what he calls 'a *theophanic* conception of things, whereby every individual process or thing is conceived as a manifestation or expression of God or a conceptual equivalent of God (pure creative potential, force, energy, life…).' (2006, 4)

At this stage it is possible to inflect a French proverb that appears in the popular *Almanach Hachette* of 1899, alluded to in Alfred Jarry's own 1899 *Almanach de Père Ubu* in his account of 'les revendications féministes' which Barnes may have come across during her time spent in the Parisian literary salons of Stein and Barney (Béhar, Dubbelboer, and Morel 2009, 49). These feminist vindications are announced and detailed in the *Almanach Hachette* on a single page, at the bottom of which is printed in bold: '**PROVERBE: Ce que**

**femme veut, Dieu le veut**' (Béhar, Dubbelboer, and Morel 2009, 50). Conveniently enough, woman and God are conjoined in a common *volonté*. The operative trope here, derived from scholastic philosophy, is that of *synderesis*, wherein the divine will or the spark of conscience remains continuous with postlapsarian humanity. Because of this continuity, a reserve of unmediated identity with God is maintained; being 'in direct communication with the supersensory', as Giorgio Agamben notes, this 'area of the soul' designated by the 'technical term used in the Neoplatonic mysticism of the Middles Ages and the Renaissance […] has never been corrupted by original sin (1993, 34).' If the birth of modern subjectivity has often been traced back to the Lutheran 'disgracing of nature', which, in bringing an end to the 'lingering medieval apprehension of the synchronicity between beauty and goodness, ethics and desire', radically encloses human nature, history, reason, and will, within the *status corruptionis* created by sin (Beattie 2013, 169-70), Barnes's return to the continuity preserved between divinity and humanity may be said to be part of an alternative modernity that eludes the alienated condition of the post-Reformation subject.

Barnes's recuperation of synderesis is also likely prompted by the texts she encountered around this time – not just *Ulysses* with its 'word known to all men' (Joyce 1986, 9.429-30),[15] but also Thomas Browne's *The Garden of Cyrus*

[15] Of this 'word', Richard Ellmann writes: 'Most readers have supposed that the word known to all men must be love, though one critic maintains that it is death, and another that it is synteresis; the latter sounds like the one word unknown to all men (Joyce 1986, xii).'

(1658),[16] as well as the 1927 edition of a rediscovered 15th-century English translation of Marguerite Porete's *The Mirror of Simple Souls*.[17] Porete's apparent heterodoxy would result in her burning at the stake and earn her the epithet '*pseudo-mulier* [pseudo-woman]' (cited in Hollywood 2016, 135). But if to locate a region of the self aboriginally with God – or whichever conceptual analogue She might take – external to the unfolding of history, is to traverse one's creaturely inheritance and one's socio-political placement to where the incorrigible will resides, then this accusation of being inauthentically woman quite rightly positions Porete 'orthogonally' to natural and historical time. Like Barnes's queer women, who remain in a time of plenitude with a queer God, 'pseudo-mulier' names an excess beyond any historical or institutional configuration of womanhood. The anti-representational commitment of the mysticism of Porete – and Meister Eckhart after her – implicated as it is in a critique of a certain anthropomorphic constriction of God, thus unfolds many of the elements observable in the 'iconoclastic theology' of Deleuze (Schults 2014). Decreation, or 'creative subtraction' names a common undertaking (Hallward 2006, 79). As Amy Hollywood notes, for Porete, the 'final transformation of the Soul demands the annihilation of all creatureliness', such that it is the divine will that remains operative in – and ultimately – beyond it (2016, 142). In repudiating 'the mediation of any images', Porete 'refuses the path to the divine which lies *through humanity*, and demands instead the renunciation of all

[16] See Barnes's 1922 and 1929 editions – as well as the three volumes of Browne's *Works* (1912) – in the Djuna Barnes Archive.
[17] The *Mirouer* remained popular even after Porete's execution in 1310, and continued to circulate anonymously or under male pseudonyms for 650 years before its author was identified by Romana Gaunieri in 1946 (Robinson 2001, xiii). Authorship is not attributed in Barnes's 1927 copy in the Archive, edited by Clare Kirchberger.

createdness in order to become divine herself (Hollywood 2001, 96; my italics).' The soteriological arc is unhinged from its anthropomorphic end: the soul united in love is 'one with its precreated ground and with the divine', returned thence, disencumbered, to 'the pre-Adamic state of freedom' (Hollywood 2001, 96, 99). If, for Deleuze, decreation ruptures the organism to rehabilitate the schizophrenic God in him/her – that is, *qua* prelapsarian flows and forces – Porete's precreated ground of all things is similarly a de-anthropomorphised God, immanently resident in the created world – an '*esse indistinctum*' (Hollywood 2001, 105).

Transcendence and immanence are thus no longer strictly divided here: 'Porete wanted to surpass *all* embodied creation *while remaining within it* in order to realize the true goal of human life: annihilation of the will and transformation into God (Robinson 2001, 31).' An allegorical opposition is set up here, with 'Reason', encumbered by an edifice of abstract representations and ethical prescriptions (conventionally, church, clergy, and scripture) placed against 'Love', who, aligned as she is with God, remains invulnerable to error: 'I am God, says Love, for Love is God and God is Love' (Guarnieri and Verdeyen 1986, 21.44-7).[18] This is 'Holy Church the Little' against 'Holy Church the Great'. As a passage marked out in Barnes's copy of the text has it: 'This soul hath neither thought, word, nor work, except for the exercise of the divine grace of the Trinity' (1927, 52). With the creaturely will annihilated, the Trinity is enabled

[18] Following Robinson, references are to the critical edition published as *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Medievalis,* edited by Romana Guarnieri and Paul Verdeyen (1986). Chapter and line numbers are given in the text. English translations, unless otherwise stated, are by Ellen Babinsky (1993).

free action in the soul, who 'has from God what God has; *and is what God is through the transformation of love* [*per mutationem amoris*]' (1986, 135.17-19).[19] The interface between self and world in melancholy is thus reconfigured: the intermittent withdrawal of the Divine Lover, leaving the soul bereaved, stranded in a 'dialectic between presence and absence […] joy and suffering', is overcome via a transformation of the very '*relation* of the soul to the world', enabling 'a new *relation* with God' (Hollywood 2001, 96, 88, 109; my italics). Union with the precreated ground – 'the virtual existence of all things within the Godhead' – dissolves the divided world of the melancholic (Hollywood 2001, 104).[20] No longer in existential exile, the soul 'swims in the sea of joy, that is in the sea of delights, flowing and running out of the Divinity. […] She is Joy itself by the virtue of Joy which transforms her into Joy itself (1986, 28.1-5).' An ironic reprisal of this finds its way into Barnes's *Almanack*: with a kind of mock-melancholy characteristic of this text, the 'Condition of Woman' is likened to a 'Fish of Earth': 'She was not fashioned to swim in Heaven […] she swims in Terra-firma (*Ladies Almanack,* 56-7).' As with Porete's – and indeed Deleuze's – relocation of transcendence *within* immanence itself, this 'sea of joy' within which the decreated soul swims may as well be 'Terra-firma'.[21]

[19] This passage survives only in the Latin and Middle English versions.
[20] Pickstock's tendentious formulation of a 'disguised melancholia' in the Deleuzian move to privilege 'virtuality' over the 'actual' – one that would also apply to Porete – may thus be characterised rather as a *dissolved* melancholy (2013, 58).
[21] 'God […] which underlies all beings, is totally immanent to all creatures' (Hollywood 2001, 105). Hollywood also notes that the Béguine mystics before Porete, Mechthild of Magdeburg and Beatrice of Nazareth, deploy 'images of the fish in the water and the bird in the air' to describe divine union (2001, 101).

It is precisely at this site of pneumatological coincidence with God, adjacent to history, subjectivity, and the realm of representation, where an achieved eschatology is to be found, making its appearance alongside the production of a world in which one is always already reconciled, always already in joy. Robinson hence notes that in naming God 'Farnear' – or 'Loingprès' – Porete resolves the 'dialectic of presence and absence, of immanence and transcendence': 'God the Trinity is within the soul. Farnear shows the noble soul that her true being dwells within her, *virtualiter* (Robinson 2001, 54).' Synderesis enables the activation of this portion of the soul that remains, as it were, 'virtual' – perennially *there*, across the unfolding of history. As Michael Screech points out, synderesis is also at work in the *L'abbaye de Thélème* sequence in Rabelais's *Gargantua*, a common source-text for both Jarry's and Barnes's respective almanacs, said also to be the first of French utopian literature (Rabelais 2006, 372). The motto of the Thelemites, 'Fay ce que vouldras', recalling Saint Augustine's '*dilige et quod vis fac*' (Augustine 2008, 7.8), finds its way into *Le Mirouer* ('love and do what you will'—1986, 13.50) and onto one of Sophia's five chamber pots in Barnes's *Ryder* in the inscription 'Do what you will' (*Ryder*, 11). The Greek term *thelema*, meaning 'will', from which Thélème is derived, is itself featured in the Septuagint, most notably in the 'Lord's Prayer': 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will [*θελημα*] be done, On earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10).' If it is a *projective* eschatology that is intimated here, however, what *Ladies Almanack* brings into presence may be more aptly characterised as a *realised* utopia. As Judith Wolfe has argued, the futural orientation of much of the eschatological imagination of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is witnessed on two opposing counts: on the one hand,

German Romanticism's inclination toward 'immanentizing the eschaton' via Joachim de Fiore's *Expositio in Apocalipsim* culminates in Hegel's 'neo-Joachimite chiliasm' which locates God within history as history's own dialectical self-realization ('World History *is* the Last Judgement'—Hegel 2012, 306); on the other hand, disenchantment with meliorist visions of 'sublation of this-worldly effort into eschatological plenitude' would sharpen with later crises including the First World War, accelerating into notions of 'eschatological rupture' most notably in the 'dialectical theology' of Karl Barth and his circle, whose imputed 'neo-orthodoxy' consists in a return to the Reformation's emphatic caesura ('infinite qualitative distinction'—Barth 1968, 10) between the human and the divine (Wolfe 2017, 676-96). In Barnes's *Almanack*, however, a strategic retrieval of a monist unity between the soul and God as the ground of all being enables the attainment of the *eschaton* in the here and now of the text.[22] The 'Kingdom of God' here, however, is queered into that 'Single Beatitude' or 'Garden of Ecstasy' – otherwise 'known as Girls! Girls!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 12) An infinite variety of girl-forms, girl-parts, and girl-bits – or girl-haecceities, to take on Deleuze's appropriation of Duns Scotus – is contained here in a monist ontology. If the neuter God of the Deleuzian cosmos of flows, forces, affects, and molecules, is in some ways functionally analogous to Porete's God, a sexed trajectory nonetheless accompanies '*Loingprès*' in the *Mirouer*, who, as Hollywood notes, eventually departs from the 'masculine' and 'becomes feminized in his union with the soul' (2001, 98). It is this coincidence of the trajectories of becoming-one, becoming-happy, and becoming-lesbian, that is

[22] See also Tynan's reading of Deleuze's appropriation of Joachim of Fiore to conceptualise an 'immanent eschaton' as part of his 'eschatological politics' (2016, 95-7).

picked up by Barnes's *Almanack*: by virtue of our union with God, we are all lesbian *virtualiter*.

With this, it is possible to reformulate the *projected utopia* of Miller's Frankfurt School modernism (negated in the present)[23] into the *achieved utopia* (always already there, *virtualiter*) of the Sapphic cosmos. In tilting the axis of history into the axis of the virtual, happiness is reassessed: no longer deferred to future time, it is resituated at the place of the virtual *now*, both immanent and *imminent*. The move is thus made from an Adornian '*promesse de bonheur*'[24] to an ontological *prémiss de bonheur*. My reading of Barnes's *Almanack* is thus consonant with Julie Taylor's claim that it is 'unequivocally committed to the textual inscription and production of happiness (2012, 151).' Although Taylor's use of affect theory does not involve an account of decreation, her reading is to a degree consonant with the utopian dimension of the DeleuzoGuattarian project in its insistence on the present-ness of happiness, or the 'Now-here' – rather than the 'No-where' – that forms Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*: 'happiness is a condition of the text's present tense: it is not elsewhere, but here (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 100; Taylor 2012, 177).' In the following, I move on to consider the flight from history in the conjugated paths toward happiness, decreation, and Sapphic conversion. I take my cue here from Louis Marin's reading of 'the text of "Rabelais"' as 'utopia itself' – that is, 'an immense body of joy [*corps-de-jouissance*]' (1976, 36), a body, not of

[23] In Miller's later account, this Adornian negative is in fact extended into an anticipatory cancellation of future possibility, producing the paradox of 'a *posthumous* future in which stories told of selves are already extinguished in advance (2019, 175)'.
[24] Adorno takes over Stendhal's phrase here (2013, 15).

containment, but of transgressive flow, as allegorised by the sculptural centrepiece of Thélème: 'a magnificent fountain of pure alabaster, topped by the Three Graces with horns-of-plenty pouring water from their breasts, mouths, ears, eyes, and other bodily apertures (Rabelais 2006, 368).' It is at such a site of ontological seepage, where the body-as-*Gestalt* is undone, that the lesbian sensorium of *Ladies Almanack* is brought into being.

*Figure 2.2,* Louis Chalon, 'Abbey of Thelema', 1892, from Rabelais, *Five books of the lives, heroic deeds and sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel*.[25]

[25] In addition to this edition of *Gargantuan and Pantagruel*, with illustrations by Louis Chalon, the Djuna Barnes Archive also holds a 1921 Chatto & Windus publication and another from 1945 illustrated by R.A. Brandt.

## Becoming-Lesbian

In *Ladies Almanack* the conventional assignation of woman to nature is as often cited as it is inverted, celebrated, as well as parodied, inveighed against, and reconstructed. The book's very subtitle makes such an association its apparent basis, promising a 'showing' and 'a full Record' of women and their seasonal variations, according to the earthly and astral influences that make up their being. Like Pascal's '*itus et reditus* [going and returning]' of 'nature', Barnes's women are ordered within the menstrual system of the almanac.[26] Pascal continues: '[t]he flux of the sea takes place in this way, and the sun seems to advance in this way' (cited in Hadot 2006, 222). Such tides are also the moving principle so-claimed by the '**LADY OF FASHION**' announced on the title page as the book's author and illustrator:

> **LADIES ALMANACK**
> *showing their Signs and their tides;*
> *their Moons and their Changes;*
> *the Seasons as it is with them;*
> *their Eclipses and Equinoxes; as*
> *well as a full Record of diurnal*
> *and nocturnal Distempers*
>
> (*Ladies Almanack*, 3)

When the woman-nature conjunction is taken up again in the October chapter, it is grafted onto a Christian paradigm of the Fall:

[26] See also Caselli's analysis of the generic conventions of the almanac (2009, 43-50).

> There was a time when still rhymed to the wild Rib that had made her, Woman was atune to every Adder, every Lion, every Tiger, every Wood thing, every Water-wight, every Sky-wanderer; every Apple was to her a whole Superstition, and to quiet and to tame that Bone, she whispered "Lord! Lord!" (*Ladies Almanack*, 61)

A general eroticisation of the cosmos is suggested here which threads together ancient and medieval paradigms of the harmony of the spheres with sexual titillation. Musical figures ('rhymed'; 'atune [attune]') relate difference to similitude, as divisions across sex and species are named and overcome. This prelapsarian conceit is in Barnes's rendering altered by a lust suspended between temptation and discharge, indicated by something like a sustained clitoral erection ('that Bone') rechanneled towards worship: 'Lord! Lord!' is this woman's murmurous response and contribution to the *muscia universalis*. Between transgression and suppression, the forbidden fruit and the 'tame[d]' body, desire expands into ubiquity: 'every Apple' holds a mythic promise and every organism an intimation of kinship. If cosmic harmony is parodically inflected here, in the March chapter it is sexologically characterised and sent up: 'A Man's love is built to fit Nature. Woman's is a Kiss in the Mirror. It is a Farewell to the Creator, without disturbing him' (*Ladies Almanack*, 23). Spinoza's *deus sive natura* is once again rebuked here; having aligned 'Nature' and 'the Creator', Barnes places 'Woman' in opposition to both, with an implication of genealogical supersession involving neither strain nor fuss ('without disturbing him'), the effort too negligible and the triumph not worth gloating over. This valedictory move is repeated again in the September chapter, where the love of men is reduced to the 'Camp of Nature', and judged insipid against the 'Garden of Venus': 'Yet do this Fire rage as hotly here in the Garden of Venus, yea, with an

even more licorous and tempestuous flame, than in the very Camp of Nature' (*Ladies Almanack*, 57). Within this scheme, women's love goes against and beyond nature, involving a certain notion of denaturalisation. Staged as 'a Farewell to the Creator', the love of women may thus be understood as a deviation from Creation, a creative detraction from one's creaturely form and purpose. As a matter of fact, it seems that even within the '*Camp* of Nature' Sapphic intensities are already stirring.[27]

In placing 'Venus' against 'Nature', Sapphic love is suggestively characterised beyond the terms of animal copulation. In Lacan's consideration of human sexuality in 'The Signification of the Phallus' (1958), 'nature' in fact becomes universally 'camp' when it comes to human sexuality. Given the linguistic-being of the subject [*parlêtre*], a certain denaturalising effect intervenes in intercourse, mutating the nature of this 'relation' from '*copulation*' into 'the (logical) copula', and along with it, the penis into the phallus: 'The phallus is the privileged signifier of this mark in which the role [*part*] of Logos is wedded to the advent of desire (Lacan 2007, 581).' When, in *Ryder*, this '(logical) copula' is instantiated as 'a transitive verb', the conjugation of which ('I lie – he lies – they lie –') results in Sophia's return from a Latin class 'a mother', this migration of sexuality from the corporeal to the syntactical is comically staged as the altered, denaturalised love that founds Wendell's birth (*Ryder,* 35). The phallus, then, is precisely the event of the negation of the penis. Yet Lacan preserves a certain ambiguity when he introduces Hegel's '*Aufhebung*' to

[27] The *OED* records early uses of the term 'camp' as 'pertaining to or characteristic of homosexuals' from 1909.

articulate this negative relation, effectively confounding 'sublation' – in which the negated term (the penis) is retained in the emergent concept (the phallus) – and simple 'disappearance': 'The phallus is the signifier of this very *Aufhebung*, which it inaugurates (initiates) by its disappearance (2007, 581).' The result is a hybrid object: the phallus is a mutant penis, partially deterritorialised, a foiled process of becoming-word, not quite in the 'Camp of Nature' or the 'Garden of Venus'. Judith Butler, in her analysis of this text, thus points to the ontological conundrum that it generates: 'The phallus *symbolizes* the penis; and insofar as it symbolizes the penis, retains the penis as that which it symbolizes; it *is* not the penis (1993, 50-1).' As Patricia Gherovici and Manya Steinkoler put it: 'The phallus is a hodgepodge, a pastiche, a semblance' (2016, 7).

The Lacanian account of the passage from the 'Camp of Nature' to the 'Garden of Venus', from 'copulation' to the function of the 'copula', may thus be read otherwise – that is, without the recuperative gesture of retaining that inch of masculine morphology in the phallus. Because the varieties of amorous traffic between, across, and amongst lovers are predicated on an initial deterritorialisation of the 'natural' relation of penile copulation, both Butler and Deleuze and Guattari recognise the creative multiplications that may exfoliate out of the becoming-other of the penis. As Miss Tuck of the sisters Nip and Tuck in the May chapter pines, the 'Contortion of Traffic' that figures the entanglements of desire is irreducible, sending whatever path-guiding 'Sign-Posts' there are into disarray: 'How am I to help it if I go astray […] when every Law of Love and Desire was long ago as mixed as a Contortion of Traffic?' (*Ladies Almanack,* 38) The love-relation, that is, cannot be pinned down. To the potential

for a 'proliferative catechresis' contained in Lacan's botched phallus, Butler responds with her own conceptual butchery by introducing the term 'the lesbian phallus'. Since 'the anatomical part is never commensurable with the phallus itself', the latter could be said to be a 'transferable phantasm, and its naturalized link to masculine morphology can be called into question through an aggressive reterritorialization (1993, 52-3).'

The passage from *physis* to *logos* is given a sexual focus here, recorded as a movement from penises (in the 'Camp of Nature') to lesbian phalli (in the 'Garden of Venus'). In *Ladies Almanack*, this movement is further specified as an epochal transition, from the 'Medieval' to the 'modern'. In the March chapter, Masie Tuck-and-Frill, 'erstwhile *Sage-femme* but now, because of the Trend of the Times, lamentably out of a Job', thus suggests alternative procreative procedures involving alternative means of impregnation:

> Creation has ever been too Marvellous for us to doubt of it now, and though the Medieval way is still thought good enough, what is to prevent some modern Girl from rising from the Couch of a Girl as modern, with something new in her Mind? To stick to the old Tradition is Credulity, and Credulity has been worn to a Thread. A Feather […] might accomplish it, or a Song rightly sung, or an Exclamation said in the right Place, or a Trifle done in the right Spirit, and then you would have need of me indeed! (*Ladies Almanack*, 22)

The penis, as conventional – or 'Medieval' – instrument of love, withers away in the proliferation of such modern phalli as feather, song, exclamation, and trifle. Tilly Tweed-in-Blood might despair ('we need them [men] for carrying of Coals, lifting of Beams, and things of one kind or another'), but it seems that in

matters of procreation, men are not strictly necessary (*Ladies Almanack,* 24). Dame Evangeline Musset herself is in fact presented as a kind of swashbuckling guru of the lesbian phallus. The almanac's mock-protagonist is introduced in the following terms:

> Evangeline Musset […] had been developed in the Womb of her most gentle Mother to be a Boy, when therefore, she came forth an Inch or so less than this, she paid no Heed to the Error, but donning a Vest of superb Blister and Tooling, a Belcher for tippet and a pair of hip-boots with a scarlet channel (for it was a most wet wading) she took her Whip in hand, calling her Pups about her, and so set out upon the Road of Destiny (*Ladies Almanack*, 7)

If reference is made to 'that Greek mystery […] which is known as the Dashing out of the Testicles, and all that goes with it' – some case of self-resolved cryptorchidism it seems – it is made a joke of and said to have occasioned more 'Surprise' than 'Pleasure' to her seemingly hermaphroditic predecessor (*Ladies Almanack*, 7). Dame Musset is of course 'do[ing] it without the Tools for the Trade', and yet 'complain[s]' of 'nothing' (*Ladies Almanack*, 8). Love suffers nothing, that is, without its conventional instrument. Extending the colloquial reference to the penis as a 'tool' into 'the Tools for the Trade' brings into relief the inherent denaturalisation at work already within heterosexual amorous practice – a prostheticisation of the body that attempts to make up for the absence of the sex-relation through renewed practice and signification. These 'tools' and their various modes of deployment, which attempt to fulfill the function of the connective 'copula' between lovers, multiply the ways in which their encounters may be inscribed, configured, and realised. Stowed away in Musset's amorous arsenal are hence a compound of words and things, speech

acts and bodily practices, which, as uncanny phalli, are often ontological hybrids of one another, *physis-logos* mutants, including 'her Slips of the Tongue' – whether Freudian or fornicatory – and 'her Genius at bringing up by Hand' – raising great expectations of a different nature from those of Dickens's novel (Dickens 2008, 7). At the almanac's close we find another catechretic migration of this 'Tongue' at Musset's funeral, where she is cremated in a literalising demonstration of the sublation of the flesh at stake in the passage of the sex-relation from 'copulation' to 'copularity':

> in the end they put her upon a great Pyre, and burned her to the Heart. […] And when they came to the ash that was left of her, all had burned but the Tongue, and this flamed, and would not suffer Ash, and it played about upon the handful that had been she indeed. (*Ladies Almanack*, 84)

This tongue of flame – again a compound of organic flesh, inorganic matter, and language – continues to give pleasure to her women, with Señorita Fly-About the first of the bevy, who straddles the funeral urn and is brought to bliss as 'beatitude played and flickered upon her Face' (*Ladies Almanack*, 84).[28]

It is, however, *at the level of art itself* – that is, *at the level of the real,* as Deleuze and Guattari understand it – that this ontological levelling of body and text into forces capable of encountering and interacting with each other im-mediately takes place. Taking into consideration Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of art as an 'event' itself rather than secondary representation, I

[28] See also Pinkerton's reading of this passage as an 'irreverent reiteration of the Holy Spirit's descent on the Apostles in "tongues like as of fire" (Acts 2:3)', as well as a 'play on the biblical Burning Bush' (2017, 117-8).

argue, enables a reading of *Ladies Almanack* that is not reducible to the terms of fantasy and even falsity that have plagued its critical history. At this juncture it may be useful to revisit the configurations of art, history, and the utopian impulse in modernist literary practice that have often been raised since Lukács's placement of modernism in antithetical relation to realism, in order to situate the aesthetic practice of Barnes's *Almanack* – as the production of the 'real' of sensation itself – against a conception of modernism's retreat from history into fantasy.

The thrust of Lukács's charges against ''modernist' anti-realism' may be summarised as the elimination of objectivity from dialectics – in other words, the eclipse of the historical, socio-economic, and material conditions of the world, alongside a metaphysical commitment to 'the ontological solitariness of the individual' (Lukács 1963, 20). For Lukács, modernism marks the suppression of the 'social and historical environment' of humanity for a non-dialectical re-conception of 'Man' as 'an ahistorical being' (1963, 19-21). Crucially, the two terms of *actuality* and *potentiality*, made distinguishable through a dialectical understanding of history, are collapsed under a universal subjectivism. The Hegelian ontology of history that grounds Lukács's analysis denies full ontological status to the 'potential' and 'virtual': that which is not actualised in time as the 'real' of historical progression and the 'real' of 'reason' is marked as purely 'abstract' (1963, 23-4). With the evacuation of the 'rational' from history in modernism's extreme subjectivism, however, the infinite phantasmagoria of the mind – 'the 'bad infinity' of purely abstract potentialities' – no longer has to pass through the sieve of actuality, and is as a result accorded equal ontological

weight as the latter: in dropping the 'selective principle', modernism contributes to an unwarranted elevation of subjective fantasy, with 'the attenuation of actuality' as its corollary (1963, 22, 33, 25). The following diagnostic is offered: i. 'melancholy', in which 'contempt' for the world, which 'declines to realize these [abstract] possibilities', is nurtured, and, ii. 'schizophrenic dichotomy', in which, *contra* Hegel, 'thought and being are 'quite separate entities'', where an excess of unactualised life persists alongside attenuated reality (1963, 22, 27). Modernism, that is, is characterised by the pathos and nostalgia attendant on the awareness of *lost worlds*, and subjectivity's turn inward is as much symptom and cause of the dissipation of these counterfactual potentialities, figured in turns as melancholic failure to let go and schizophrenic cleavage.[29]

I am proposing, however, that a DeleuzoGuattarian refusal of the Hegelian hierarchy of the actual and rational over merely abstract or *virtual* potentiality, alongside the conceptualisation of a single ontological plane over which thoughts, affects, bodies, and texts interact im-mediately, would enable a reading of *Ladies Almanack* as an instance of a concretised utopia, in which 'the possible as aesthetic category' is 'give[n] […] a body, a life, a universe' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 177). The related terms 'possible', 'potential', and 'virtual', are here all made *real*. As Daniel Smith notes, the theodistical inheritance of Deleuzian thought inheres in the fact that '[d]ivergences, bifurcations, and incompossibles […] belong to *one and the same universe*'; the Deleuzian 'God', unlike the Hegelian one, 'passes through all […] virtual possibilities' (Deleuze

[29] See also the pathos of retrospection in relation to history's exhaustion of the counterfactual – that is, 'the costs and the catastrophes that led to the contingent shape of the present' – in Miller 2019, 170-2.

1997, xxvi). This is where utopia, in its DeleuzoGuattarian form, takes place within an ontology not of 'history', but of the 'virtual'.[30]

Instead of being a realist text, then, where 'realism' is understood to imply a subordinate relation of text to world – an instance of linguistic mimesis of reality – *Ladies Almanack* is, rather, a *text of the real.* Its operational mode is *creation*, not correspondence – which is to say that in it language does not enact a self-cancelling gesture to prioritise the extra-textual flesh, history, and mental life of the reader, but *is* the event itself of a lesbian sensorium. It does not represent the world; it *makes* it. Barnes's *Almanack* may thus be read as a specific utopian response to the situation of the melancholic subject, concretising a world that history is said to foreclose: instead of a nostalgic throwback to a 'lost Eden', it produces 'Eden' itself as an affective sensorium – *presenting*, rather than *representing* utopia. Where Lukács considers abstract potentiality to be merely sub- or non-ontological, Deleuze and Guattari confer full ontological dignity to the status of art, refusing the conception of the latter as mere 'fantasy', and emphasising its production of nothing less than 'cosmogenetic sensations' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 183).[31] As will be seen, this entails a depersonalising passage from the contingent historical body to what Deleuze repeatedly names a

[30] See also Mengue's reading of 'history' as the 'ontologie propre' of modernity, against the '*alter*', 'para- or post-modernity', of Deleuze's 'ontologie du virtuel'. Although Mengue considers Deleuze's work to involve a strain of 'anti-utopisme', his claim is directed quite clearly toward a notion of 'utopia' that remains inscribed within a Hegelian ontology of history, retaining therefore 'le lien intrinsèque […] avec la réalité qui lui est constitutif'. The virtual, however, is irreducible to 'history' or 'reality', and takes place instead – or '*evenit*' – in art and thought (2009, 9, 81-92).

[31] Jameson also notes that the 'ambiguous reality' associated with Utopia hinges on an 'ontological' question (2005, xv).

'bloc of sensation' (1994, 164, 179). This abandonment of the 'creatural qua creatural' that Hallward refers to includes the abandonment of the 'flesh', 'subjectivity', 'opinions', 'perceptions', and 'affections' that make up the human-being (Hallward 2006, 80). The overcoming of these anthropocentric affiliations in art is given in *What is Philosophy?* by the terms 'percept', 'affect', and 'sensation': 'Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them (1994, 164).' 'Sensation', compounded of affects and percepts, is accorded full ontological dignity, and is hence often referred to with such predications as 'being of sensation', 'sensation as being', or 'pure being of sensation' (1994, 164-7). It is in this ontological region engendered by art that the subject-object dichotomies established by the Oedipal ego are overcome. On the one hand, the 'perceiving subject' and its 'affections' are raised to the 'percept' and the 'affect': '*Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man,* just as percepts […] are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*.' On the other hand, it is also '*the material that passes into sensation*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 167-9, 193). 'Sensation' is thus precisely that into which human and artwork pass, the ontological region that art creates.

For Deleuze, a key component to this process of 'rais[ing] lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect' is 'style', which, in literary art, is manifested through 'the writer's syntax' (1994, 170). 'Style' hence names the means by which 'sensation as being' is produced; it is that through which the lesbian sensorium is born, the linguistic medium that dispatches with the 'creaturely' – that is, all the historical, local, contingent, and corporeal

determinants of the human organism – and raises from it a new cosmos of sensation. This function of style is at work everywhere in *Ladies Almanack*. In the May chapter, for example, an account of Dame Musset submitting 'one dear old Countess' to her amorous attentions is given as such:

> I, fervid with Truth, had finally so floored her in every capacious Room of that dear ancestral Home, that I knew to a Button, how every Tickling was made! And what a lack of Art there is in the Upholstery Trade, for that they do not finish off the under Parts of Sofas and Chairs with anything like the Elegance showered upon that Portion which comes to the Eyes! There should […] be Trade for Contacts, guarding that on which the Lesbian Eye must, in its March through Life, rest itself. (*Ladies Almanack*, 34-5)

An elaborate system of puns and metalepses here results in the collapse of different categories of being into new percepts. Lexical registers collide and converge as flesh, fabric, furniture, and language pass over into one another. The 'Truth' that impels Musset to storm her lover's body and home is a mixture of some kind of sexual authenticity, pseudo-religion, and plain passion, whilst her knowledge of the 'Tickling' of every 'Button' refers not only to the sartorial item, but also to the nipples, navel, and clitoris. The 'under Parts of Sofas and Chairs' also conjure up those of a woman, an effect reinforced by the *chair* which is the word for 'flesh' in French, and the 'March through Life' functions as a rather grandiloquent military phrase for the process of growing up and growing old, as well as for sexual conquest and its infelicitous visual encounters. Musset's tale is offered as a cocktail of bravado and complaint, stylised with such ingenuity that the resultant affect, in spite of its representational content, is one of pleasure.

The same machinery of affective conversion is deployed elsewhere. In the July chapter, a stylistic stand-off is staged between a sentimentalising rhetoric of courtship on the one hand ('what a woman says to a Woman'—*Ladies Almanack*, 42), and a critical, censorious one on the other (effectively, what another woman says to such a woman). Yet their differences are not all that easy to measure. The critical voice directed against the sentimental verbosity it chastises is presented with a similarly indiscriminate verbosity; the former's brandishing of its critical wit against the 'Blandishments' of the other ends up committing the very vice it rails against. Its target is not just 'corrected' with a kind of supercilious glee, but also joyously cited. To juxtapose the criticised passage with the critique itself is hence to reveal their not so covert complicity in the joy of verbal outpour. I set them side by side here:

> You know my quick Step, my real Run, my true Bite. My intake and withdraw are at your behest, I am but a Shade of myself an I am not by your Side, and what I am is because you are, and should you turn and not find me, it is because I have taken that not worthy of you to another, who may blow me bright again to shine toward your Lightning, a Sun to my Beam!
>
> Nay——I cannot write it! It is worse than this! More dripping, more lush, more lavender, more mid-mauve, more honeyed, more Flower-casting, more Cherub-bound, more downpouring, more saccharine, more lamentable, more gruesomely unmindful of Reason or Sense, to say nothing of Humor […] they be not happy unless writhing in Treacle, and like a trapped Fly, crawl through cardinal Morasses, all Legs tethered and dragging in the Gum of Love! (*Ladies Almanack*, 45-6)

The first is a passage from the inamorata, whose maudlin rhapsody is a string of clichés ('a Shade of myself'; 'what I am is because you are') peppered with idiosyncratic detail ('quick Step', 'real Run', 'true Bite'), and even a dash of

ingenious self-exculpation furtively stowed away within the flummery: the conventional formula – 'I am not worthy of you' – is deployed here to blot out the lover's faithlessness ('I have taken that not worthy of you to another'), and dilates further on via some verbal cunning into another homage to the original ('toward your Lightning, a Sun to my Beam!'). There is as much glee involved in the reading of this rhetorically suspect passage as in the charge brought against it by the plaintiff, who is, for her part, no more practised in rhetorical sobriety. 'I cannot write it!' she claims, but this turns out to be an instance of what in medieval rhetoric is often termed *occupatio*: a negative is professed, but undermined by what follows. Adjectives compound ('more lavender…more honeyed'), grow into compound-adjectives that further compound ('mid-mauve', 'Flower-casting', 'Cherub-bound', 'downpouring'), peaking with a bloated modifier ('more gruesomely unmindful of Reason or Sense, to say nothing of Humor'), before a debouchment into 'Treacle', 'Morass', and 'the Gum of Love' – that is, a stew of saccharine and smut in which the lover as drowning insect 'writhe[s]', 'drag[s]', and 'crawl[s]', all 'tethered' and 'trapped'. If, at the level of the *content* of these passages, it is possible to attach a negative coefficient to the first and a positive – or at least corrective one – to the second, at the level of the writing itself – its form or style – the affective status is universally positive. Both are, as it were, 'twittering so loud upon the Wire that one cannot hear the Message', tending toward the suppression of the referent beneath the sensorial vibration itself (*Ladies Almanack*, 46).

A heightened instance of this reversal may be found in the extensive list of expletives in the August chapter dished out by a man to the women who dare to

be more than 'just good Distaff Stuff'. In a similar logic, negatives are converted into positives as 'belabouring' turns into 'admir[ation]', and the same content affectively transposed from the perspective of the man into a lesbian bloc of sensation (*Ladies Almanack,* 53). Heterosexual male insults become homosexual female tributes:

> unwieldy, gander-gated, sprung at Hip, unlovely, disenchanting, bearded, hoop-chested, game of Leg, out at Elbow, double-jointed, hook-toothed, splay-footed, wattled, hamstrung, mated with nothing, high-bridged and loose-lipped, no-woman's Meat the length of her Bones, fit for no diddling, dallying Tom, white-eyed and no Wind in her Nostrils but such as blows down her Bellows to make her a neither, and so forth and so on. In no wise worth their pains. (*Ladies Almanack*, 53)

In imitation of its Burtonian and Rabelaisian sources,[32] each lexical unit in this pell-mell pillory is dispatched from its original evaluative context – under the heterosexual gaze – into depersonalised percepts and affects. Instead of a coherent body, united into a specular whole as a phenomenologically intended 'perception', each segment here breaks off into a sensorial nugget that takes flight from the immediate sense of the disparaging terms. The lesbian body, *perceived* by the male gaze as 'fit for no diddling, dallying Tom', lifts off into so many lesbian *percepts* ('gander-gated [gaited]', 'sprung at Hip', 'out at Elbow' etc.) which the reader partakes of in a sensorium of joyous affects. The reversal

[32] See in particular the extended passage from *The Anatomy* that begins with: 'Every Lover admires his mistris, though she bee very deformed of her selfe, ill favored, wrinkled, pimpled, pale, red, yellow, tan'd, tallow-faced, have a swolne Juglers platter face, or a thin, leane, chitty face, have clouds in her face, be crooked, dry, bald, goggle-eied, blear-eyed, or with staring eyes, she lookes like a squis'd Cat,' and so on and so forth (Burton 1989-1994, III.164). See also the passage from Rabelais's *L'abbaye de Thélème* beginning 'in those days no women were put into convents unless they were one-eyed, lame, hunched-backed, ugly, askew, mad, backward, deformed or defective' (Rabelais 2006, 361).

managed by the stylistic acceleration here inverts the negative contained in the woman with 'no-woman's Meat the length of her Bones' into a universal positive, turning this entire passage 'all-woman' – pieces and percepts of women, as it were. So it is said in the preceding chapter:

> were she haggard, gray, toothless, torn, deformed, damned, evil, putrid and no one's Pleasure; or if on the other Hand she were lovely, straight, marble browed, red in her bloom, bright in the Eye, headed with Hair, and Venused to book – 'tis all one to a Girl in Love! (*Ladies Almanack*, 44)

Each term in the series is caught up in a rhythm that propels it on to the next, generating a surge of affect that neutralises not just the perceptual but also axiological context out of which each arises, mobilising a syntactical force that sweeps up these cluster-bomb insults and pufferies into a pure bloc of sensation. In this passage from the body caught in the eye of the male subject to the lesbian sensorium, truly, ''tis all one'. 'Style' here functions as a kind of linguistic transformer, through which history, along with the literary, aesthetic, and moral values that overcode women's bodies, pass and re-emerge as positive affect. Maligned on one occasion for being mere 'modernist *bijouterie*' (Rascoe 1923, 130), and backhandedly complimented on another as 'sprightly and spinsterish' (Glassco 2007, 34), the lapidary machine of Barnes's writing may now be seen to demonstrate that it is in the very 'Jangle' that style *ontologises* sense (*Ladies Almanack*, 46). Writing itself, in its contact with the reader, concretises sense as sensation – that is, it produces and gives body to a region of affects and percepts. The heterosexual socium in which these expletives operate breaks open, loses its integrity and the capacity to provide the evaluative frame for the elements it

contains, and passes over into the lesbian sensorium. Through this reversal, lesbian 'lack' is positivised (in both senses) as affect: 'though that Prick is nowhere in the Flesh of Sister for Sister, they cry as loud, yea, lament still more copiously, turning and twisting as if the very Lack were an extraordinary Pain!' (*Ladies Almanack*, 57) Once again, if the sense is 'pain', the sensation is joy; though the text writes 'Lack', the product is plenitude: the absent 'Prick' becomes a ubiquitous 'lesbian phallus'.

Such rapture founds the world of Barnes's *Almanack*, which, in fact, prepares its elixir of happiness for the reader in the form of 'LOVE PHILTERS', whose magic recipe is given in the October chapter. Here, the alchemising *process* itself is its intoxicating product. This aphrodisiac is concocted in the trail of the Goddess, whose passage across the cosmos discharges its virtual constituents as so many Sapphic bits in protean combination:

> So take the first Hair from your Head, and boil it with Mare's Milk and wrap in a Napkin and bring the Goat inside out, then till the old Mother of six pans of her Earth, and next to the fur-side, lay the Nap to the Horns' end, and thereover cast a peep of No-Doubting-Sappho, blinked from the Stews of Secret Greek Broth, and some Rennet of Lesbos to force a get-up in the near Resurrection, and put on a Horseshoe to ride Luck's Mare at a Gallop a trot, and when the Mass bubbles and at the River's lip quivers, call it dear Cyprian, and take her under your Wing on the warm side, and but her no buts! (*Ladies Almanack*, 71-2)

Maternity perfuses the cosmos here from birthing goats to lactating mares, just as various lesbian molecules of various degrees of palpability from a Sapphic 'peep' to a 'Rennet of Lesbos' are discharged from Creation. Sexual, spiritual, and eschatological resonances mingle: the 'Resurrection' of the body

draws in a kind of clitoral erection ('get-up'), while the Holy Communion of the *corpus Christi* turns into a lesbian 'Mass' whose Host is compounded of the parts of woman. The sense of an achieved eschatology comes through here not just in the imminence of the Resurrection, which promises beatitude *virtualiter*, but also in the unravelled path of joy: shod with a 'Horseshoe' of 'Luck', all paths through existence at all paces ('a Gallop a trot') yield happiness. As in the phrase from Alexander Pope's 'The Second Pastoral', famously set to song by Handel and referenced by Barnes in *The Antiphon*: 'Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade' (Pope 2006, 10; see also *Selected Works,* 201).

The women of *Ladies Almanack* everywhere undergo processes of molecurisation, dehumanised from subjects to sensations, becoming-ceramic, becoming-fabric, becoming-flame, and also becoming-insect and becoming-animal. In the 'LISTS AND LIKELIHOODS' segment which concludes the September chapter a catalogue is given which includes:

> THE Vixen in the Coat of red,
> The Hussy with the Honey Head,
> […]
> The Doxy in the Vest of Kid
> Rustling like the Katie-did,
> With Panther's Eyen dark and wan,
> And dovës Feet to walk upon.
> The Jockey with the Pelvis plump,
> The high-hipped Wrestler with the Rump
> Or yearling Mare, firm, sleek and creased, (*Ladies Almanack*, 60)

And so on and so forth. Barnes's strategy of ontological collapse is once again in evidence here: the categories of being are compressed in 'Kid' – causing

goat and child to pass into one another – and in its rhymed double 'Katie-did', where woman (Katie) and insect (katydid) cross over. The universal reach of this molecularising process of becoming-woman culminates at the end of the list, where, effectively, time and the cosmos end up traversed by a lesbian vector that queers the created world into a lesbian pleasure-dome:

> For all the Planets, Stars and Zones
> Run girlish to their Marrow-bones!
> And all the Tides prognosticate
> Not so much of any other State! (*Ladies Almanack*, 60)

By congesting the cosmos with lesbian presence – where lesbian 'body-parts' or 'molecules' overrun the skies, permeate astral bodies, infuse the oceans, and hybridise all creaturely existence – *Ladies Almanack* presents a lesbian Cockaigne, a radical state of reconciled existence in a world in which lesbian desiderators and desiderata everywhere meet and meet again. This spatial takeover is accompanied by a temporal one, as prehistory comes to be overrun by myths of female parthenogenesis – whether through egg-laying, as in the March chapter, or urination, as depicted in April – as well as evolutionary just-so stories involving the 'naked backrunning of Nature': 'from Fish to Man there has been much Back-mating and Front to Front' (*Ladies Almanack*, 43). The obsessive notes on the 'retrocopulation' and 'retromingency' ('pissing backward') of the animals in the medieval *Book of Beasts* return here, it seems, to set the record 'straight': from fish to man, all creatures are about as queer (White 1954, 10).

It is this eternal self-encounter of she-desiderators and she-desiderata that provides the *Almanack* with its cartography of love. Right from the outset, the ostensible introduction of the *Almanack*'s protagonist quickly dissolves into a spume of body parts. The tale of a molar entity named 'Evangeline Musset' does not quite take off here, but is waylaid by an extended account of the various assemblages of organic and non-organic machines of desire. Here, 'Hinder Parts', 'Fore Parts', 'whatsoever Parts', 'Itch of Palm' and 'Quarters most horribly burning' seek solace 'upon warm and cozy Material, such as Fur, or thick and Oriental Rugs', and even 'upon warm Stoves', before it eventually pans out that 'from the day that we were indifferent Matter, to this wherein we are Imperial Personages of the divine human Race', it is 'inflamed' lesbian-parts which best serve the interests of other 'inflamed' lesbian-parts: 'no thing so solaces it as other Parts as inflamed, or with the Consolation every Woman has at her Finger Tips, or at the very Hang of her Tongue' (*Ladies Almanack*, 6). Such a map of desire, where bodies organic and inorganic are laid out in recombinant reticulations, could be termed 'rhizomatic',[33] an alternative vegetable metaphor that displaces the conventional arboreal organisation of life – patriarchally affiliated, as 'The Tree of Ryder' in Barnes's novel of the same year suggests – given in Patience Scalpel's outburst: 'Where, and in what dark Chamber was the Tree so cut of Life, that the Branch turned to the Branch, and made of the Cuttings a Garden of Ecstasy?' (*Ladies Almanack*, 12)

[33] '[T]he rhizome refers to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, and modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari 2013, 22).'

*Figure 2.3* Djuna Barnes, 'Tree of Ryder', *Ryder*. © The Authors League Fund.

'Woman', in *Ladies Almanack*, taken on these dispersive vectors, evades the stasis of molar-being with its negative logic ('I am this, not that'), in favour of an additive one that co-opts all apparent negatives into positives. All exclusions turn out to be inclusions: 'but's' turn into 'and's' and 'or's', resulting in a vast ontological complex. Where the inscription above the main gate of Rabelais's Thélème accumulates a list of exclusions built on the refrain 'Cy n'entrez pas' – or, 'Come not herein' – the 'Lists and Likelihoods' of Barnes's *Almanac* reverses this logic of enclosure to include the cosmos within the changing body of 'Woman' herself (Rabelais 2006, 364-5). In the September chapter, it is said: 'THE very Condition of Woman is so subject to Hazard, so complex, and so

grievous, that to place her at one Moment is but to displace her at the next (*Ladies Almanack*, 55).' In the month before, we encounter another itemisation of woman-parts and their expansion into a textual panoply of philosophies, styles and genres: 'WHAT they have in their Heads, Hearts, Stomachs, Pockets, Flaps, Tabs and Plackets, have one and all been some and severally commented on, by way of hint or harsh Harangue, praised, blamed, epicked, poemed and pastoraled, pamphleted, prodded and pushed, made a Spring-board for every sort of Conjecture whatsoever, good, bad and indifferent (*Ladies Almanack*, 47-8).' The result, it seems, is that 'Woman' includes – and in fact *is* – everything – *even men*, as Dame Musset once suggests ('I never a Woman before nor since!'—*Ladies Almanack*, 24), along with Low-Heel ('she must have had a Testes of sorts, however wried and awander […] she was called forth a Man'—*Ladies Almanack*, 53);[34] *and even heterosexuals*, like Patience Scalpel, having gone 'a Nose-length into the Matter' (*Ladies Almanack*, 50):

> Some have it that they cannot do, have, be, think, act, get, give, go, come, right in anyway. Others that they cannot do, have, be, think, act, get, give, go, wrong in any way, others set them between two Stools saying that they can, yet cannot, that they have and have not, that they think yet think nothing, that they give and yet take, that they are both right and much wrong, that in fact, they swing between two Conditions like a Bell's Clapper, that can never be said to be anywhere, neither in the Centre, nor to the Side, for that which is always moving, is in no settled State long enough to be either damned or transfigured. (*Ladies Almanack*, 48)

Here, the exclusionary logic of bounded identity is bypassed in order to ramify across all ontological modalities, positive, negative, or the contested zone

[34] Origen's reputed self-castration, referenced in *The Antiphon*, may also qualify her (*Selected Works,* 195).

between. Aristotle's principle of the excluded middle – one of the forms of 'exclusive predication' Deleuze rails again – turns out to be a symbolic fiction cut through by the women who 'swing between two Conditions like a Bell's Clapper'. '[A]lways moving', 'in no settled State', Barnes's women not only dodge all kinds of essentialism, but also a predestination in another world: neither 'damned or transfigured', consigned to Hell or Heaven, they thrive in the realised eschatology of the *Almanack*'s sensorium, all always already in bliss.

In this revised eschatology, Creation – the volatile body of God – is surcharged to the threshold of its phenomenal crust beyond which it is routinely discharged as the sensorial units of the City of the Goddess. The virtual, that is, forms the transversal screen across which the inherited world erupts in Sapphic swathes. Certain apocalyptic implications may thus be resituated here. In *Revelation*, to recall, it is with the passing away of 'the first heaven and the first earth' that the New Heaven and New Earth make their appearance, with the Holy City in descent 'as a bride adorned for her husband', scintillant with 'jasper' and glass-like 'gold', a composite of 'sapphire', 'chalcedony', 'emerald', 'sardonyx', 'sardius', 'chrysolyte', 'beryl', 'topaz', 'chrysoprasus', 'jacinth', and 'amethyst' (Revelation 21:1-2, 18-20). A typological rewriting of the Old Testament prophets is observable here. In the Book of Daniel, it is the gilded territories of the earthly kings that are shattered by God's Kingdom. When Nebuchadnezzar's dream is relayed to Daniel in a vision, the 'great image' that emerges before him is an anthropomorphic representation of the kingdoms of Man: **'**This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.' A 'stone' then issues

forth, 'cut out without hands', and 'smote the image': 'Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors' (Daniel 2:31-5). The Kingdom of Heaven is founded on the pulverised remnants of earthly glory.

This precedent saturation of *bijouterie* in the eschatological Kingdom may enable a re-situation of one of Barnes's gnomic statements that now forms the title to the recently published volume of essays on her work, *Shattered Objects*. Responding to Peter Neagoe's complaint regarding *Nightwood*'s lack of 'cheer',[35] Barnes writes to Coleman on 8 November 1935: 'Split the most beautiful woman in half and is it cheering in his sense? No. In mine yes, to see the guts and gall and heart embroiled in that pit out of which beauty boiled.' Barnes glosses: 'There is always more surface to a shattered object than a whole object—and likewise the surfaces of a fragment are less 'cheering'' (cited in Armond 2012, 867). The turn from comedy to tragedy between the *Almanack* and *Nightwood* – where this very epistolary *fragment* is located – suggests a degree of affective ambivalence that is registered in Barnes's manoeuvre here, which first insists on the 'cheer' – in *her* sense – pertaining to the cloven body, before a second take concedes – or *stages* a concession – to the 'less 'cheering'' quality of the 'shattered object', volleying Neagoe's term back in scare quotes: it *is* more 'cheering', and if it is 'less 'cheering'' – *that is the point*. The incongruity that Peter Nicholls notes here between the organic innards and the brittle object is, however, not particular to just Barnes (Pender and Setz 2019, 207), but encrypts a logic of transfiguration

[35] Coleman's advice is to dismiss his opinion: 'he cant [*sic*] think. He is like a woman (Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 16 November 1935).'

witnessed from Huysmans's jewel-encrusted tortoise to Joyce's 'alshemist', raised – but also wrecked – into the image of his 'chagreenold' body (Joyce 2012, 185.34-186.8; Huysmans 1977).[36] Their Biblical inheritance here shines through, to different ends: eschatologically re-visioned, God's body *qua* Creation breaks forth in the lambent stones of the new body, and the New World. As Barnes sees it, the beauty of the bisected body – predicated on creaturely death – in exhibiting its disinterred surfaces, initiates a vector of further dissections that pushes to a coruscating dispersal. The more facets there are to a precious stone, the greater its glory; the logic of the *cut* diamond, it seems, conjugating fractioning with radiance, applies to the *revealed* body, its viscera, in touching the surface, breaches it, to be crystallised in the eye of the artist.

If Barnes's words to Coleman here, formulated at the threshold of *Nightwood*'s publication, do end up stalling not just the passage from flesh to ceramic or stone (insisting on 'the guts and gall'), but also the machinery of *affective conversion* from the dreary to the cheery, the *Almanack*, on the other hand, sees the created world to its dehiscent end in Sapphic shards of percepts and affects. New Jerusalem here does not so much descend, as erupt in the scintilla of the New Sensorium. As Dame Musset sees it, the 'monstrous Pot' of the creaturely body, formed by the 'heinous Potter', may be released into so many fleet girl-bits: 'once smashed to bits it must go a go-going (*Ladies Almanack*, 66).' In the omnipresent showing of God's love in the *Almanack*, Her fissiparous body is everywhere divided in glory.

[36] See also the 'radiant body' of the Daedalian artist in the *Portrait* (Joyce 2000, 186). For a reading of the 'paradox of organic tissue and lapidary design' as an 'effluence of the Real' over Huysmans's tortoise, see Hanson 1997, 122-3.

In presenting *Ladies Almanack* as the concretisation of a positive utopia in which desires, far from being countermanded by the very presence of the objective world, are productive of the real *qua* affects and percepts, I am offering an instance of modernist comedy that steers away from the *negative* utopias of Adorno and Bloch, as well as the various projective eschatologies of Christian thought. Barnes's distance from the negative poetics of a Surrealist writer such as Antonin Artaud, from whom Deleuze adopts the term 'body without organs', may thus be measured here. As Adrian Morfee explains, 'The *corps sans organes*, by which man will be 'délivré de tous ses automatismes et rendu à sa véritable liberté', is a way, then, of being finally free from God's influence, the means 'en finir avec dieu' – it could have been called the *corps sans dieu* (2005, 189).' In *Ladies Almanack*, however, this *agon* of God and poet is now unravelled, as both are brought into a covert alignment. Immanent to the cosmos itself, its author may be said to make a mock cameo-appearance in the October chapter, offering a comic display of God's own becoming-lesbian. After a mythic account of woman's fall from nature, grace, 'God and man', the figure of Daisy Downpour is introduced, who, 'return[ing] homeward' one day, 'Godless and fearless', ends up making 'Fear and a God of the yellow Hair of Dame Musset, wandering about the grassless Sods of her Garden' (*Ladies Almanack*, 63). In a moment of theophany, a lesbian part-object – Musset's 'yellow hair' – is recognised as God, who turns out to be as cold, cruel, and withdrawn as He or She ever was to Job. Daisy's erotic disappointment unspools in a series of epithets, offering, in one outburst, a depiction of the many faces of God: 'by so much Indifference, packed down on Scorn, became she first God, then God Almighty, then God Dumbfounding, and

still later God help us, and finally God Damn to Daisy Downpour (*Ladies Almanack*, 66).' In *Ladies Almanack*, Creation and the Creator have become women – 'with a Difference' (*Ladies Almanack*, 26). And, insofar as we have come into the *event* of the text – *so have we*.

Chapter 3

# Comedy III: *Ryder*, Rape, and Recurrence

> What ho! Spring again! Rape again, and the Cock not yet at his Crowing! (*Ryder*, 21)

Thus run the opening lines to 'Rape and Repining!', the fifth chapter of Barnes's 1928 novel, *Ryder*. Built on a series of repetitions, the catachrestic unfolding of the chapter – essentially, an extended rape joke – identifies a specific comic mechanism embedded within its alliterative title: first as tragedy, then as farce. This chapter is concerned with the function of repetition in the production of humour, alongside its ethical implications. The critical tradition that founds humour on a certain principle of 'unincremental repetition' will be reconsidered beside an alternate formulation of humour in terms of ironic revision – otherwise put, *non-identical* repetition, or repetition with a *difference* (Frye 1990, 168). If Barnes's comic novel acknowledges Frye's claim that '[r]epetition […] not going anywhere belongs to comedy', it stages simultaneously the undoing of this mechanism of humour in favour of a form of ironic reprisal that establishes critical distance from that which it repeats (1990, 168). Irony, as it is deployed in *Ryder*, involves a discriminative disposition that dynamically reconsiders the values that prompt the kinds of jokes they do – and

in fact form their very condition of possibility – shifting, in the process, our ethical and libidinal lines of allegiance. It is this dynamism involved in the cultivation of an ironic disposition – one that privileges *process* over *closure* – which resists the various forms of premature reconciliation humour is capable of producing, re-orientating us thereby away from the present, toward the future.

In *Ryder*, the association of humour and repetition is staged both thematically and formally. The recurrence of rape in particular is attributed to the cyclical time of nature, as seasonal law and genealogical fate:

> A Girl is gone! A Girl is lost! A simple Rustic Maiden but Yesterday swung upon the Pasture Gate, with Knowledge nowhere, yet is now, to-day, no better than her Mother, and her Mother's Mother before her! (*Ryder*, 21)

Grounded on an anatomical principle of pregnability, the joke here operates by recalling the civilised world to the grim necessities of mere life: generation demands penetration, and every mother, *qua* mother, is a 'Girl […] gone' and a 'Girl […] lost', forming a fateful chain of ruptured hymens. The doubling in the genitive ('Mother's Mother') becomes the formula for an infinite concatenation into prehistory. All mothers, inheriting and bequeathing rape, are levelled by the scythe of Hades, which functions here metaleptically as the insignia of the biological ground-zero encoded in the *memento mori* ('Man is born to die'—*Ryder*, 27), in essence, also a *memento rapiendi*. Death, to repeat one of Barnes's puns, is the 'Grim Raper' (Barnes to Daniel A. Mahoney, 14 November 1958). To recall, Persephone, ravished from the flourishing earth to be the caged bride of the underworld, inaugurates winter, becoming the mythic

event that divides a perennially green world into the seasons. Yet, if on one level, the humour of the chapter functions via a dogged *reduction*, collapsing civilisation into libidinal licence and bodily rudiments, historical time into cyclical myth, the linguistic exuberance demonstrated throughout gestures toward humour's other strategy of *elevation*, which, with a kind of manic overwriting, raises suffering into joy. Repetition, that is, both de-sublimates and sublimates, rewriting rape as objective fate – in conformity with a physical law – whilst reclaiming it with subjective agency via an aesthetic re-enactment. Repeated textually, the event turns comic, retrieved from its occurrence in the world at large – involuntarily undergone – to be reprocessed as a redacted narrative, whose wild embellishments, wrought rhetoric, and intemperate relish, signal the addition – and, as we will see – the *strain* of the subject's will. Passively suffered, it is now actively relived; the victim triumphs thereby via a diegetic manoeuvre, recovering from damage a *post hoc* desideratum, reproduced as the pleasure of the text:

> Ravished, and the Cream not risen in the Pantry! Ravished, and the Weather Fork not turned twice upon its Vane! Ravished, and no Star pricked upon its point! (*Ryder*, 21)

Augmentation and trivialisation intertwine here in an anaphoric sequence that pairs rape with the mundane goings-on of the household, the climate, and the skies. Here already, the lavish redaction of the ravishing points to an ethically dubious relish, its literary arabesques crafted from a body levelled into – and undifferentiated from – so much *materia poetica.*

These two facets of humour form the focus of this chapter, which seeks to understand irony as a means of navigating a passage between pleasurable involvement and self-conscious detachment – between, that is, collusion and critique. The tendency for comedy to produce reconciliatory frames of mind via the contrary modes of reduction and elevation does in fact find occasional elaboration within the novel itself. The narrator, at one point, remarks on its mechanism of affective reversal: 'By "humorous" is meant ability to round out the inevitable every-recurring meanness of life, to push the ridiculous into the very arms of the sublime (*Ryder,* 9).' The instances of malignance and banality strewn across life's passage may, it seems, be recuperated and reversed by a will-to-laughter. The crippling of such a will, however, presents the other face of humour, which runs humanity aground against the bare facts of the hapless body. As Kate protests to Wendell, and his mother, Sophia: if the inevitability of birth chains her to pain, the inevitability of death, turning as it does life into one bathetic peak and trough, is a reminder that both are actually quite 'humorous'. Infanticide, apparently, is quite funny:

> I've become infatuated with the flavour of motherhood; you poked it under my nose, and I've learned to like it. It makes me ill, and there's no pleasure at either end, but I'm addict, and it's your fault, keeper of the shop, and madame of the keeper! […] I'll kill it the minute it's born, but I'll bear it! There's humour for you, and you can't prevent me! (*Ryder*, 170)

Repeatedly subjected to the pains that come with pregnancy and labour, Kate launches the contradictory claims of 'ill[ness]' and the absence of 'pleasure', despite having 'learned to like it': she is, in her words, an 'addict'. If the comic action pushes her in one instance toward a joyous reconciliation with

'motherhood', its contrary tendency is an upsurge into a revolt with limited prospects, returning her to her anatomical destiny, and life, in general, to an eternal recurrence of birth and death, truncated here into the microcosm of the womb.

The two forms of humour that feature prominently in *Ryder* are thus founded on a principle of repetition, one which reduces humanity to its corporeal dimensions, and reverses history into myth, and another which elevates humanity to godhood, raising history into art. Both, however, in repeating life in writing, enact a typological closure on the side of comic resolution. The following pages aim to read the two forms of *eternal recurrence* whose logic permeates the linguistic apparatus of Barnes's novel, both of them presenting a false reconciliation to be critically undone, one in the direction of de-sublimation, and the other, of sublimation. The names that have been attached to them are those of Mircea Eliade, who reads the return of profane history to its sacred origins as a redemption of violated time, and Friedrich Nietzsche, whose proposal of a will-to-laughter that could reverse the fragmentation, suffering, and contingency of life into a redeemed whole has been described as an 'atheistic theodicy' and an 'aesthetic theodicy' (Young 1992, 109; Williams 2012, 323-48). Kate's 'infatuation with the flavour of motherhood' appears in this light as a parodic foil to a disrupted *amor fati*, indicted by Adorno as the 'crime of theology that Nietzsche arraigned without ever reaching final court (Adorno 2005, 98).' This 'crime of theology', as will be seen, inheres in its push toward a premature theodicy that Adorno – with his melancholy

attachment to the body in pain, irreducible wherever it is come upon[1] – considers morally defunct, a collusive misattribution of joyous closure to unreconciled life that has provoked his thoughts to take on the contours of something more akin to a 'negative theodicy' (Geuss 1999, 100). Against these two tendencies toward comic resolution, however, a third form of humour emerges in *Ryder* which may be given the name *irony*. Its defining trait is discernment, and presents the means of negotiating the reader's way – alongside Julie's[2] – between the engulfment of the subject by the primordial community (*à la* Eliade) and the self-arrogation of the subject to a private redemption (*à la* Nietzsche) – between, that is, the Scylla of impotence and Charybdis of omnipotence, the crippled and the elevated will. Presenting *Ryder* as an *ironic* comedy thus attributes to it a *qualified* reconciliation with life that negates joyous closure in the present – alongside the tenuous redemptive formulations that enable it – and re-opens the subject instead toward the possibility of renewal in the future: reconciliation, that is, is projected against the horizon.

I thus move on here from the *achieved eschatology* considered in the previous chapter in relation to *Ladies Almanack* and *Creatures in an Alphabet* to a reading of the *projective* orientation toward happiness in *Ryder*, involving an investment, however, not in any concretely envisioned eschatology – whether as the re-installation of the Divine or earthly family, in the advent of the Kingdom of

[1] See in particular his response to the Holocaust, where 'the practical abhorrence of the unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed' is raised into a 'new categorical imperative' (Adorno 1990, 365).
[2] My reading thus follows Marie Ponsot's broadly in aligning the reader with Julie's nascent subjectivity, although – as argued below – a psychoanalytic account of the heterogeneous nature of the subject complicates this (Ponsot 1991).

Heaven or the advent of the Husband – but, rather, an investment in the open horizon of the future. If an assent to life and the created world is coded in the comic text of *Ryder*, it is also one that is simultaneous with a refusal of various forms of premature and/or false reconciliation. The premise of futurity on which the text's comic principle is based is thus, on one level at least, secured with an *anti-reconciliatory* gesture: in repudiating a joyous location of the self in the present world, a commitment to the future may be affirmed. *Ryder*, in this light, remains minimally a response – in the *positive* – to the question of theodicy, even in its wanton parody of the various false theodicies it relays.[3] The reconciliatory and anti-reconciliatory facets of humour thus yield a number of antagonisms that will be considered in the first half of this chapter; in the second half, I move on to a consideration of the libidinal implications of irony in relation to the corporeal drives, and hence, its formative role in the production and constitution of the subject. Irony's mode of crafting *openings* out of a falsely totalised present, it will be shown, is implicated in the *open body*.

## Humour, Satire, Irony

Although a certain degree of automatism is often attributed to its physical mechanism, laughter nonetheless can – and not infrequently *does* – occasion

[3] See my introduction for an account of a 'weak theodicy'.

reflection.[4] For many modernist critics, the questions surrounding when and how to laugh are compounded by the fragmentation or even dissolution of ethical norms. Jonathan Greenberg speaks of the 'codes of sophistication' that direct emotional responses to suffering, which are themselves complicated by a general attitude of 'modernist antisentimentality' (2011, xiii, 12-13), while Matthew Stratton points to the individual and social 'dispositions' that prompt or pre-empt laughter, often a marker and dynamic producer of 'affiliation and disaffiliation' across subjects and communities (2014, 15-17). In setting aside the taxonomical polarities that have often accompanied critical considerations of irony, whether considered in formal terms ('stable' and 'unstable' irony; 'finite' and 'infinite' irony; 'specific' and 'general' irony— Booth 1974; De Man 1996; Muecke 1969), historically indexed ('modern' and 'postmodern' irony—Wilde 1981; McHale 1987), socio-politically branded (as 'political' or 'antipolitical'—Debarati 2006; Rorty 1989), or psycho-developmentally tagged (to 'genital' and 'pre-genital' stages—Sacerdoti 1992; Reik 1929), Greenberg and Stratton direct their attention to the mixed constitution of ironic praxis, which often incorporates elements on both sides of these categorical divisions, in order to consider it as a means of discrimination and discernment. While laughter's spontaneous moment *presumes* certain affective and ethical investments and

[4] Wyndham Lewis is perhaps – on the surface at least – the modernist most adamant on the mechanical reducibility of the human ('a repeating-machine, a habit-machine, a parrot of itself'—Lewis 1993, 364), prompting Michael North's claim: 'For Bergson, mechanical behavior is a betrayal of true humanity, one that society punishes and corrects by laughter. For Lewis, on the other hand, human beings actually are mechanical objects, and it is the function of laughter to expose their pretensions to be otherwise.' For Bergson, laughter is 'to some extent redemptive', while for Lewis, 'bitterly tragic' (North 2009, 117-8). There is, however, a *false redemption* involved in the comic assumption of the body-as-matter, trapped in unincremental repetition, as I demonstrate with Eliadean 'eternal recurrence'. For an opposing account of Lewis, see Dwan, 2015.

dispositions, deriving from a shared situational and/or linguistic context, reflection can nonetheless come in its wake. Irony and satire, that is, are capable of recalibrating these investments and reconfiguring dispositions, displacing the lines of allegiance across individuals and communities. Laughter, while 'partly a reflex', as Frye claims, may thus also occasion a degree of reconsideration (Frye 1990, 168). They dynamically 'affiliate' and disaffiliate', in Stratton's terms, and constitute, for Greenberg, a '*double movement*': 'on the one hand, the satirist speaks for a community […] on the other, he is a renegade who enjoys the subversion of traditional values' – or, for that matter, non-traditional ones (Greenberg 2011, 7).

Irony, in *Ryder*, affiliates in treacherous ways that in turn prompt critical disaffiliation. As the novel progresses, it becomes more apparent that the reader's collusion and revolt, produced by the linguistic strategies of the narrator, are kin to Julie's own struggle between attachment to her family and community and detachment therefrom – a laborious, intermittent, and unfinished process involving her libidinal and spiritual weaning. This shift from the position of the community to that of the individual is in fact undertaken in the 'Rape and Repining!' chapter, which first aligns the reader with its humorous victimisation before the overexertion of its comic machinery dismantles it. The subject position of the reader thus begins with an allegiance with the enunciatory position that centres the chapter – revealed only belatedly as that of a 'Council of Women' from Tittencote, comprising 'Gossips' and 'good Wives' – but ends up with a tentative retreat from the histrionic ventriloquy (*Ryder,* 26,

24). The chapter's prefatory couplet, however, is already a concise if covert marker of the perspectival frame in which its humour is made possible:

> Lock windows, bolt doors!
> Fie! Whores!
>
> (*Ryder*, 21)

The enunciatory position set up by the narrator – into which the *reader* slips by virtue of entering the text – is established against the enemy other: the raped girl – that is, the source of social contamination. 'Rape and Repining!' exhibits the vengeance of the Tittencote population against the individual. The event of rape is understood as a rupture of the archaic order of the community, founded as it is on a mythic synchronisation of the seasons and the rhythms of society. Its results are temporal distortion ('You have stolen Time'), genealogical inversion ('Is this not turning the Just Proportion of Generations backward?'), economic ruination ('You mint with your false Metal […] that from now on, we must watch our Change, lest there be Lead in it'), epistemological confusion ('the Community […] honoured you as True Coin, only to discover you Counterfeit'), and a general collapse of logic and sense ('Who plants the Staff, Crook down? Who suckles the Wind for a Mother? Who combs the Wind for a Parent?') (*Ryder,* 26-38) Victim-blaming is rife in the vitriol: 'There is a "No" with a "Yes" wrapped up in it, and there is a "No" with "No" enough in the Weave, and we have been sorry amiss that our Girls have not learned of it (*Ryder,* 26).' This girl must have, of course, with classic wile, stowed away a 'Yes' within her 'No', feigning resistance only to pique his interest. She has, therefore, seized a man out of turn: 'Have you not taken that which Better Women have refused […] Is it well to grab

Sweets that an Hundred Guests, at the Same Gathering, have left untouched, and thus greedily to limn their Savour (*Ryder,* 26)?' Her overreaching antics make her traitor to the community and the sacred time it runs by:

> You have stolen Time, such Time as lies thick about Tittencote. Time made stout by Good Wives stitching, and washing, baking, and praying. Firm with Household Duties well done, within the narrow excellence of Wedlock, paced to Monogamy, fortified with Temperance, made Durable with Patience. You have bent Time with the Tooth of Lust, torn the Hem of Righteousness, and the Wind may enter and the Cyclone follow! (*Ryder*, 27)

The 'Time' that encloses Tittencote in its seasonal regularity is measured against the cycles of domestic activity, patterned according to 'stitching, and washing, baking, and praying', alongside the ritualised stages of life, which make passage – with deterministic force – from 'Wedlock' to 'Monogamy', sanctified by the values of 'Temperance' and 'Patience'. The community, that is, is preserved – or 'made Durable' – through a repetition across the generations that safeguards the nuclear family with a recursive production of 'Good Wives'. The 'Girl' who gets herself raped, however, is none such.

The insights drawn from the philosophical anthropology of Eliade and René Girard that inform Michael Seidel's study on 'satiric inheritance' enable a closer examination of the relationship between historical and mythic time that satirical literature interrogates. Girard's view that the ethical norms and institutions of a community – given legal elaboration and ritualistic enactment – are codified displacements of primordial violence (be this patricide or fratricide) is taken up by Seidel in his account of historical and 'satiric dispensation'. The

'dispensations of history', Seidel writes, 'are the beginnings of necessary cover-ups or sanctifications of violence through disguise', enabling the substitution of founding acts of 'sacrifice and scapegoatism' with 'communal rituals' (1979, 18). The linear time of history, that is, takes hold where the recurrence of violence is minimally displaced. Mythic time, on the other hand, names a repetition without difference. While history begins with an exemption – or 'dispensation' – from violence, satire, conversely, *dispenses with* history, exposed now as a long series of compensatory fictions: it 'blows history's cover' (1979, 19). In effect, 'there is in the satiric act a kind of perverse neutralization of historical progression […] the satirist maintains that what is represented as legal is really unthinkable (1979, 21).' The legal edifice of the socio-symbolic order, raised and steadily fortified over the course of history – into which primal violence has been displaced – is now de-sublimated and exposed as ethically and/or epistemologically untenable, a conspiratorial 'disguise' of *homo qua lupus homini* in the sheepskin of civilisation. In Eliade's view, historical dispensation is a transgression of sacred time (myth) into profane linearity (history), redeemable only via a reconstitution at the origin itself, with, that is, a 'renewed dispensation': it is only with a *backward repetition* of an 'archetype' that such restoration is possible (Seidel 1979, 32). The 'structure of this archaic ontology' thus constitutes in this regard, for Eliade, a 'platonic structure', which returns 'historical man' to his archetypal form, '*ab origine*' and '*in illo tempore*' – that is, *in that time* of the constitution of the world (Eliade 1969, 12-16, 34, 49). The cyclical re-enactment of a 'rite' thus enables 'the abolition of time through the imitation of archetypes and the repetition of paradigmatic gestures', constituting, in essence, the 'transfiguration of history into myth' (1969, 49, 52). Within such

an ‘archaic ontology’, only that which ‘participates’ in or ‘repeats’ the archetypes of a society’s foundational myths retains any degree of ‘reality’ at all; all else remains the illusory dross accumulated with the unfolding of profane time, eliminated anew each time history itself is cancelled out in the recurrence of the only *real*, consolidated in the originary myths of the community (1969, 48). The seasonal rite, in short, *de-realises* profane history and *re-authenticates* the sacred archetype. It is this restorative function of archaic repetition, however, that satire interrupts even as it reduces the contemporary world to its primitive coordinates, thereby de-legitimising *both* the profane and the sacred. As Seidel points out, satire’s dismantling of history into prehistory occurs alongside the perversion of the founding circumstances surrounding the latter, and thus paves the way for a ‘revisionary inheritance’ that enables a *forward repetition* that includes within it a disinheriting mechanism (1979, 60). Satire, then, as in Mary Douglas’s reading of the ‘joke’, may be classed as an ‘anti-rite’ (1975, 102): instead of a ritualistic imbrication of history with the mythic foundations of a community, it hollows out the former with archaeological incision to lay bare the violence that now vitiates rather than legitimates the edifices of society. Satire, that is, is capable of dispensing with *both* history and myth.

*Ryder* casts rape in a double role. The suggestion that the daughter is ‘no better than her Mother, and her Mother’s Mother before her’ points to an originary ravishing – reinforced here with an allusion to Persephone – that founds the community, since it reproduces itself only on condition of the production of more such mothers. In this staggering diversion from the immediate victim to her maternal forebears, rape as an isolated case of non-

consensual intercourse is first redoubled into a second instance of non-consent ('her Mother'), before its recessive extension *ad originem* pares it down to its skeletal coordinates: it becomes, i. a formal definition of all penetrated (possibly also penetrable) bodies, and ii. an insinuation that the conditions of heterosexual intercourse itself – physically incursive, socially coercive, with economic stakes and anatomical consequences (*daughters*, for one) so much beyond the remit of the will as to render all 'consent' impossible, or, at any rate, moot. Historical dispensation may displace this violence *ab origine* into the sanctioned institutions of 'Wedlock' and 'Monogamy', as hailed by the council of self-proclaimed 'Good Wives', but the satirical action of the chapter goes some way in uncovering the traces of the 'Grim Raper'. In reversing the social institution into its archaic coordinates, the satirist here, however, instead of issuing *judgement,* ramps up the malicious joy by adopting the voice of the community. Despite the intimation, then, that the marriage institution of Tittencote might be an elaborate and systemic recoding of rape as matrimony, its ethos is not palpably delegitimised, since it is not rape *per se* that is lamentable, but rather, the wrong kind. Logical contortions can only emerge here: in opposition to the 'timely' rape of wedlock is the 'untimely' springtime rape. So it seems, rutting time in the civilised world is post-marriage, not post-winter. Yet the seasonal law inscribed in 'Spring again! Rape again' suggests rather the fatalistic timeliness of the event. A phonetic perversion from 'rape' to 'ripe' here marks the convolutions of Tittencotian logic: ''Tis Ripe Time for it, when Unripe Woman falls to Ripening!' (*Ryder*, 23) Each spring, it seems, what is 'Unripe' finds the 'Ripe Time' for its premature – or, *unripe* – 'Ripening'.

This satiric touch, which reverses history to primitive time, leaves the victim impotent against the forces of nature and a community enclosed within its myths. But if the mechanism of humour operates here by sealing off the victim as passive object, an alternate function is demonstrated in *Ryder* which is founded rather on a narrative will, retrieving damaged life to be reprocessed in aesthetic form. It is worth approaching the relationship between life and art with some care here. Julie Taylor's cautions against the temptation to critically decode the events of the novel in relation to Barnes's own life are pertinent given the reductive tendency evidenced by past critics. Nonetheless, the numerous allusions in Barnes's fictional and non-fictional writings to some form of sexual encroachment – the exact nature of which remains unclear – in her early years may be registered rather than suppressed.[5] As Taylor notes, 'traumatic testimony' is *produced* rather than excavated, exhibited in the present via the symbolic means of communication, which retrieves only in refiguring, rather than passively recording, a broken past: trauma, in short, is built on a structure of repetition (2012, 36). If the satiric aspect in *Ryder* buries the subjectivity of the victim, trampled beneath the collective mob, another brand of humour sublimates the event into comedy via the will-to-laughter that informs its textual repetition. Narrative overkill, that is, 'push[es] the ridiculous into the very arms

[5] Barnes's biographers have not been the most helpful here: Field, Herring, and Stromberg have all opted for the strange move of depicting her childhood via backward inference from her fiction (Field 1983, 43; Herring 1995, 313-4; Stromberg 1989, 27-8). Louise DeSalvo and Anne B. Dalton are also insistent on the encryption of incest in *Ryder* and *The Antiphon* (DeSalvo 1991; Dalton 1993). Whether or not Barnes's father did rape her, or facilitated it via a neighbour, and to what extent the bawdy letters from *the mother* of this father are evidence of some grandmother-daughter incest – whether harmful or nurturing – is not an issue I am able to follow up here. I am indebted to Taylor for a sober overview of these claims, although many more inconsistent ones have been made by Barnes herself, or recorded to have been made by her (Taylor 2012, 7).

of the sublime.' This 'Girl' is not just 'Ravished', but 'Soiled! Despoiled! Handled! Mauled! Rumpled! Rummaged! Ransacked!' (*Ryder,* 21) The trochaic force may be constant here, but it does not quite hammer the point home, with the severity of the offence swerving from 'maul[ing]' to 'rumpl[ing]' and 'rummag[ing]'. The catachrestic excess of the accusations accumulate with each retake ('Or put it thus: […] Or thus: […] Or so: […] Or better: […] Or thus: […]), multiplying the perspectives from which the victim might be judged and re-judged (*Ryder*, 26-9). Distending from the human community to the animal world, this censuring voice exposes the victim to cosmic pillory, reiterating the sentence against her from one species to the next. Her abjection is refracted thus from eye to eye:

> To the Oblong Eye of the Deer, is not your Condition lengthened? By the Owl, is there not purchased a dreadful Rotundity? To the Shallow Eye of the Fish, you are but a little staled, but to the Bossy Eye of the Ox, you may ride as High and Damned as Jezebel. And what of the Multitudinous Insects, and the Infinitesimal Conclusions of the Ether? To the Myriad Pupil of the Fly, what can it but manifold your Grievance? (*Ryder,* 25)

Exposed before 'the World's Eye', her rape – or 'crime' – is reviewed in new dimensions according to whichever 'thing it walks before' (*Ryder*, 25). Violated once, she is violated once more and ever more; first raped, she is now rent through a host of disparate lenses ('Oblong', 'Rotund[]', 'Shallow', 'Bossy', 'Infinitesimal', 'or 'Myriad') to different effect ('lengthened', 'staled', 'Damned', 'manifold'), wrenched apart by a kaleidoscope of shame into a series of mutilated shapes. Raising ridicule to sublime proportions, the hyperbolic linguistic machine here turns the eternal recurrence of rape into a thing of laughter. This

capacity for textual repetition to reverse tragedy into comedy is in fact suggested by the narrative pleasures of Molly Dance in the novel itself:

> She consumed one after another some hundreds of shilling shockers, laughing with hearty delight when a knave got his mouth clean slitten, or a damsel suffered rape: "For at least," she said, "it never hurts in the reading." (*Ryder*, 193)

The accumulation of 'shilling shockers' to the 'hundreds' drains the 'hurt[]' from the 'reading', turning murder and rape into occasions for 'hearty delight'. The more *written* the text, the more the contribution of the narrative will, which, in re-appropriating the contingency and suffering of life into the ambit of subjective agency, raises these into joyous affirmation. That this repetition of tragedy as humour involves shifting allegiance from the side of the victim to that of the victimisers is encapsulated pithily in the caption for an earlier drawing by Barnes for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*: 'The Joke in the Tragedy of the Other Man's Life'.

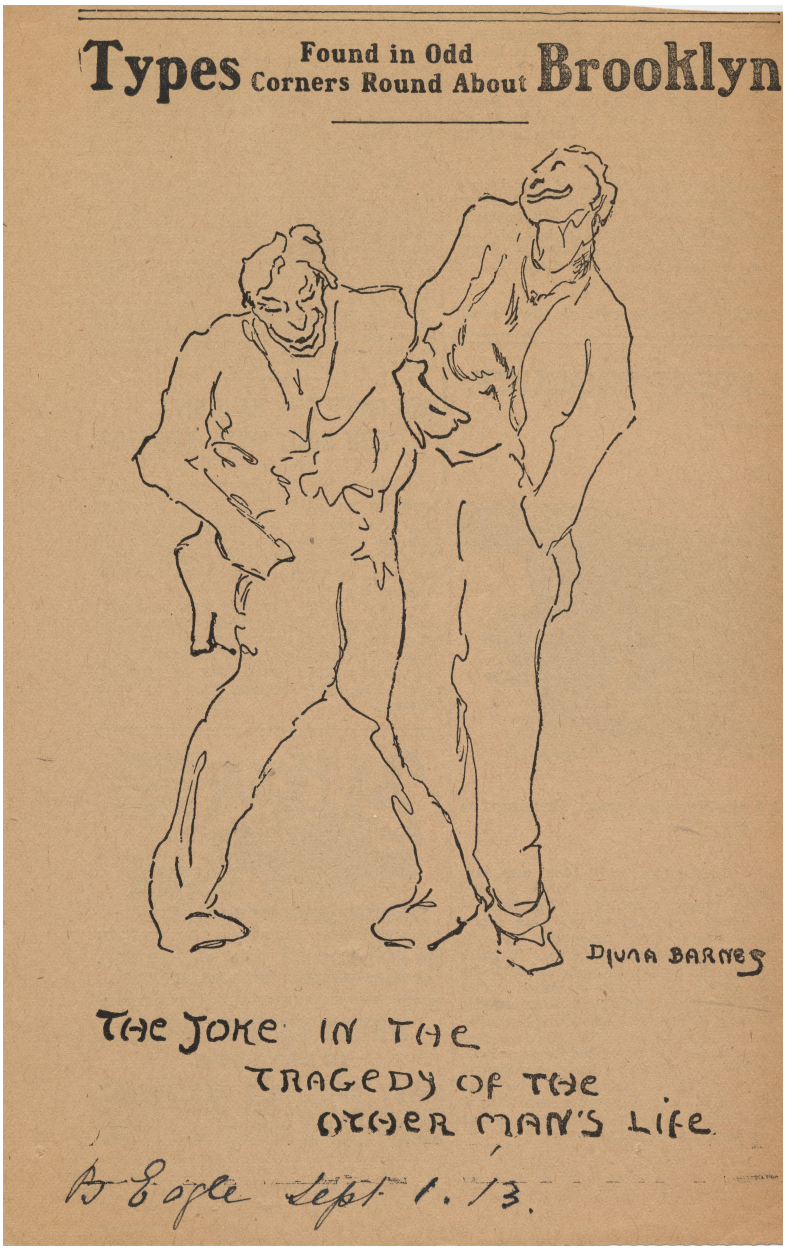



*Figure 3.1* Djuna Barnes, 'The Joke in the Tragedy of the Other Man's Life', 1913. © The Authors League Fund.

In situating tragedy on the side of the 'other', suffering and misfortune may be consumed as comedy. A certain degree of sadism is intimated in this libidinal affiliation with fate rather than fate's victims, indicated by the slightly sinister aspect created by Barnes's contorted faces. The rising curve of the grimace is, in both figures, broken by smaller undulations that suggest the spasmodic motions of laughter which, in turn, visibly traverse the entire body to

rupture physical composure into interrupted lineaments, concentrated at the abdomen and torso where the jagged strokes aggregate. In dispatching with sympathy, laughter, here, seems momentarily to snatch the human from himself. This libidinal redistribution from sentiment to a *Schadenfreude* of sorts is produced via a shift in our allegiance from the victim to the victimisers, and is in fact at work throughout 'Rape and Repining!' When, for instance, the offended community points the finger at the source of contamination, its manic rhetoric betrays a sadistic hue: ''Tis such who Poison Wells, and make the Hackle rise on every Pubic Inch, and do split the very Bells by which we tell Time!' (*Ryder*, 25) The affective complexity coded in the accusation is revealing: rising hackles, a conventional marker of anger, move south to turn into a pubic disturbance that modulates disdain into desire.

Such a libidinal redistribution is not far from Nietzsche's characterisation of the laughter of the gods. The philosopher's declaration – 'our *laughter* itself may have a future!' – marked out in Barnes's copy of *Beyond Good and Evil*, follows a pronouncement of universal comedy on the same page:

> we are prepared as no other age has ever been for a carnival in the grand style, for the most spiritual festival-laughter and –arrogance, for the transcendental height of supreme folly and Aristophanic ridicule of the world. (Nietzsche 1914, 166)[6]

Such '*golden* laughter', related later in the text to '*The Olympian Vice*', is produced from the vantage of 'transcendental height', the sublime peak beneath

[6] I cite from Barnes's edition in the Archive.

which the mundane world shrinks into 'ridicule', presenting to the distant eye a miniature of human civilisation, not as canny enterprise, but as 'carnival'. The 'Gods', Nietzsche claims, 'also know how to laugh […] in an overman-like and new fashion – and at the expense of all serious things!' (1914, 260) In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the titular prophet – '*the teacher of the eternal recurrence of the same*' – is in fact not so much a soothsayer as a 'soothlaugher [*Wahrlacher*]', figured as a harbinger of redemption and conqueror of death, in a revisionary take on the Biblical resurrection: 'like thousandfold children's laughter Zarathustra comes into all burial chambers, laughing at these night watchmen and grave guardians, and whoever else rattles about with dinghy keys (2006, 177, 158, 108).' In the following section headed '*On Redemption*', the repetition of the past ('it was') into a willed act in the present ('thus I willed it!') names the process by which the shards of life are shorn up against ruin to (re)-create a whole:

> And all my creating and striving amounts to this, that I create and piece together into one, what is now fragment and riddle and grisly accident. […] To redeem those who are the past and to recreate all 'it was' into 'thus I willed it!' – only that would I call redemption! (2006, 110)

These passages, leading up to the formulation of the 'eternal return of the same' in Part III, point to the creative will involved in redeeming linear time and the debris accumulated with its flow, with a retrospective glance that gathers it up and reproduces it 'piece[d] together into one'. If deficient in organisation, significance, and reason, the past nevertheless comes into completion refigured by an aesthetic will. Such a redemption is thus achieved via a willed repetition of

life as art; eternal recurrence serves here as the litmus test for the vigour of this will. Given this, the cumulating excesses of 'Rape and Repining!' may be read alongside the logic embedded within Nietzsche's account of eternal recurrence, which several critics, elaborating on Alexander Nehamas's work, have associated with the trope of hyperbole:

> the idea of eternal recurrence is not about proportion; its whole emphasis is on disproportionate acceptance, acceptance with a vengeance so extreme that the terrifying power of what is is subverted in a hyperbolic leap from resignation to desire[.] (Magnus, Mileur, and Stewart 1993, 145)[7]

Mere 'resignation', that is, remains on the level of the Stoicism. Nothing less than 'positive desire' answers to the 'challenge of wanting unconditionally what is the case' – that is, *amor fati*, or the love of fate (Magnus, Mileur, and Stewart 1993, 145). The greatest pains incurred in the trajectory of history are thus reversed into a joy to be repeated unto infinity: reality as it is – 'what is' and 'it was' – is redoubled into sublime form and redeemed. As with Nietzsche's emphasis on song and rhyme in relation to metaphysical gaiety,[8] in *Ryder*, versification is often a concise means of rewriting life as art, a comic affirmation of that which, in the first instance, elapses beyond the precincts of the subjective will, only latterly re-appropriated by it. If 'the Horrid Outcome of Wendell's First Infidelity' is the death of a woman in childbed ('Impaled upon a death that crawls within'), it is retold with verve in a sequence of iambic pentameters that begin and end 'to the point':

---

[7] See also Nehamas 1985, 22-3.

[8] 'But if you do not want to weep and weep out your purple melancholy, then you must *sing*, oh my soul!' (Nietzsche 2006, 180)

And died so—in pitched child bed, ere the North
Gave up its snowy custom, and came down
To waters in the heavy watered sea,
[…]
And so this girl, untimely to the point,
Pricked herself upon her son and passed
Like any Roman bleeding on the blade—

(*Ryder*, 77)

Pathos, here, is prematurely terminated in the chapter's bathetic opening, cutting short grief in life with comic precision, just as the life of this woman – referred to only as 'Wendell's First Infidelity' – is cut short to be served up as so many *bons mots*: 'For men die otherwise, of man unsheathed/ But women on a sword they scabbard to (*Ryder*, 77).' Similarly, after the reader is told of another death occasioned by Wendell's procreative fervour – this time that of one of his daughters, 'born feet first' – the following chapter, 'And Amelia Sings a Lullaby', retells the death of a young boy and his mother's response to it:

She with true philosophy
Made no cry how it must be.
Since he was all three-quarters lost
She would make whole at any cost!
Fol di ril de re do!

(*Ryder*, 103-4)

This 'true philosophy', it seems, takes the step beyond Stoic resignation ('Made no cry how it must be') to joyous affirmation, rounded off in two rhyming couplets and ending in the gay refrain of the lullaby. *Amor fati*, operative here on several levels, imbricating the losses of the mother here with – perhaps – Amelia's own, is, however, also burlesqued: the willed recurrence of misfortune

put forward by Nietzsche morphs here into collusive action, with the mother joyously finishing off what was 'all-three quarters lost' to 'make whole at any cost', effectively turning herself into lover *and* accomplice of fate, crafting a redeemed 'whole' of sorts from the 'grisly accident[s]' of life. More than Chaucer's Knight, who thinks it 'wysdom […] To maken vertu of necessitee', she makes of necessity complicity (Chaucer 2008, l.3041-2). Narrative will, here, domesticates death into versified epigrams:

> For when a boy's more in than out
> Of this world's gate, what can one do
> But push the rest of him out too?
>
> (*Ryder*, 103)

In the form an inverted pregnancy, this boy is given death – rather than birth – to, by a mother who 'push[es] the rest of him out' *from* rather *into* life – quite likely, in the comically retold drowning: 'He, in other words was—phut!/ Head-first in the water-butt. […] Fol di ril de re do!' (*Ryder*, 103)

While Nietzsche's own references to 'redemption' justify readings of his notion of eternal recurrence as an 'atheistic' and/or 'aesthetic theodicy', *Ryder*'s satirical edge tends rather toward its dismissal as another instance of false reconciliation. If, on the one hand, allegiance with the comic apparatus of the text is achieved, its humour quite often redounds on itself, disassembling the very machinery by which it operates whether by overworking it, or by prompting a renewed sentimental response, thereby disaffiliating us from its sadistic tendency, and in turn affiliating us with an alternate axiological position.

Although Barnes's own references to Nietzsche suggest that the influence of the philosopher on the artistic circles of New York's Greenwich Village in the 1910s did leave its mark on her,[9] the most pointed intertextual revision in *Ryder* that subverts the redemptive omnipotence of the will is based rather on a parody of the proto-Nietzschean figure, Kirillov, from Dostoevsky's novel, *Devils* (1872).[10] A letter from Barnes's mother, dated 5 January 1927, suggests Barnes's encounter with the novel prior to *Ryder*'s publication the following year.[11] The pages detailing Kirillov's meditations on the nature of the 'will' and the 'former God', alongside his eventual suicide, are in fact all marked out in one of Barnes's two copies of the novel, and serve as the model for the satirical undoing of the redemptive will of the belated creator in *Ryder*.[12]

Kirillov's search for a 'salvation for everyone', entailing nothing less than the 'physical[] transform[ation]' of humanity, registers a number of the distinctive features of the spiritual project of the Nietzschean 'overman' (Dostoevsky 2008, 693-4). An *agon* is staged here between the 'divinity' of the individual against that of God – otherwise put, 'Self-Will' against 'His will':

[9] For an account of 'New York, Nietzsche, and the 1910s', see Stratton 2014, 23-52.
[10] Nietzsche's own response to 'die klassische Formel Kiriloffs bei Dostoj<ewsky:>' is recorded in his *Nachgelassene Fragmente* from 1887. See especially the sections headed '**Bési.**' – the novel's Russian title – 'Zur Psychologie des Nihilisten', and 'Die Logik des Atheismus'. These are fragments 331-4 from group 11 in the *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe*.
[11] Cheryl Plumb notes, following this letter, that Barnes 'owned a copy' of the novel (*Nightwood: The Original Version*, 231). *Two* copies, in fact, are held in the Barnes Archive.
[12] These are pages 578-87 of Barnes's 1916 copy. In the following, I cite however from the Oxford World's Classics edition.

> If God exists, then everything is His will, and I can do nothing of my own apart from His will. If there's no God, then everything is my will, and I'm bound to express my self-will. (2008, 691)

The grounding evidence for the revised soteriology Kirillov envisions takes shape as an act made possible only with the primacy of 'self-will' over that of the 'former God': *suicide*, he claims, shifts 'sovereign[ty]' over to the subject ('To realize there's no God, but at the same time not to realize that one's become God oneself is absurd'—2008, 693). While not a requisite for future generations, an originary act of violence is nonetheless necessary to secure the ground for the new order: 'I must certainly kill myself to make a start and prove it (2008, 694).' This basic opposition between 'Self-Will' and 'His will', however, finds itself in a logical imbroglio: 'I'm still only God against my will and I'm unhappy since I'm *obligated* to express my self-will (2008, 694).' 'Self-Will', here, loses foundational status in the acknowledgement that it fails to be self-grounding, since its very existence and expression is based on a prior '*obligat[ion]*': suicide no longer stands sufficient as an unconditional act, or the cynosure of the will's freedom. In fact, where this putative 'self-will' takes Kirillov is nowhere other than the paradox of willing 'against [his] will' in an attempt to supersede God.

This metaphysical morass that Kirillov runs himself into, first paralysing him with inaction, then pressing him into an ignominious suicide when cornered, is raised in *Ryder* in an exchange between O'Connor and Wendell, with the pathos of its precedent, however, drained into a truncated summary. In the chapter, 'Dr. Matthew O'Connor Talks to Wendell on Holy Inspiration', a gendered spin is given to Kirillov's predicament: '"It's God in them [women],"

said Matthew O'Connor. "It accounts, I think, for the peculiar difference in the suicides of man and woman (*Ryder,* 203).' The logical conundrums involved in a self-grounding will are compressed into a bathetic *non sequitur* in O'Connor's account. The 'young man' is '[t]roubled – why?'

> Because he cannot kill himself without including his will in that action. He knows that if he kills himself, he is the slave of that action, so with the soul of the slave he bargains, and makes great argument about a thing that has not only no base for argument but no way but the way including its will. He says to himself, 'I must abandon you. How shall I abandon you?' Thus, he makes for himself a pact. If I kill me, my corpse shall be, in my terms absolute, and by myself, myself made myself – voilà!' (*Ryder*, 203)

If the point of the suicide is 'to place himself on an equal footing with God' and bring about the 'death of God *and* the father' in an act of self-siring, he balks before the circular inclusion of his subjectivity in the negating process ('he cannot kill himself without including his will in that action'), relegating his self-will from sovereignty to the place of the 'slave' (*Ryder*, 203). '[A]rgument' is made where 'argument' is out of place and a 'way' out contrived where there is 'no way but the way including its will'. Finally, however, with a preposterous syntactical legerdemain, he reasserts himself, tripping over his 'absolute' will into his 'absolute' corpse by smuggling both terms – subject and object – into the reflexive pronoun 'myself'. In an act of sovereign self-grounding – or, rather, self-ungrounding – he is, as it were, 'by myself, myself made [*not*] myself'. In addition to terminating the trammelled sophistry with a curt intervention, 'voilà', here, also indexes not so much the self-positing subject or even his empirical body, but the fast dissipating hocus-pocus of his logic. With this, the redemptive will of the overman is dispatched. The woman, conversely, bypasses these metaphysical

snares since, unlike the Oedipal man who attempts to father himself, her will is ceded to God in the act:

> take what woman you like, the virgin in her nightshift, the mother in her maternity gown, the actress in her beaded buskins and ruff, the queen in her leg-o'-mutton sleeves, the peasant girl among her wheat, the shop girl among her percales, the market harridan in her filth and degradation, the whore in the stews; one and all commit, in that act, their body to death's custom, neither making bargain nor asking for precepts and points of departure, nor platforms for philosophy, because women know that there is God only, but man knows that there is God and the father. (*Ryder*, 203-4)

Against the omnipotent will, now gendered male and scattered into aporias, there is the impotent passivity of the 'woman', who, in another variant of *amor fati*, consigns herself to 'death's custom' and the way of God. Humour, once again, operates in both directions, abetting, then betraying the insurrectional will on one side, and on the other, reducing the 'woman' to an anatomical ground-zero. Death, the leveller, cuts his scythe across the ranks of 'virgin', 'mother', 'actress', 'queen', 'peasant', 'shop girl', 'market harridan', and 'whore'.

As previously discussed, the narrator herself is complicit to some degree in this essentialist take on 'woman'. Her humour, as with O'Connor's here, operates via reduction. The third form of humour that is available to *Ryder*'s readers, however, prompts a process of disaffiliation that withdraws from the libidinal complicity of comic engagement: *irony*, that is, cuts its way through both the reductive repetition that abolishes the subject (*à la* Eliade) and the sublimating repetition that enthrones it upon its own will (*à la* Nietzsche). Where humour tends toward *closure* – whether by an aesthetic repetition of life

into the product of the subjective will, or a reductive repetition of life into an archetype – irony re-opens these forms of *premature reconciliation* to resituate the subject in history, with a gesture toward an unwritten future. These *openings*, as will be discussed below, are both psychic and corporeal.

Just months before Barnes's death on 19 June 1982, her last poem is published with a reference to another infamous spring sacrifice – namely, Stravinsky's 1913 *The Rite of Spring*.[13] Barnes's own 'Rite of Spring', like Stravinsky's ballet, exhibits the defeated body, collapsed into anatomical stasis:

> Man cannot purge his body of its theme
> As can the silkworm on a running thread
> Spin a shroud to re-consider in.
>
> (*Collected Poems*, 145)

The 'theme' of the mortal body, subjected as it is to contingency, pain, and decay, persists throughout 'Man''s existence. This opening declaration disables history's capacity to relieve – much less to redeem – the stigma of fate on the flesh, insisting instead on the eternal recurrence of its needs and symptoms. If symbolic existence is often cited as a marker of species difference – if not species *distinction* – it is here crippled in the contraposition of man's 'cannot' with the

[13] Barnes's memoirs of her Paris days reveal a familiarity with not just the avant-garde in literature and the visual arts, but also in music and dance. In addition to Schoenberg, Satie, Antheil, and a number of the composers of 'Les Six' (Honegger, Auric, Milhaud, and Poulenc), Stravinsky and his *Le Sacre du Printemps* are mentioned, together with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes (*Collected Poems,* 235-7). Stravinsky's music also features decades later in a 'Homage to T.S. Eliot' at the Globe Theatre on 13 June 1965. Barnes did not attend, but received a first-hand account from Silas Glossop, along with the programme for the evening and a review in *The Times* which includes a section on the 'Stravinsky Contribution' (Glossop to Djuna Barnes, 14 June 1965).

silkworm's 'can': man repeats his body's 'theme' without difference while the silkworm is given the chance to 're-consider'. The intimation here of a certain degree of thought displaces consciousness from the human, anatomically immured, onto an insect capable of metamorphosis, and hence, of a 'purg[ing]' of the inherited body for the 're-considered' form of a silkmoth. While the familiar resurrection motif commonly attributed to the butterfly may encourage such a reading, Barnes's choice of the silkworm produces a degree of semantic dissonance that is further intensified by the reference to a 'shroud', affiliating the chrysalis hence with the winding sheet more than the womb – an association reinforced by her citation of Joseph Addison in a marginal note to another of her late poems: 'The silkworm after having spun her task, lays her eggs and dies (*Collected Poems*, 145).' The silkworm, that is, in 're-consider[ing]' life, deems it not worth living, and departs. Negating the prospect of the transfigured body, it reverses resurrection into suicide, issuing its counter-judgement against Creation and the Creator. Never to unfurl from itself, it consciously chooses that which 'Man' is coerced into, sealing off its body in an integument of its own making. Unlike its other insect cousin, the Keatsian spider – who may 'spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel' – Barnes's silkworm has for its home no dwelling in the symbolic spaces of the imagination, but only in death (Keats 1935, 102). Spring, once again, functions as a reverse archetype, advancing only the 'anti-rite' of a rebirth perverted into suicide, one that fails its task of a ritualistic reanimation of the world.

With these oppositions between the open and closed body, historical and mythic time, critical irony and collusive humour, set in place, it is not hard to

understand how Adorno's condemnation of the false redemption tendered by *amor fati* (Nietzsche's 'crime of theology') is closely associated with his analysis of irony, as well as his negative assessment of Stravinsky's *Rite*. Irony, for Adorno, is indissociable from the availability and production of various openings, gaps, or rifts, between the world-as-it-is and the world spiritually and libidinally re-envisioned – otherwise put, between its immanent guise ('That's-how-it-is') and its 'transcendental' commitment (Adorno 2005, 212). His dismal assessment of the prospect of irony in the modern world is founded precisely on a perceived collapse of the differential zone between immanent reality and its transcendental reconsideration: 'Irony's medium, the difference between ideology and reality, has disappeared. The former resigns itself to confirmation of reality by its mere duplication. […] There is not a crevice in the cliff of the established order into which the ironist might hook a fingernail.' As with *amor fati*, humour has now been re-aligned with fateful necessity: 'Irony used to say: such it claims to be, but such it is'; 'today, however, the world […] falls back on the argument that things are like this', which now 'coincides', quite simply, with the good (2005, 209-10).' Laughter, hence, switches sides, dispatching with the subject to affiliate itself with the community or the cosmos at large: 'our situation […] makes a mockery of mockery (2005, 209-10).' This 'sadistic gesture', which transfers allegiance from the victim to the mob, is attributed equally to Stravinsky, whose works are repeatedly characterised in terms of an 'anti-subjectivism', a 'distrust of subjectivity', and a 'taboo on subjectivity' (Adorno 2002, 155, 162-8).[14] Stravinsky's 'restoration', as Adorno sees it, is closely related to his 'archaism',

[14] For a concise account of the continuities and discontinuities in Adorno's separate takes on Stravinsky, see Paddison, 2003.

which proposes a 'magic regression' from history into myth, abolishing, in the process, the subject, now 'sacrifice[d]' to 'collective power': 'the music does not identify with the victim, but rather with the destructive element (Adorno 2016, 100, 108-9).' As in *Ryder*'s 'Rape and Repining!', the *Rite*'s sacrifice of the victim is aesthetically refigured and affirmed. Here, too, elements of Nietzschean and Eliadean eternal recurrence result in a false theodicy that repeats destruction as desire, and constitutes 'the innermost deception of objectivism: the destruction of the subject […] is transformed into the victory of the subject in the aesthetic complexion of the work' (2016, 108). Allegiance, here, is once again shifted from the subject to the 'objective' elements of fate and the community. As with *amor fati* and the vitiation of irony in the modern world, the 'ontological illusion' of Stravinsky's art confirms its affiliation with a redoubled immanence: 'This is how it is' (2002, 149-50). If, for Adorno, 'music' has always been 'a protest against myth, against a fate which was always the same', Stravinsky's contrived objectivism turns music – with its temporal dimension – against itself:

> Instead of overcoming the fate of Sisyphus by virtue of its intrinsic historical structure, it comes to grief on a concept of time as the unconnected sequence of ephemeral events and on the illusion that salvation lies in using art to conjure it away. Ernst Bloch's comment that Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence was simply a poor imitation of eternity consisting of endless repetitions applies literally to the inner core of Stravinsky's music. […] [H]is works create the impression […] that they have abrogated time and achieved a state of pure being. (2002, 151-2)

Time and 'historical structure' are once again 'abrogated' here. The secular, profane world 'comes to grief' against the fundamental ontology of the sacred in its undivided 'state of pure being'. A dubious soteriology is attached to

this achievement of unity, as 'salvation' here – like Nietzsche's 'atheistic theodicy' – reveals itself 'a poor imitation of eternity', lost to a cyclical fate. Both rites of spring, Barnes's and Stravinsky's, exhibit a form of stasis that retreats from the wounds of time, folding 'becoming' over into 'being' as a mechanism of preservation that is at best contrived, if not destructive in its ossification of life. Both artists raise the *closed body* before us, and in each case, this closure counts as a *redoubled closure*: first as fate, then as the love of fate. Aesthetic complicity, by sublimating the cruelty and contingency of life, affiliates desire with the agents of destruction. Instead of seeking for some transcendence beyond the stasis of the present, it spiritualises the immanent world: immanence is thus redoubled *as* transcendence. *Ryder*, in fact, begins with such a theology of immanence with the chapter 'Jesus Mundane', which has been read – with unsettling consistency in the history of Barnes scholarship – *without irony*. The second half of this chapter, in proposing an *ironic* reading of 'Jesus Mundane', seeks to challenge this critical complicity in the destruction of subjectivity – which has found encouragement more recently in the critical turn toward the various 'surface' and 'cold' modernisms considered below – and thus to reconsider irony's role in forging *openings*. These openings, as mentioned above, have a corporeal basis. By relating ironic voicing to the polyphonic texture of Barnes's novel, the rest of this chapter considers how the psychic structure of the *embodied subject* may be recalibrated via strategies of affiliation and disaffiliation.

## Irony, Polyphony, Body

If *Ryder*'s patriarch, Wendell, has – quite rightly – been the target of much feminist criticism in Barnes scholarship, its matriarch has eluded the attention of many of these readings.[15] Yet Wendell is very much his mother's son, his identification with Sophia signalled not only by his last name (Sophia 'gave him no father's name'), but also his first, changed from John – after his father John Peel – when 'he spoke up for an unfatherly given name', by way of 'Rufus' and 'Wolfgang' (*Ryder*, 17). In *Ryder*, the Law of the Father is supplemented by that of the presiding Mother, whose representative is not so much Julie's mother, but her mother's mother, Sophia: 'She was the law (*Ryder*, 16).' Kate's protest against their brand of nature philosophy and free love, which redoubles anatomy as destiny, is thus directed at both Wendell ('keeper of the shop') and Sophia ('madame of the keeper'): 'you and your son came forward with his notions about women loving one another when they were not meant to love one another, or to get their children from the same spigot (*Ryder*, 170-1)'. Readings directed unilaterally against Wendell's patriarchal role are thus wanting on two counts: they fail not only to account for the maternal supplement to the oppressive familial law, arguably more insidious for its invisibility, but also fail to note the complicit structure of the narrative itself, which, framed within the formal coordinates of a picaresque novel, establishes allegiance from the outset between the reader and the position of the roguish mock-hero (more 'ranchman' than 'father'—*Ryder*, 170), who is himself situated in opposition to the orthodox

[15] See, for instance, Ponsot, 1991, Dalton, 1993, and DeSalvo, 1991.

state values of monogamy, public schooling, and species difference. The Law of the Ryder family, that is, already divided between the matriarch of the house and its filial delegate, is pitted against what is more conventionally associated with the Law of the Father, which expropriates the subject from the mythic family to relocate it within the symbolic order of society at large. Susan Edmunds thus quite rightly points to Wendell's position in the novel as both 'emancipatory hero of nonconformity', and 'domestic and sexual predator whose practices merit suppression' (1997, 218-9).[16] Given the conflicting enunciatory positions staged by the formal apparatus of Barnes's novel, the reader is often affiliated with the embedded axiology of each of these voices and brought into their circle of laughter, and is disaffiliated from them only by means of a critical process of judgement and discernment. I have suggested that another form of humour, irony, contributes to this mode of disaffiliation via corporeal and psychic means. Since Freud's synthesis of his accounts of identification and melancholic incorporation, critics have often pointed to the heterogeneous constitution of the subject. Freud's claim in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) that '[t]he character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes' implicates the subject within a structure of *derivation*, emerging belatedly as the site of its losses (*SE* XIX, 29). The self is thus constituted by its incorporated others, making it, in essence, an 'elegiac formation' (Clewell 2002, 43; cited in Bahun 2013, 28). Bahun hence speaks of a 'porous ego […] constantly formed and re-formed by abandoned/lost loved objects' (2013, 28), while Sanchez-Párdo, in her close engagement with Kleinian thought, writes of the processes of 'introjection' and 'projection' in

[16] Edmunds's reading locates *Ryder* within the historical context of middle-class reformism in rural New York around 1890-1910, with its 'competing models' for 'normative domestic and social conduct' (1997, 218-9).

negotiating the boundaries between the self and other as a 'continual activity of interiorization and exteriorization' (2003, 11). Both critics, in relating the heterogeneous composition of the subject to the formal heterogeneity of much modernist art, point to the instability mobilised in the reading experience itself, demanding 'responsive understanding' more than mere 'receptivity' (Bahun 2013, 168). Affiliation and disaffiliation, that is, are continually and dynamically processed. If the subject is produced via the melancholic incorporation of its predecessors, and hence *affiliated* from its inception with certain figures of authority, then the project of *disaffiliation* may be said to involve the reverse process of a '"disincorporation" […] of the Master' (Bhabha 1992, 65-6; cited in Bahun 2013, 39; and Butler 1997, 190). In *Ryder*, this manner of satiric disinheritance tethers ironic praxis to the body in the form of a *buccal* revolt. If laughter is, on a primitive level, identified with the convulsive mouth, exhalant or expectorant, irony – one of its forms – is in *Ryder* engaged in analogous acts of buccal and oral resistance. Disrupted from its normative action,[17] textually displaced and mediated as comedy, laughter, here, is registered in the form of an ironic vocalisation that continues to bear its corporeal trace – of, that is, *spitting*.

Melancholic incorporation and buccal revolt are in fact staged quite literally early in the novel. Deploying the model of the Eucharist – associated already with tribal practices of incorporative affiliation in the preceding decades by James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) and Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913), both of which Barnes encountered – the unity of the Ryder family is said to be preserved via the incorporation of the body of the matriarch. Julie's move

[17] On the normative, redemptive arc of laughing and crying, see my introduction.

to 'think[] something outside the family', in essence, a disaffiliative gesture, thus involves the disinheritance of the familial name via ironic citation, judgement, and revolt (*Ryder*, 169). '[S]he is none of mine', Wendell protests midway through the novel, with the explanatory addendum: 'Did I not hear her *deriding* me greatly?' (*Ryder*, 110; my italics) In refusing to incorporate the body of the matriarch, Julie opts out of the communion of the family. Sophia, the narrator relates, exacts 'obeisance': 'she loved, but she would be obeyed'.

> She was the law. She gave herself to be devoured, but in the devouring they must acclaim her, saying, "This is the body of Sophia, and she is greater than we!" Devour her they did, and said, "This is the body of Sophia, and she is greater than we"; all but Julie, who loved her most. It was Julie who gave this queen her mortal hurt, for that she loved her best. Sophia offering her heart for food, Julie spewed it out on a time, and said, "I taste a lie!" And Sophia hearing, cried in agony, but Julie went apart. (*Ryder*, 16)

The 'affective amalgams' that compose the subject, as Bahun puts it, are thus re-calibrated via a negotiation of its borders (2013, 167): the love between grandmother and daughter may be mutual, yet the latter achieves individuation with an act of disaffiliation archaically associated with the refusal to be fed. The maternal forcemeat is, as it were, expelled to *re-open* the subject to a life outside the family. If the Ryders establish communion by partaking in 'the body of Sophia', forming a consubstantial unity bound by 'the law', Julie finds her way 'apart' only with a form of archaic judgement that reveals discernment to be a function of 'taste': the refusal to be *taken into* the tribe with its enshrined 'lie' is a refusal to *take in* its nutritive substance. This understanding of a corporeal archaeology supporting mental activity does in fact find a focal point, in Freud's

account, at the oral cavity. Having staked the claim that the Eucharistic host, like the totem meal, forms the '*sacred cement*' and the 'sacred bond' that unites the community in 'the same substance' in *Totem and Taboo* (*SE* XIII, 154), Freud goes on in his 1925 essay, 'Negation', to locate the faculty of judgement at the site of the archaic mouth: 'Judging', he writes, 'is a continuation […] of the original process by which the ego took things into itself or expelled them from itself' (*SE* XIX, 239). In other words: 'Expressed in the language of the oldest – the oral – instinctual impulses, the judgement is: 'I should like to eat this', or 'I should like to spit it out'; and, put more generally: 'I should like to take this into myself and to keep that out.' That is to say: 'It shall be inside me' or 'it shall be outside me' (*SE* XIX, 237).'[18] Julie's act of 'spew[ing]' out the totemic 'body of Sophia' thus functions as a 'disincorporation of the Master' – or Mistress – that involves a form of discernment that compounds bodily and psychic factors.

Eating, in *Ryder*, is often a sign of compliance. The sanctification of the primitive family and community operates alongside a redoubling of nature as law. Such a framework constitutes a spiritualisation of immanence through which anatomy is sublimated into destiny. Sophia's efforts to preserve the sacred

[18] Paula Heimann, citing this same passage in her elaboration of the Kleinian position on projection and introjection, goes on to make a bold statement regarding 'oral primacy', in which 'oral experiences set their stamp on all sensations and experiences' (2018, 124-7). See also Lacan's account of the non-coincidence between the 'demand to be fed' and the 'demand to let oneself be fed' as a prerequisite for the birth of the subject (2015, 201), as well as Jean-Luc Nancy's elaboration of this primordial opening into the differentiated ego: 'The Freudian child (I will not say subject) is not initiated into an "oral stage." He first opens himself as a mouth, the open mouth of the cry, but also the mouth closed upon the breast to which the child is attached in an identification more ancient than any identification with a figure, as well as the slightly open mouth, detaching itself from the breast, in a first smile or a first facial expression, the future of which is thinking (2016, 111-2).'

bonds of the family are thus echoed by Wendell's own philosophy of immanence, which finds itself actualised in the bodies of women. 'All women', so Wendell claims, 'are equal, until one dies in child-bed, then she becomes as near to saints as my mind can conceive. Why is that? you ask; because they died at the apex of their ability (*Ryder*, 202).' Once again, a reductive gesture levels all women to an anatomical ground-zero via an abrogation of the socio-historical world, in a radical transvaluation of all values onto a single axis of reproductive capability: the 'saint[liest]' women are those who have been martyred in the holy cause of procreation. The life he envisions for his daughter, Julie, according to his philosophy of immanence, thus locks her within the sacred time of myth, prescribing for her the 'simple' path of conformism, with no wayward deviations 'outside the family', or indeed, outside nature:

> She […] will follow her mother, she will become both buxom and coarse. It will have saved her from the pale existence of those women who, from cradle to the grave, have but two odours – celibacy and monogamy. My daughter will be frank, neither promiscuous nor childless: those two things are appropriated by flat-chested women whose hearts beat sideways for want of room. She will eat, function and die, looking neither backward nor forward. (*Ryder*, 202)

Julie, that is, in repeating the life of her mother, will be another derivative exemplar of the family. Evading the external law of the state ('celibacy and monogamy'), characterised here in terms of the libidinal restrictions that psychoanalysis designates 'castration' (as the 'pale existence' of 'flat-chested women whose hearts beat sideways for want of room'), she would cleave instead to the law of the Ryders in a return to the archetype of the animal-woman. Withdrawn from history back into myth, '[s]he will eat, function and die, looking

neither backward nor forward', reduced to an operative vessel without memory or aspiration. Eating, here as elsewhere, signals her enclosure within 'nature'. Those who partake of the same flesh, becoming consubstantial in the process, are thus brought into the holy community. In the chapter 'Ryder—His Race', Wendell hence 'explains his mission in life' beginning with 'a treatise on carnivora': 'Of all canivora man holds woman most dear':

> To see some sweet creature, couched in splendour, putting away sides of ox, fills him with pure ravishment. […] In like manner, consuming whole lamb, trawls of fish, an hundred guinea fowl, woodcock and grouse per annum, does she not eat, that through her office slaughter may be transfigured? […] Has not wild venison rhymed her coquetries of throbbing bosom, spaced the heaving stomach to a strophe, as she lies dreaming in all capacities, mundane yet meticulous? (*Ryder*, 205)

The ritualistic elements of the feast are raised here with a reference to the 'transfigur[ation]' that turns 'slaughter' presumably into sacrifice, spiritualising the act of incorporation. In Wendell's philosophy of immanence, nature is once again redoubled as spirit: poetic devices here in particular point to the repetition of life as art, sublimating anatomy into a rudimentary blazon as the 'throbbing bosom' finds 'rhyme' and the 'heaving stomach' its scansion, 'spaced […] to a strophe'. That Wendell's 'pure ravishment' recalls the 'ravishing' of 'Rape and Repining!' is hardly accidental given how both chapters stage the closure of women within the mythic archetype. Wendell's profane soteriology, which seeks to found a form of universal love that operates by conflating the sexual and spiritual, *eros* and *agape* – to the point of traversing the species boundary[19] –

[19] 'By bedding in all beds', he plans 'to be Father of All Things', redeeming all of Creation into a single 'Race': 'Now this is the Race that shall be Ryder – those

may in fact be described with another iterated term here: it is, in brief, a sanctification of the 'mundane' – albeit one plagued, unsurprisingly, with its share of paradoxes. In this light, the novel's opening chapter, 'Jesus Mundane', may be seen to articulate the very philosophy of immanence of the Ryders – that is, a spiritualisation of the *worldly* components of life that redoubles the mundane as the marvellous via a sublimating function, presenting the reader hence with the voice of a redeemer who resituates salvation within the immanent world itself. 'Jesus Mundane', quite possibly Wendell himself, promises, in essence, a false theodicy. *Ryder*, arguably, begins with the incorporated voice of the master/mistress. It is, on the other hand, in the process of reading *ironically* that prompts the disincorporation of the values and desires coded in the enunciatory position from which the belated subject – both Julie *and* the reader – begins its journey, enabling thereby its disaffiliation from the sacred family. That such ironic consciousness – against *both* humour and satire – is developed over the course of the text enables a reassessment of Drew Milne's claim that '*Ryder* never quite distills an authorial critique of wit […] simultaneously too frivolous and too bleakly indifferent to the book's implications (2019, 117).' What Miller identifies as *Ryder*'s 'self-commentary' on its own 'performatively enacted ambiguities of tone, idiom, historical style, and

---

who can sing like the lark, coo like the dove, moo like the cow, buzz like the bee, cheep like the cricket, bark like the dog, mew like the cat, neigh like the stallion, roar like the bull, crow like the cock, bray like the ass, sob like the owl, bleat like the lamb, growl like the lion, whine like the seal […] Never before have all these sounds been common to the human, but I shall accomplish it […] For this was I created, and to this will I cleave […] They shall be fleshed with all fleshes now alien to man and unknown, and shall be by that flesh made so tender with wisdom that they shall know how the hoof strikes, the fin cleaves, the wing soars, the paw runs, the claw clings, and the web swims. No heart shall strike with a difference, for they shall have hearts within hearts; ox heart and robin heart. (*Ryder*, 210-11)

genre' directs us, rather, to the lines of tension where formal and psychic strain aggregate and, ultimately, divide the text from itself, reticulated thence with the grooves of irony (2019, 173).[20]

I choose to conclude this chapter with a reading of 'Jesus Mundane' that relates irony to *Ryder*'s polyphonic practice partly as a corrective to the unsettling tendency demonstrated in previous scholarship in using the novel's opening lines as a stable hermeneutic frame within which further instances of ambivalence and indeterminacy may be sorted and embedded. Of the many injunctions issued in this prefatory chapter, the imperative – 'Reach not beyond the image' (*Ryder*, 3) – has, in particular, often been isolated as justification for the novel's inclusion among the various 'cold', 'surface' or 'weak' modernisms that have found critical elaboration in the past decades in opposition to older models of psychic and hermeneutic depth.[21] Brian Glavey pronounces *Ryder*'s first chapter 'a lesson in iconology' that cautions against libidinal and epistemological 'overreach' (2016, 63), while Tyrus Miller's earlier work reads it as a foil to 'modernism's desire' to raise 'the wordless "depths" of meaning' into 'speech' (1999, 167) – a claim that is thereafter cited by Julie Taylor in her argument for Barnes's investment – 'against hermeneutics […] grand narratives

[20] Miller, however, pushes his reading toward a Beckettian end in a 'dreadful recognition of impotence'; I am avoiding the 'slight hyperbole' here of reading *Ryder* in the light of its supposed logical development in, say, *Watt* (2019, 175, 164).' Barnes, after all, often described Beckett's writing as 'farting' (O'Neal 1990, 141). This may not have displeased Beckett, who on one occasion described his own work as 'a matter of fundamental sounds' (1983, 109).
[21] See, for instance, Burstein 2012 and Levenson 1991. For an overview, see Saint-Amour, 2018. Goldstone's resuscitation of the question of 'autonomy' – alongside its aporias – bucks this tendency, without, however, discussing *Ryder* (2013, 110-37).

[…] cosmic certainties and universal truths' – in 'the bodily, the affective, the immediate and the uncertain (2012, 85).'[22] Such a facile binary between a 'modest' or 'mundane' modernism against its repudiated others – variously characterised as too deep, too grand, and too certain – winds up stabilising the very uncertainties that have been worked into the Barnes's text itself right from its opening pages, and becomes the critical accomplice to Wendell's own religion of the mundane – otherwise put, his *grand narrative* of philosophical immanence. Taylor goes so far as to cite the 'choreographed laughter' of the community as 'a powerful alternative to depth psychology', arguing finally that '[i]n *Ryder* […] Barnes suggests that individual subjectivity should not be privileged over collective forms of expression' (2012, 87). Once again, evidence is marshalled with non-ironic citation: the injunction – 'Let thy lips choose no prayer that is not on the lips of thy congregation' (*Ryder*, 4) – is taken to be Barnes's. As I have suggested, the polyphonic apparatus of the novel produces treacherous affiliations that are further reinforced by its pervasive humour, from which distance is established, conversely, via the disaffiliating effects of irony. Critical collusion on the side of the victimisers is, on one level, solicited by the novel, but, on another, internally challenged through various libidinal realignments. The heterogeneity of Barnes's text, arguably, dynamically engages the heterogeneous constitution of the melancholic subject, variously prompting, shifting, privileging, and suppressing its disparate allegiances through a variety of enunciatory positions. As Bahun argues, 'heterogeneity obscures the signifying system within

[22] Most recently, 'Reach not beyond the image' has bounced back to Caselli; another non-ironic citation from the same chapter, the 'great capacity for all things uncertain', now 'become[s] a principle that we can extend to the entire Barnes oeuvre (2019, 148).'

which one is expected to interpret the utterance […] and, by extension, challenges our presuppositions about particular adequacy of certain types of utterance to certain kinds of content' (2013, 168).

*Ryder* is presented as a formal and vocal conglomerate. Its Menippean mix of prose and verse is complicated by the epistolary, its picaresque trajectory framed by a series of Biblical injunctions. The satirical and the sentimental cohabit as much as the religious and the profane. Bungled Chaucerian verse meets the bungled lullaby and the bungled bedtime story, and, as letters make their way across the Atlantic, tall tales and fairy tales, a confession, treatise, sermon, and a will enter the fray. This 'pastiche of genres and styles', Sanchez-Párdo notes, produces a 'chasm between referentiality and figurality', an 'incommensurability of the effects of narration with narrated events' (2003, 306, 318). If the formal mosaic of the novel ends up disarticulating language from the content it inscribes, it redirects attention to the provenance of each instance of vocalisation – that is, from *what* is said to the *how* and the *who* of the saying. These are occasionally signalled by the chapter titles, or derivable from context, but are not always immediately clear: for example, 'Amelia Sings a Lullaby', 'Midwives' Lament', 'Amelia Hears from Her Sister', 'Sophia Tells of Wendell', and 'The Soliloquy of Dr. Matthew O'Connor' may give the reader enough indication regarding the various enunciatory positions that centre these chapters, but it takes some time before the victim-blaming of 'Rape and Repining!' is attributed to a 'Council of Women', while the circumlocutory slut-shaming of Kate-Careless – who could be anything from 'Kate-Why-Not' to 'Kate-the-Doll', 'Kate-the-Whirlwind' or 'Kate-the-Swoon' but not 'Kate-Careful', a pruner of 'wanton

brambles' – is never pinned to any subject position in 'What Kate Was Not' (*Ryder*, 88-92). A discriminating reader might think it is Amelia's jealousy doing the talking here, but given its waffling prolixity, note its incongruence with the tussles wife and mistress more often get themselves into, which favour physical assault and invective – and the occasional foray into the epigram – over yarn-spinning.[23] In *Ryder*, quite often, these enunciatory positions are mixed or unidentifiable.

A certain conjunction, then, between a mosaic formal apparatus and the mosaic topography of the subject is witnessed in *Ryder*. While a vocal polyphony is in evidence on one level, distributing distinct parts across the novel's disparate participants, each characterised by recognisable variances in tone, diction, and content, on another level, the narrative solvent of the writer's own voice – held at a steady pitch of urbanity, mischief, and affected pity – returns these individuated accents to a common flow commingling satire and sentiment. The lines that divide subjects from one another are as frequently displaced as the lexical accents that distribute formal ground. *Ryder*, in this sense, inherits a feature common to much satirical and ironic literature – that of a degree of complicity or even collapse between those who laugh and those who are laughed at – otherwise put, a treacherous affiliation. Critics have thus spoken of satire's 'purloined territory': like the subject founded on melancholic incorporation, it

[23] '"One was owner," said Amelia, "and one was poacher."
"One was gift fruit, and one was gotten," quoth Kate.
Therewith, a doughty clout Amelia fetched her alongside of her head […] and as good as was sent she gave in return, till blood flowed, and hair fell, and there were tears amid the equal anger.
"Filthy slut!" cried Kate.' (*Ryder*, 173-5)

begins as a derivative formulation (Seidel 1979, 14). Kenneth Burke's term for the lost boundary between satirical agent and object thus emphatically returns the two to a single body: they are, he notes, 'consubstantial'.[24]

Given this, *Ryder*'s ironic praxis may be understood as a means of working a way out of this consubstantiality of the belated subject and its predecessors. Ironic voicing *colludes* with a prior enunciatory position in order to *critically* disengage from it. The mechanism most often deployed in Barnes's novel for this purpose is that of hyperbole, no longer simply to 'push the ridiculous into the very arms of the sublime', but to push the ridiculous into the *sublimely ridiculous*: *hyper-bole*, in *Ryder*, goes beyond Nietzschean sublimation by, quite literally, *throwing up* the contents that have been subjectively incorporated. Ironic (over-)voicing – a kind of *ventri-loquy*, or belly-speech – constitutes a disincorporative method. Rejecting the words and the values coded in the nutritive contract between parent and child is thus figured as the refusal of communion: the body of Julie's forebears, as much as their language, is 'spewed out'. If ironic speech may be characterised on a basic level as *saying what one does not mean*, such an act of dissociation, framed otherwise, may be understood as the expulsion of the words that have been seeded in the nascent self, whose boundaries are thus renegotiated in the process. Paul West's keen observation that in *Ryder*, Barnes seems to be after 'ventriloquial recoveries of the beloved voice gone', thus captures half the picture: these melancholic traces of the lost voices of one's forebears are retrieved only to be reworked into grotesque semblances that are

[24] '[I]rony is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one *needs* him, is *indebted* to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him *within*, being consubstantial with him' (Burke 1945, 514).

thereby disincorporated (*Ryder*, 246). Irony tracks this process of iteration and differentiation.

Redacted as a series of anaphoric Biblical injunctions, 'Jesus Mundane' solicits the reader's compliance by adopting the enunciatory position of the patriarchs. If its first lines, cautioning against 'fanatics' and protesting care for 'thy physical body and thy temporal agony', are rather palatable, they nonetheless arrive at an intensity that becomes harder to stomach, moving us from affiliation to disaffiliation. Taylor's characterisation of its tone as 'authoritative but benevolent' is about as misleading as the chapter itself seems designed to be (2012, 85). Its philosophy of immanence is formulated via appropriations in both form and content of the King James Bible, which, in redoubling nature as spirit, prove to be, as the novel progresses, recognisably Wendell's. The voice of this prophet of the mundane enjoins its listener to withdraw into the cyclical time of myth:

> Art thou not part and parcel of thy pastures? Thank thy melons for what thou art, and blame thy figs for thy failures, and gather in thy differences, and go to thy mourning as one a little gathered from the earth, and as one going a little toward the earth, and of the earth judged. (*Ryder*, 5)

As with the prescribed existence Wendell has in mind for Julie – to 'eat, function and die, looking neither backward nor forward' – the voice of the master here returns its subject to 'the earth', foreclosing any departure from a purely immanent existence by collapsing life and law into 'the way' of the world

(*Ryder*, 4). What is, *is*. Divinity and mundanity are synchronised here.[25] Wendell, it seems, has managed the double infringement underlined in Barnes's copy of Pascal's *Pensées*: 'Two errors: 1. To take everything literally. 2. To take everything spiritually (1943, 183; cited in Caselli 2019, 148).' *Ryder*'s ironic citational praxis, however, tends toward a 'satiric disinheritance' rather than intergenerational continuity. If the chapter opens somewhat 'benevolent[ly]', it graduates into shades of petulance as the imperatives compound and the oppression turns personal with the introduction, towards the chapter's end, of the pronoun 'I':

> Go now, and lift up thy cries from about me, for I have done with thee awhile and thy ways, and thy way's ways, and the things that thou hangest about the places of the soul. And speak not of Me, for thou knowest not of what thou speakest, nor knowest thou of thy need, nor knowest what thou hast given or taken […] Knowest thou if thou hast troubled me, or how thou hast inconvenienced me for thy sake? Or if thou hast pleased me in any way, or hast not? […] These things are as the back of thy head to thee. Thou hast not seen them. (*Ryder*, 5)

The novel's opening lines may be voiced seemingly out of nowhere, sourcing authority from the impersonal accents of the law, but by the time its final paragraphs are arrived at its floating enunciation touches ground with an all-too-human 'I'. Citing Saint Paul's claim in Romans 10:17 that 'from hearing comes belief [*ex auditu fides*]', Steven Connor relates the 'experience of a voice without an obvious origin, whether in divine annunciation, oracular utterance' or other instances of displaced vocalisation to an 'experience of the overload of sound': 'The long association between the dissociated or ventriloquially

[25] See also Job 12:7-9, which I have previously cited in chapter 1.

dissimulated voice and the exercise of various kinds of divination, in particular in the traditions attaching to the oracle at Delphi, seems to testify to this close link between the autonomized voice and the control and signification of time (2000, 23-4).' More than just the authority over time, what is shown in both psychoanalytic thinking as well as Barnes's novel is the command over the formative processes of the self and its relation to the world that the voice without apparent origin wields. This voice of the master, melancholically incorporated as the 'superego' in the Freudian topography of the subject, regulates the self, its actions, and ethical commitments, in this case, curtailing all epistemological and spiritual ambition within a theologically framed account of immanence. While seemingly autonomous, it is genealogically attributable to the self's predecessors. In *Ryder*, the archaeology of the self turned up by the text ends up returning the disembodied voice of the law to its human sources, exposing in the process its foibles and pretentions: the Wizard of Oz, it seems, is Wendell. Mapping out the various wheretos and wherefroms of the diverse voices that constitute Barnes's novel thus simultaneously maps out the mosaic constitution of the subject, with its affective and axiological distributions laid out for critical stocktaking. In 'Jesus Mundane' in particular, ventriloquy enables the daughter to inhabit the enunciatory position of the father by activating that part of her that is consubstantial with him from melancholic incorporation. In a further step, this vocalisation from 'purloined territory' effectively divides the speaking from itself, alienating its overworked formal mechanism to open up a residual space of discontent from which the subject might come into its own. Ironic engagement and disengagement thus form the process by which the belated subject, in spewing out its incorporated predecessors, comes to be.

The extent to which the voices of literary and genealogical patriarchs and predecessors co-entwine in Barnes is perhaps made most explicit in a letter to Coleman, dated 7 August 1938, in which she reports on her recent reading of Tolstoy during a trip to Petersfield with Peggy Guggenheim and her children:

> I have read three of Tolstoi's books in Petersfield, his later religious and polemic ones, why of life, of art? etc, and now his biography, what a very great, prolific, and at times deluded man. Still I think him less of an idiot, than I did (that is for his later repudiation of himself along with Beethoven, Dostoevsky, Turgenieff, Gogol etc) than I did before I read his books. I can imagine what a great lumbering, dispotic fiery [*sic*] genius he must have been, hell to live with, particularly to himself, with better intentions than temper, better conceptions that [*sic*] ability to follow them up, and a power of concentration and ability to work that I envy like poison. He had the good and the evil of a fanatic (which you cant [*sic*] thole) I think I understand him better for the fact that I knew Peter Neagoe, all those hairy, open shirt prophets have something of the same footing, like my (upsidedown) father, Thoreau, Whitman, you know the kind, full of theories and whiskers, but underneath a really passionate feeling for truth and right and "how to live?" as its theme.

Admiration and dismissal are threaded together here. By means of some caricaturising accents, Barnes's depiction of the Russian 'prophet' and 'fanatic' departs from its immediate referent to include other preeminent father figures, both literary and familial, all subsumed – with a conspiratorial nudge – into indexical tautology: 'you know the kind'. Sororal solidarity is established here against the grandiloquence of their predecessors, as esteem is wrecked against charges of misconduct. The universalist tendencies that characterise the thought of Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Whitman – founded on visionary pronouncements on 'human nature' or 'nature' *tout court* – are also attributed to the renegade spirituality of Barnes's own '(upsidedown) father', as well as her sometime lover,

Peter Neagoe. Their philosophical bulk, however, is linked somewhat deterministically to a similar profusion on a physical level ('full of theories and whiskers'), with a reductive touch that pits their predilection for hyperopic sapience against the subtlety – and, ultimately, the greater ethical validity – of the women: while 'great' and 'prolific', Tolstoy is also 'at times deluded', even 'an idiot'; as a 'great lumbering, dispotic fiery [sic] genius', he must have been 'hell to live with', and, like 'all those hairy, open shirt prophets', rhapsodised across the standard repertoire of the sages ('why of life, of art? etc […] "how to live?"'), churning up in the process, 'the good and the evil of a fanatic'. The oppressive paternity of a Tolstoy or Thoreau, a Walt Whitman, Wald Barnes, or indeed a Wendell Ryder, it is suggested, is the common result of male visionaries who miss the trees for the forest – or, rather, the women for the world ('To man is the vision, to his wife the droppings!') (*Ryder*, 114)

In *Ryder*, Sophia's mother, Cynthia, in fact, dispenses some cautionary advice to her daughter when she finds that 'madness had crept upon her' after her fourteenth pregnancy: 'Your father is a hairy atheist […] all nature lovers are, especially these. Remember (*Ryder*, 7).' Two generations later, the warning is repeated between Sophia's daughters. To her sister Amelia, about to depart for America in marriage to Wendell, Ann protests that he is 'free-thinker' (*Ryder*, 47). As far as Ann is concerned, Wendell's counterfeit religion is not just blasphemous, but also epigonic:

> Did you ever know a dog […] who was free to choose him a home, who would not nose out a dung-heap? For free-thinking dog or free-thinking

> man […] never seem to come by anything with their thinking but the refuse of other people's! (*Ryder*, 47)

Like Barnes's own '(upsidedown) father', Wendell's profane soteriology, which doggedly conflates sexual and spiritual love across all of civilisation's taboos against incest, polygamy, and bestiality into a vision of universal kinship, is derided by Ann as the excreta of the luminaries of the past. Wendell, we might say, is 'Jesus Mundane' in several senses of the term: instead of the 'good news' of Christ he offers nothing very *new* – and nothing very *good*; promising nought by way of transcendence, he veers into territory claimed already by Luther's *princeps mundi* – that is, Satan, prince of *this world*.

If the suggestion comes through Barnes's novel that it is sometimes better to 'spew' than to swallow, to throw rather than lap up the 'refuse of other people's', this focalisation of the subject's will over the oral cavity can only be reinforced by certain events from her own life. As retold in her 1914 article, 'How It Feels to Be Forcibly Fed', an 'experiment' undergone in solidarity with the British suffragettes who had been force-fed since 1909 while on hunger strike, the subject's 'passive revolt' can sometimes be 'reduced to one simple act – to swallow or to choke (*New York,* 174-6).' The stunt journalist theatrics of the piece notwithstanding, Barnes's recapitulation of the event firmly underscores the collapse of the subject into her body, her 'soul', 'spirit', and 'will' reduced to a 'physical mechanism': 'I had lapsed into a physical mechanism without power to oppose or resent the outrage to my will (*New York,* 175, 178).' Hardly any less literal is the link between buccal revolt and the opening into subjectivity made in

another surviving anecdote from the Barnes household, retold this time by Janet Flanner of the young Djuna:

> My favourite story of hers dealt with a period when her father, who entertained odd ideas of nourishment, decided that since chickens ate pebbles to aid their digestion, a few pebbles in the diet of his children might be equally salubrious. (Flanner 2003, xxvi)

Herring's suggestion that Wald Barnes has, here, taken a leaf out of *Walden* adds just one more layer to the derivative stack that weighs upon the belated subject (1995, 34). This comic literalisation of the necessity of disincorporation is nonetheless an opportune reminder of the place reserved for irony in *Ryder* – that is, to *open* up a space in which the subject might come to be, away from the premature reconciliation of, on the one hand, absorption into the community, and on the other, the humorous re-appropriation of its forces, the one eliminating the will *in toto*, the other raising it to godhood. After all, even in Nietzsche is the tendency for this metaphysical gaiety to trip over into *indigestion* acknowledged: instead of the sublimation of the past ('it was') into an act of the will ('thus I willed it'), one sometimes finds the 'will's gnashing of teeth' against 'the stone "it was"' (2006, 111-2).

Chapter 4

# Tragedy I: *Nightwood* and the Eschatological Body

In the penultimate chapter of *Nightwood*, 'Go Down, Matthew', having referred to Robin as 'outside the "human type"', the manic Doctor of *Nightwood* launches into another one of his many baroque flourishes with a characteristic *non sequitur*:

> like the paralysed man in Coney Island […] who had to lie on his back in a box, but the box was lined with velvet, his fingers jewelled with stones, and suspended over him where he could never take his eyes off, a sky-blue mounted mirror, for he wanted to enjoy his own "difference". (*Nightwood,* 131-2)

Immobilised, supine, and sunk within his ornamented coffin, this 'paralysed man', already an intimation of death, appears nonetheless determined to retrieve for himself the image of his own end with 'a sky-blue mounted mirror', on which his gaze is fixed. While this may not constitute any recognisable form of extreme unction, his preparation for his death here nonetheless reveals the close association between one's eschatological orientation – or being-toward-the-end – and the frozen image of the body: the *corpse*, vacated of life, may nonetheless be withdrawn from decay and immortalised, 'raised in glory' (1 Corinthians 15:43). If something of a 'literal

error', which the Doctor ascribes to the '[t]he Anglo-Saxon', comes through here in the jewels over his flesh and his velvet cocoon, what remains traceable in his 'enjoy[ment]' of his posthumous form are the lineaments of a certain dialectic between the mortal body, subject to time and contingency, and its transfiguration into the eternal stasis of an image (*Nightwood,* 80). The 'difference' that is set in relief here names his infirmity, the anatomical shortfall that discloses the margin between the image of the normative human body and his own. That this is prefigured – in *falsetto* – in an earlier passage when the Doctor's 'voice cracked on the word "difference", soaring up divinely', suggests, however, that this intervening region between the fallen *flesh* and its glorious *form* is one that extends to all of *Nightwood*'s 'damned' and 'disqualified' – all who fail to approximate, as will be seen, the corporeal idol of Christological Man – including, as his rogue leap up the octave betrays, his own the transvestite self (*Nightwood,* 83).

If the soteriological narrative of the Resurrection maps out the trajectory of the body beset by time, error, and contingency, to its pleromatic reconstitution at the end of time as the restored image of Christ, such a movement is, in the first instance, stalled in melancholic indecision in *Nightwood.* The question of the *eschatological body*, that is, is raised here: does the body that is projected against its *end* move infirmity toward formlessness and putrescence, or is it refigured, rather, in the light of the Resurrection, 'sown in corruption [....] raised in incorruption', 'sown a natural body […] raised a spiritual body' (1 Corinthians 15:42-4)? Is this a body plagued by the 'eschatological affliction' of radical finitude that Heidegger names 'being-toward-Death' (Wolfe 2013a, 40-65;

Heidegger 2001, §50-3), or is it rather a body in the form of a Christian being-toward-eternity, which, as Ricoeur notes, reads 'the meaning of my existence in the light of the Resurrection, that is, as reinstated in the movement which we have called the future of the Resurrection of the Christ' (1974, 409-10)? This chapter, in picking up on Barnes's concern with the eschatological body – evidenced from the early *ars moriendi* of 'What is Good Form in Dying?' (1923)[1] to her late poems – charts the diverse forms of the body and the meanings embedded in them that are produced in that zone of apprehension before the mirror of death. In *Nightwood,* the soteriological crisis of the body before itself, reflected in its end-state, collapses finally on the side of a negative judgement: in its tragic response to the question of theodicy, *Nightwood* encloses a textual world overseen by the reigning figure of an allegorical 'Death in Heaven', oriented finally toward a horizon of irremediable decay (*Nightwood,* 146).

The Doctor's own apocalyptic imagination in fact ends up summoning forth a motley fellowship of the dead throughout *Nightwood*, via a series of apostrophes and invocations that spasmodically rupture his plangent digressions: the 'Widow Lazarus' and 'the widower bird at the turnstile of heaven' make an appearance, alongside the Biblical King Saul (accompanied by Handel's 'Dead March'), trailed by some variant of the Death and the Maiden

[1] Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (1650-1) is often considered a culmination of the *ars moriendi* tradition. Barnes owned two copies of the first book on *Holy Living* but none of *Holy Dying*, perhaps explaining her remark in this journalistic piece: 'Heavy tomes have been compiled on the art of living'; 'good form in dying', however, remains 'untutored'.

motif (imaged here 'with a crupper of maiden's hair' and a 'grim horse')[2] and the heliophagic *Sköll* of Norse mythology who consummates his quest at *Ragnarök* (*Nightwood,* 124, 85, 127, 114). Surveying himself from the end of time, the Doctor retrieves his body not in elevated form, but pared down to its essential architecture, reduced as it is after accumulated suffering into its osseous substratum:

> But when you inbreed with suffering […] you are destroyed back to your structure as an old master disappears beneath the knife of the scientist who would know how it was painted. […] [W]e all carry about with us the house of death, the skeleton […] Time is a great conference planning our end, and youth is only the past putting a leg forward. (*Nightwood*, 117)

What follows this is another sketch in apocalyptic tones of the stations of the damned (London, Marseilles, Singapore), with their necromantic host of 'Tuppen[ies]', '*grue[s]*', and other 'ladies of the *haute* sewer', all altered by the touch of death into the caparisoned fauna of a modern *selva oscura*, pressed into confrontation with the *eschata* of existence. They are brought to their 'last stand', 'taking their last stroll', 'sauntering on their last Rotten Row', frozen by O'Connor into so many terminal images – that is, 'standing still, [letting you do it,][3] silent and indifferent as the dead, as if they were thinking of better days, or waiting for something that they had been promised when they were little girls' (*Nightwood*, 118). Projected against the horizon of the end, these women join the company of the dead and deathward bodies – variously 'shock-abbreviated' or 'stripped' of

[2] 'The grim horse is death', Barnes explains to Wolfgang Hildesheimer in a 5 June 1959 letter. Plumb misdates this letter (see *Nightwood: The Original Version,* 228).
[3] This clause apparently did not escape T.S. Eliot's censoring eye (*Nightwood: The Original Version,* 110).

'the hide of time' – that are imaged throughout the Barnesian *corpus*, as it were, 'vivid and repulsive/ As the truth' (*Collected Poems,* 49, 55; *Nightwood*, 121). A paradox emerges here concerning the eschatological body: where mortal life enters the terminal zone of the apocalyptic gaze, the organism, arrested in its insentience, nonetheless ends up succeeding itself in the afterlife of the image. As will be seen, this eidetic stasis is affiliated with the notion of the resurrected body within the Divine Comedy of Christianity. *Nightwood*'s enclosure of a tragic world here is thus implicated in the delivery of not just the body, but the *image of the body* itself, over to death. I begin here with Barnes's formulation of the corporeal *eschaton*.

## The Resurrection of the Body

Just a few years after *Nightwood*'s publication in 1936, towards the end of the decade, Barnes herself somewhat facetiously refers to the post-Resurrection body in a letter to Coleman with the cryptic remark – 'How odd to write 40 – a date younger than myself and older than God' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 December 1939 – 1 January 1940).[4] The allusion here is to Augustine's claim – which she would also have come across in Émile Mâle's study of medieval art in *The Gothic Image* (1913) – that the body is 'born again at the perfect age of thirty

[4] The Barnes-Coleman correspondence of 1935 includes a number of references to William Gerhardie's *Resurrection*, published the previous year. Coleman remarks at one point: 'You cant [*sic*] be occupied with the resurrection until youve [*sic*] known this body, Djuna. […] (what do you mean? – You must believe in a resurrection then?)' (16 November 1935).

years (Mâle 1961, 374-5).'[5] At 'the age of the fullness of Christ', that is, the body reaches its pleromatic form (Augustine 2008, 462). That Mâle's remark is made in the context of the religious significance of the 'image' in the Middle Ages is of some relevance here: the 'mystic' Doctor of *Nightwood*, is, after all, an epigone of not just the Biblical prophets, but also – christened Matthew-Mighty-grain-of-salt-*Dante*-O'Connor – of *il Sommo Poeta* (*Nightwood,* 28). Barnes's words to Coleman on two separate occasions suggest that the significance of the Italian poet, for her, concerns his signature memorialisation of the visionary and the worldly at the crossroads of the poetic image. As she formulates it in her letter dated 30 October 1938:

> Dante, for me (perhaps because I cant [*sic*] read him in the Italian) has a marvellous under-tow, a weight and an importance thats [*sic*] near to the weight of dreams, occasionally a line will absolutely rpostrate [*sic*] one with its [*sic*] accuracy and beauty—but its [*sic*] alsays [*sic*] the accuracy and beauty of something that is a phantasmagore [*sic*], the taking of a vision and pinning it through like a butterfly, its [*sic*] one of his powers, and then theres [*sic*] the other no man can explain, something grasped of another reality and set down so stoutly that it must be real, the father and mother of visions, midwife of two worlds.

The poet's access to the nebulae of visionary heights is partnered here with a firm grounding in the material realm. If the noumenal intimations of 'another reality' are disclosed here, they nonetheless manifest themselves in the coordinates of the phenomenal plane, 'set down so stoutly' as to condense into the 'real'. In this accretion of substance, reality itself is re-envisioned and

[5] A 1958 edition of Mâle's text is held in the Djuna Barnes Archive. Augustine himself cites Paul's reference to 'the mature measure of the fullness of Christ' (Ephesians: 4.13) as evidence, since 'that is the age reached by Christ' (2008, XXII.15).

remade. A certain gravitational field, that is, shapes the oneiric expanse of the imagination, magnetising its flow into regions of density with a 'weight' and 'under-tow' that gathers the diffuse into the contoured boundaries of the image. The referenced dualism of the 'two worlds' (spirit/nature, noumenal/phenomenal, transcendent/immanent) meet here in the crucible of Dante's mind where – in an archetypal analogy – as 'father and mother', they birth the visions overseen by the 'midwife' poet. The solecism of 'a phantasmagore' here is striking in its anticipation of the figural elaboration that follows: as the wild motility of the 'butterfly' is fixed into the image of its death, so the multitude of phantasms contained in a 'phantasmagoria' is seized – and singularised – in a coinage that carves out a recess in the flesh borne at the heart of the static *eidos*.[6] The reduced suffix here, from '*agoria*' to 'gore', encapsulates one of Barnes's idiosyncratic formulations for the body's relation to its idealised form: it is, as it were, 'impaled' upon its image (*Nightwood,* 3, 123).[7]

The following year, on 6 June 1939, a similar reference to eidetic unity and contingent plurality is made in relation, once again, to Dante. To Coleman, she writes: 'you […] seem to have just one long dream through which, with Dantesque terror, man after man goes and disappears in that mad limbo.' In the same letter, she observes: 'I believe you have only had one lover in your whole

[6] In a letter to Coleman on 13 October 1938, Barnes makes the Freudian observation on the psychic traces embedded in parapraxes: 'misreadings are often the unconscious revising, like your mirth for myrrh, like my mouthing lark for mounting.' These 'misreadings' are also, technically, misspellings.
[7] Barnes also recounts her impression of Salvador Dali to Daniel Mahoney in her 14 November 1958 letter with a similar turn of phrase: 'bandolined moustaches, gold topped cane and all/ the sloe-eyes head completely skimmed of human moisture., bead [beard?] sharp, impaled upon his ego.'

life—the one in your head.' While the desire that is said to attach Coleman to a transcendent image here is, in Freudian terms, founded on 'object-cathexes' rather than the 'cathexis of the "ego"' – that is, other-directed rather than self-directed – *Nightwood*'s mobilisation of the libidinal structure of narcissism in elaborating desire *tout court* tends to fold over this Freudian binary into a common origin (*SE* XIV, 76, 80).[8] The image that one is 'impaled' upon, in short, is a loved image that bears the imprint of the self, toward which one is eschatologically oriented. Nora's attempt to repair her fractured relationship with Robin is thus envisioned against a final horizon of recovery: 'In the resurrection, when we come up looking backward at each other, I shall know you only of all that company (*Nightwood*, 53).' A blasphemous intransigence is recorded here: like Catherine Earnshaw of *Wuthering Heights* (1847), after whom she seems to have been initially named, the ultimate desideratum here is not God, but refracted back to her earthly love.[9] As Ramie Targoff points out, Jesus's words in Matthew 22:25-8 ('For in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven') has been taken from at least the time of the Renaissance to indicate 'no real possibility for a shared afterlife between husbands and wives (2014, 29).' Nora's envisaged reunion with Robin, situating eschatological fulfilment within the framework of same-sex desire, draws angelic-being and sexual *indifference* into proximity. As

[8] Such a move is in fact suggested by Freud himself in his conjecture that the 'object-libido' and 'ego-libido' share a common provenance in 'indifferent psychical energy' (*SE* XIV, 76-8).

[9] Plumb notes: 'Catherine […] was later combined with Nora (*Nightwood: The Original Version*, xii).' Having taken the 'Catholic vow', Robin's mind also later drifts toward 'Catherine Heathcliff', among others (*Nightwood*, 41-2). See also Catherine's outburst: 'they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won't rest till you are with me…I never will!' (Brontë 2009, 111-2)

this chapter will show, the pleromatic body as formulated in *Nightwood*, insofar as it is retrieved in 'glorious form', is resituated in a prelapsarian region before the Fall into sexual difference – the very place, that is, from which the 'damned' are exiled.

The dialectical relation of the body *and* its own repetition in the image is thus implicated here in a concomitant dialectic between temporality and eternity. The paralysed man's reappropriation of his infirm anatomy via a reduplication in the mirror hence functions as a *memento mori*, bringing to the fore the stigma of death that accompanies the raising of the flesh. Such an eschatological exhibition of the body enables a retrieval of the theological coordinates of the Lacanian mirror-stage which have often been suppressed. As Lacan himself notes: 'There is something in images that transcends the movement and changeability of life, in the sense that images live on after the death of living beings. According to Antiquity's *nous*, this is one of the first steps of art: that which is mortal is immortalized in statuary. This is also the function that is served in a certain way by the subject's image in my theory of the mirror [stage] (2015, 351).'[10] The *constitution* of the body itself as *Gestalt* via a mirrored repetition thus effectively projects it against the image of its end – that is, in the pleromatic form of the Adult that, *qua* phantasm, will always remain a 'subjunctive delineation' (Butler 2011, 44). In this sense then, the body is always constituted via its eschatological orientation: prior to the Second Coming, the 'body' in its properly human dimensions, is *always already the body post-*

[10] According to Agamben, the conception of the resurrected body in terms of its *eidos* rather than its material constituents was historically put forward by Origen (*contra* Aquinas), and suspected of heresy (2011b, 92-3).

*Resurrection*, predicated on the negation of its infirm flesh and its sublimation into the vessel of a transfigured double. O'Connor, said to be 'dead in the beginning', has, along with Dante, made passage beyond his death to retrieve for himself his posthumous form (*Nightwood*, 137).[11]

The structural genesis of the psychoanalytic body before the mirror thus reformulates the co-articulation of death and resurrection already registered in the sacrament of baptism, which, as the initiation rite into Christendom, mortifies the 'body of sin' to raise from it a Christic body, ushered into a 'newness of life' that is also 'eternal life': Christological Man is produced as an imago of God, projected 'in the likeness of his death' and 'in the likeness of his resurrection' (Romans 6:3-23.).[12] *To be a body*, from Saint Paul to Lacan, is, in the first instance, to be alienated from the immediate flesh ('whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord'), *and* in the second instance, re-oriented toward the 'glorious body' of Christ ('we are […] willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord'—2 Corinthians 6: 6-8). The anthropological minimum here, marked by the entry into the Holy Community of

[11] On Dante's 'necropolitan pilgrimage to God', see Balsamo 2004, 9-42.
[12] The entire polemic against the Oedipal subject staged by Deleuze and Guattari is in some sense a derivative one, honed against its specific historical target of bourgeois psychoanalysis: the self that has become-Oedipus, is first and foremost a self that has *become-Word* and *become-Christ*, eschatologically refigured in the Trinitarian image. The body resurrected from its disequilibrated drives is also, in the process, *reterritorialised* (according to the terms of the socio-symbolic order). *Anti-Oedipus*, reconsidered in the long history of Christological humanism, could be renamed *Anti-Christ*. Deleuze and Guattari do in fact observe that the psychoanalytic configuration of desire according to the transhistorical factors of 'lack, law, and signifier' constitute 'an idealism that forms a pious conception of the unconscious'. A 'religiosity' accompanies the 'theological cortege' of the split subject: 'psychoanalysis has its metaphysics—its name is Oedipus (2000, 111, 75).'

Christic bodies, is the *swerve* in the eschatological horizon of the embodied subject from the self-coincident animal to the glorious Other: the manner of one's being-unto-the-end is thus refigured here, dividing those who 'live unto themselves' and those who live 'unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 6: 15).' Dying to itself to be raised *imago Dei*, the body is thereby 'clothed upon' (2 Corinthians 5: 2): it sheds – to use a Barnesian formula – its organic integument to be re-skinned, on one level, in civilised garments, and on another, in the ethical and spiritual codes of the socio-historical world. Humans, in this sense, have 'second skins' (Prosser 1998).[13] It is this logic that enables Barnes's facetious characterisation of 'Eskimos' as animal rather than human, since they can be 'killed for their fur' ('Why Actors?', 42-3), and of the fate of 'little beasts in their mothers' as lamentable, for 'having to step down and begin going decent in the one fur that would last them their time (*Nightwood,* 94).' Robin, on the other hand, becomes the insupportable image of a Venus that would not stay *im Pelz,* an animal slipping from the ''picture' forever arranged' to which she remains precariously pinned*:* as the eland in spiritual raiment, she is 'outside the "human type" – a wild thing caught in a woman's skin' (*Nightwood,* 131-2).[14]

Melancholy's reference to a soteriological indecision may thus be focalised here as a crisis in *corporeal assumption*, in the arrested zone interrupting the redemptive arc from the 'ontologically incomplete' to the

[13] See also Barnes's gloss on her poetic image of Absalom's death: 'I always feel that the dead body is second body to the living'; like her melancholic Doctor, she finds herself in posthumous existence: 'I should be writing about Absalom, when I myself was hanged long ago (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 20 October 1938).'
[14] See my introduction.

pleromatic body.[15] The place of 'damnation', otherwise put, is lived out in a corporeal limbo *between* skins – that is, expropriated from the hide-bound existence of the Animal, without, however, a corresponding reappropriation into the raiment of glory, *denaturalised* without being *divinised*. Insofar as the self-coincident Animal is seen to remain immersed in nature, the motive O'Connor gives for desisting from stealing one of Jenny's calf-bound books – probably *The Satyricon* – appears slightly less eccentric in this light: 'I might steal the mind of Petronius […] but never the skin of a calf' (*Nightwood*, 93). As for the Doctor himself, however, he remains in the divided state of the transvestite ('I divorced myself'—*Nightwood,* 138), ek-statically cast from his mammalian masculinity yet 'clothed upon' by neither the image of Woman nor of Christic Man, equidistant hence from Animal *and* God. He resides *between* bodies, *skinless*, homeless in the home of the flesh yet homeless in the home of the Father, with death alone, as his ersatz refuge: 'I was doing well enough […] until you came along and kicked my stone over, and out I came, all moss and eyes; and here I sit, as naked as only those things can be, whose houses have been torn away from them to make a holiday, and it my only skin' (*Nightwood*, 138).[16] Some precision may thus be

[15] Barnes's admiration for Joseph Frank's reading of *Nightwood* in relation to 'spatial form' – 'obtained by means of reflexive reference' – may thus be traced here. A certain element of *denaturalisation* – albeit overstated – is involved in the captivation of the living world within the image, vacating the organism of its visceral substance to refigure it as an aesthetic body: 'in *Nightwood* as in the work of Braque and the later abstract painters, the naturalistic principle is totally abandoned: no attempt is made to convince us that the characters are actual flesh-and-blood human beings.' That these images are often 'distorted', however, foregrounds the contingency, even volatility, of the reassembled body (Frank 1945, 434-5).

[16] See also Daniel Mahoney's own description of his plight to Barnes in his 8 September 1950 letter: 'I am always happier in rainy weather – less exposed somehow. When it is fine, I always feel like some poor old crustacean with its shell pulled off' (cited in Herring 1995, 213).

accorded to Reider Ekner's association of this passage with Christ's Resurrection: if the flesh is untenanted by the presence of the Word, in this case, it fails to be recuperated as a glorious body but left bereft of mortal *and* immortal skin (Ekner to Djuna Barnes, 12 November 1953). The place of the 'damned' is, therefore, of ontological exile: its ontic analogue is the 'outhouse'. As the Doctor descants: 'I haunt the *pissoirs* as naturally as Highland Mary her cows down by the Dee' (*Nightwood,* 81-2).

The margin – or 'difference' – between the 'glorious form' of Man one is 'impaled' upon and the infirm organism is thus implicated not just in a general question of 'love', but also in *soteriological desire* in particular. The purgatorial interval, between the self and its transfigured image, disrupts the consummation of 'love', which, in the definition that Nora ventures, is perhaps 'Man seeking his own head': 'The human head, so rented by misery that even the teeth weigh (*Nightwood*, 122)!' This open region of the body's non-coincidence later comes back to her when her pursuit for Robin – said to be 'incest', 'like a relative found in another generation' – leads her to a young girl in Naples:

> Looking from her to the Madonna behind the candles, I knew that the image, to her, was what I had been to Robin, not a saint at all, but a fixed dismay, the space between the human and the holy head, the arena of the "indecent" eternal. (*Nightwood*, 141-2)

Sexual and soteriological desire are isomorphically mapped out here in this doubled reflection, with a coordinated fault-line between woman and image: Nora's paralysis – in 'fixed dismay' – in the limbo that divides 'the human and the

holy head', is Robin's vision given back to her through her own eyes witnessing the failure of the Madonna to coincide with herself, who hence falls asunder into the two parts of her transcendent significance and her material vessel, stalled, therefore, before her own 'saint[hood]'. The structural homology of two missed encounters discloses the hitherto invisible 'space between', the 'arena' where the agonistic tension towards grace tows in the 'eternal' into a warped – even 'indecent' – eternity of anticipation: from out of this girl's gaze, Nora retrieves the Madonna *manquée* of herself in Robin's gaze.

This revelation of love through a crossing of the gaze on the plane of the divine thus discloses the transferential frame that supports these mirror-identifications. *How one loves*, it is suggested, is informed by *how one is loved*, just as *what one loves* is informed by *what is loved in one*. Nora's love for Robin is situated where Robin's love is: 'I said to myself, I will do what she has done, I will love what she has loved, then I will find her again (*Nightwood*, 141).' Locating herself in Robin's field of desire, Nora retrieves it eventually in the disrupted soteriological relation between a girl in Naples and her Madonna. I will go on in this chapter to examine this soteriological relation that binds the subject to her/his Other, but note for now the importance of the function of transferential love in Lacan's conceptualisation of the mirror-stage. As he writes: 'It is inasmuch as the third party, the Other with a capital *O*, intervenes in the relationship between the ego and the other with a lowercase *o* that something can function that gives rise to the fecundity of the narcissistic relationship itself (2015, 353).' The attachment to one's specular reflection, that is, is *mediated by* the Big Other. This is to say that the 'Other's gaze' is from the outset 'internalized'

in the bond between the subject and her image, implicating hence the 'ideal ego' ('an imaginary projection') within a realm of significance, as the 'ego-ideal' ('a symbolic introjection'—Lacan 2015, 356). Deploying Freud's term – *ein einziger Zug* – Lacan conceptualises this 'reference to the Other' already present in the narcissistic relation as the 'single trait' that sutures the organism to its reconstituted form (2015, 355). The 'sign of the Other's assent' is thus sedimented in the apparition of the glorious body, libidinally legible where the gaze of subject and Other 'coincide': *I love myself where S/he loves me.* The *einziger Zug* may thus be reformulated in Barnesian terms as the point where the subject is 'impaled' upon her eschatological form.

Robin's love for Nora and the Neapolitan girl therefore find a point of intersection in their common reference to the Madonna, albeit one that falls short of her own hagiological image. As I go on to show, it is in this fault in the Other that the interval between the subject and her significant form – or *significant other*, as it were – is aggravated, ushering in a soteriological crisis that volatises the body alongside the image it fails to assume. Citing Karl Barth's observation that Christological Man, as *imago Dei,* 'signifies an *analogia relationis* rather than an *analogia entis*', Carl Raschke writes that the human being is, therefore, 'ontologically constituted as a relationship' (Barth 1958, 323-4; Raschke 2014, 59). The disruption of this soteriological relation, in a co-implicated crisis of subjectivity and the sovereign Other, thus produces the panoply of the bodies of the 'damned' in *Nightwood*, misshapen torsions of the 'glorious body', exceeding or untethered from its lineaments, all on the cusp of a humanity they fail to fully assume: whether – as with Nikka's black body –

inscribed over with salvifically drained words ('hack-work of the devil') and images ('an angel from Chartres'), skinned over with a taut 'bodice' to become 'unsexed as a doll' (Frau Mann), prostheticised with a 'pine board' (as with the legless Mademoiselle Basquette), cross-sexed (Doctor O'Connor), cross-speciesed (from Robin to the Breton cow and 'the horse who knew too much'), or, in fact, simply Jewish (Felix, Guido), these denizens of the night incarnate a theologico-political critique of the image of Man itself (*Nightwood,* 14-15, 12, 23-4, 102).

In the following, I direct my critique of soteriological desire toward a comparative disambiguation of the pleromatic body of the Aryan forged by the Fascist imaginary and the volatile body of *Nightwood*'s transvestite Doctor. That a certain link between conquest – here, Fascism in particular – and art is suggested by Barnes herself on the basis of a common root in the infirm body raises the question of where and how the 'power of the deformed' – of 'Toulouse[-]Lautrec, Gaugin, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Proust', on the one hand – may be distinguished from that of 'Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini' on the other (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 13/19 November 1938). She observes in her 30 October 1938 letter to Coleman:

> note all great conquerors, Mussolini (sexually all right perhaps, but – ) Hitler, (hasnt a mouses [*sic*] rations in his trousers I understand) Napoleon, nearly all geniuses something damned in them sexually, so that the instinct, or whatever it is, leads them onto other roads, and better ones, degrade the sex instinct enough and it becomes vulgar crime, or bragging at best, like D'Anunzio [*sic*], George Moore, the Marquis of Senningalt (?) de Sade thinking hes [*sic*] being mighty by using whip and match, or perhaps a Hitler and a Napoleon should be in the most degraded class, not above it where Jack the Ripper takes satisfaction

> immediately on the body of three or more children, – Hitler, Napoleon need to ravage a world, – all beauty and all ugliness (?) seems to come from the physically "deformed".

In her own throwaway contribution to the discourse of 'degeneration' popularised in the preceding decades by Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso, Barnes ends up reducing all 'genius' – whether aesthetic or military – to the common denominator of 'the physically "deformed"'. Where its etiology is further specified in terms of 'the sex instinct' ('degrade[d]'; 'damned […] sexually'), Barnes's critical attention seems to hone in on the libidinal redirection from the mortal flesh to its sublimated substitutes ('other roads, and better ones'), associated with some degree of ontological ambition, whether manifested in the production of a textual or colonised, 'ravage[d] […] world', in which the redoubled body might live. As formulated in an earlier letter, the marred body attaches all the more vehemently – and *creatively* – to its projected double in glory: 'inferiority complex […] made Napoleon, Mussonini [*sic*], Hitler, etc and gives hunch-backs a feeling that they are Gods [*sic*] miracles, not errors…' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 7 August 1938). Sexual deficiency, that is, from Hitler's measly share to Mussolini's passable one, prompts the ersatz production of everything from the Sadean whip, Post-Impressionist painting, French Symbolism and its Decadent precedents, to the colonial imagination and serial infanticide. Insofar as physical deformities render the 'ontologically incomplete' status of the organism more acute, its typological completion in the repeated form of its 'glorious' double may go down the direction of 'beauty' or 'ugliness'. Some spiritual significance may be attached to the aesthetic discrimination referenced here. Having ventured a tentative distinction between the 'ugly' and

the beautiful', Barnes elaborates with another ambivalent formula: these 'geniuses' bear 'the holy imprint of the Devil hoof'. The turn, that is, from anatomical mediocrity onto 'other roads' is signalled by a metaphysical trace, indeterminately condensed here into that which is both 'holy' and 'of the Devil'. If a common expropriation from the mortal flesh is indicated by the rebus of a 'holy […] Devil hoof', which way one turns – toward 'beauty' or 'ugliness' – it seems, is still open to be determined. This turn, as suggested, lies in the eschatological orientation toward the 'glorious body' of God, or the Devil.[17] As Catherine Pickstock observes, the fact that the body is constituted via an original repetition through which the Other is internalised leaves it structurally open to alterity: it is always already 'possessed' – always already available to be re-possessed or dispossessed – by the *divine* or the *diabolic*, in the image of Christ or his profane double, the Antichrist (2013, 124). The crisis in corporeal assumption thus involves several dimensions: it is possible to remain sutured to an image of salvation that is never attained, leaving one 'damned' in the interim, *or*, in a tragic turn, to re-orient oneself eschatologically toward the image of Death, in devotion to, as it were, a 'wicked God' (Bouchard 1989, 4). A third possibility, as

[17] In the same letter, Barnes goes on to schematise this into rising and falling vectors, only to return hastily to suspend it: 'Perhaps only direction of good and evil; you fall (the fall of Lucifer) and you are a fallen angel; you rise (the heavenly chariot, – race with Einstein) and you are: Christ – things that come down, meteors, angels, storms, we seem to think evil, things that rise, nature, trees, flowers, fire, prayers, good; no, on the other hand this wont [*sic*] do—there are showers of good omen, and there are uprisings of evil, its [*sic*] not direction then but kinds in direction—(this is all insane, but I'm just putting down for fun what runs through what is called my head).'

will be seen, lies in the way of another kind of false redemption: the body can also be given over to the ersatz God of the fascist leader.[18]

I move on, in the following, to a critique of the libidinal structure of *narcissism* that undergirds fascism and the production of its corporeal idols, to disambiguate it from the soteriological crisis of *hysteria*, which structures the Doctor's simultaneous attachment to and inquisition of his God. In contrasting the 'fascist body' with the 'hysterical body', I seek to account for the psychic logic co-implicating narcissism and fascist eschatology in order to dissociate it from the expressive enactment of hysteria in *Nightwood*'s Doctor O'Connor, and in so doing, offer a revisionary account of the novel's political unconscious. Placing narcissism beside hysteria – and, as will be seen, their bodily correlates of Nazism's 'blond beast' and *Nightwood*'s 'damned beasts' – is thus an attempt to disambiguate two psycho-political 'states of mind' (Wieland 2015, 11-28), whilst taking into account that their disparate strategies of synthesising fracture and revolt nevertheless relate to a specific dialectic of woundedness and cure. Both narcissism and hysteria bind the split subject to the figure of the sovereign in a soteriological relation. However, where the narcissist disavows the lack internal to his constitution in the identification with his idol, the hysteric, though placed in the field of the sovereign's desire, ultimately foregrounds the failure of the redemptive promise encoded in this relation. What is proposed here is thus a

[18] As Wolfe points out, Hitler at times frames himself as the redeemer: 'Thus I believe myself to be acting on behalf of the almighty Creator: By resisting the Jew, I fight [*kämpfe*] for the work of the Lord' (cited in Wolfe 2013b, 312). The 'Jew', in fact, is figured as a desecration of the *image* of God, *qua* Aryanic icon: 'Ihr ganzes Dasein ist der fleischgewordene Protest gegen die Ästhetik des Ebenbildes des Herrn (Hitler 2016, I.495).'

variant of what Fredric Jameson has termed 'the dialectic of utopia and ideology', a logic of reversals from 'positive' moments of reconciliation and fulfilment ('Utopian appeal'), to the 'negative' one of critique (against 'false consciousness'), with a focus on 'the transfigured body' (Jameson 2002, 271-90).[19]

## Of Beasts Blond and Damned: Fascist and Hysterical Bodies

In her peremptory writ to James Scott dated 1 April 1972, Barnes launches the following accusation: 'I want you to subdue your genital solution for everything—but everything!' While the ostensible targets here are the reductive readings proposed by the literary critic, a strident metaleptic reference nonetheless comes through: the 'genital solution' of critical reduction is likened to the 'Final Solution' of Nazi eschatology. That a certain psychoanalytic logic informs this comparison is suggested not just in the encryption of a Freudian 'genital stage' here, but also in Barnes's earlier accusations targeting Scott for his 'superficial drive […] to drag the author back his or her works to confront him or her at the porch of the mother (Barnes to James Scott, 15 April 1971)'. Decades earlier, repeated allusions to 'the Hitler complex' or ''little Hitler' complex' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 12 November 1939) – applied quite often, though not exclusively, to her mother[20] – suggest a capability on Barnes's part herself to

[19] On 'the transfigured body', see also Adorno 1990, 400.
[20] Stephen of Cloyes, a 'shepherd boy' who led the 1212 Children's Crusade is also 'like Hitler etc.' Barnes misdates the Crusade to the 12th century (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 28 October 1942).

engage in psychoanalytic diagnostics, often flippant though occasionally also earnest, on issues running the gamut of Freudian motifs from ego-development and mass psychology to infantile sexuality and narcissism.[21] As we have seen, Barnes herself is not particularly restrained when it comes to concocting all-purpose 'genital solutions' in her own accounts of the sexual etiology of Fascist leadership and artistic genius. The eschatological orientation embedded in the term 'solution', whether in the domain of the political or psychoanalytic, suggests a degree of homology in the image of Man conjured in each instance: both the Nazi Aryan and the Freudian Adult seek to resolve historical contingency, manifested as racial or as sexual diversity, via the figure of the Hitlerite or Oedipal Man. The structural and thematic similarities here are informative, but, as Barnes's irate riposte indicates, *her* writings may encode genital references and eschatological considerations without any such subscription to a fundamental anthropology. A degree of disambiguation is thus in order: Barnes's own critique of the envisioned corporeal *eschaton* entails, in fact, a critique of the soteriological relation that binds the subject to her sovereign and sutures her to his incarnated form. An interrogation of this soteriological bond to the fetish of the glorious body is thus implicated in a revision of the narcissistic relation.

Reconstructing the psychic coordinates of hysteria as they are exhibited in *Nightwood* enables hence a critical departure from the novel's many unwarranted associations with Nazi ideology, often via the entry-point of

[21] In her 15 December 1938 letter to Coleman, Barnes reports: 'I've read the psychoanalysts from time to time, a bit here, a bit there, all of them, but of course I would have to go through them again and properly…dont [*sic*] recall much, case history makes me sick, the one on dreams (not the popular one) and cant [*sic*] recall who wrote it.'

narcissism. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that Kenneth Burke, one of the first to record the presence of such 'Hitlerite' terminology as 'folk' and 'blood' in *Nightwood* (1966, 252), also happens to have written an early 1939 analysis of 'The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'', in which narcissism is recognised as the libidinal force mobilising 'the total identification between leader and people': 'in wooing the people, he [Hitler] would in a roundabout way be wooing himself' (Burke 1957, 167). Subsequently, the most sustained account of *Nightwood*'s 'failed flirtation with fascism' is given in Erin Carlston's work on *Sapphic Modernism* (Carlston 1998, 42-85). Carlston's analysis is informed by Jeffery Herf's reading of a strain of 'reactionary modernism' that seeks to unite technological progress (*Technik*) and conservative, organicist forms of romanticism (*Kultur*) against the abstractions of modernity, including its 'rationalist' bent toward internationalism, materialist industry, and finance, understood in the context of German philosophy of history as '*Zivilisation*' (Herf 1984, 16). Such an interpretive framework also shapes studies by Alice Kaplan and Zeev Sternhell that Carlston draws on, which tend to schematise alienated modernity against fascism's ideological drive towards unity. The reifying tendency built into such a hermeneutic key, however, tends to expand a basic dualism to assimilate neighbouring paradigms into its binary code of fascist organicism versus linear historicity. The opposition of 'myth' and 'history', in Carlston's analysis, unfolds into an elaborate taxonomy linking strains of Decadence, Catholicism, Romanticism, and fascism (of all stripes, Italian, French, and German) on the one hand, and liberalism, Marxism, positivism, and rationalism, on the other (Carlston 1998, 43). As Andrew Hewitt points out, these broad metaphysical schemes also facilitate a co-analysis of the psychic

structures said to support them, generating tendentiously shaped correlations in ontological and libidinal structures across a range of differing aesthetic and political concerns (Hewitt 1996, 26). The specificity of the libidinal *object* counts for less than the fact that both in the *Männerbund* of fascism and 'lesbian sexuality' as portrayed in *Nightwood*, the 'desire for fusion' is enacted. A certain degree of slippage between secondary narcissism, whose object is the delineated form of the ego-imago, and primary narcissism, whose aim is the dispersal of ego-boundaries, pushes the Führer in his neighbourly guise as 'soldier-brother-mirror', and the Mother as 'womb/grave' into conjunction (Carlston 1998, 72-73). Inevitably, then, *Nightwood*'s affiliation and disaffiliation with fascism inhere in the following: in its valuation of immediacy and unity (its embrace of myth, its rejection of history and progress, its narcissistic libidinal structure) on one side, and on the other, its highly mediated aesthetic form. Along the same lines, Caroline Rupprecht, despite her placement (against Carlston) of narcissism on the side of history and the symbolic, ends up with a binary frame situating the mediated aesthetic that narcissism enables (developed in the novel in the relationship between Robin and Nora), in opposition to the discourse of 'biological determinism' and 'bloodlines' evidenced on the side of Freud and Nazism, as well as – through a highly literal reading – O'Connor (Rupprecht 2006, 128, 95-98). More to the point, however, is Carlston's conclusion: 'If *Nightwood* is antifascist, it is so not because it opposes the absent Aryan Superman, but because it denies that he exists, or ever could'. Insofar as the novel conducts an 'assault on history', it engages equally in one against that which is here coded as history's 'other' – that is, the 'myth' of the Aryan, in all its

self-authenticating and redemptive aspects (Carlston 1998, 80-81). My analysis thus focuses on the body as the strategic site of these mythic investments.

In her reference to the 'Final Solution' of the Nazis, Barnes locates the Queer alongside the Jew as figures of embodied otherness in opposition to the mythic Aryan body. As the term 'genital' seems to suggest, the Adult that figures at the end of a Freudian teleology of the drives, whereby pre-maturational 'polymorphous perversity' is subdued to its hierarchical configuration in later life, is considered a form of violent foreclosure. As narrated in Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, the final image of the body that one is to inhabit is genitally centred, with the libidinal disorder of the maturational process brought to order, delivered over to a procreative end, enabling the disavowal of individual finitude in favour of the fetish of reproductive immortality (Freud 2001, 191). Barnes's irate epithet thus imbricates the Freudian Adult with the Nazi Aryan. A preliminary delineation of a corporeal eschatology may already be found here: desire is directed towards its immortal fetish, given in the image of the Adult or the Aryan, insuring both 'racial' continuity and the millennial reign of the Reich. The Freudian *Endlust,* in gerrymandering the corporeal map of the drives, works in tandem with the *Endlösung* that gerrymanders the map of the world, redistributing – or annexing, rather – *Lebensraum* along purportedly 'racial' lines. Both the 'body' and the 'body politic' are organised here in the fabrication of idols promising redemption (*Erlösung*). Judith Wolfe's account of the messianic heritage of modern European thought thus points out that the 'identification of eschatological kingdom with earthly *Reich*, and the

consequent need for its political and military realization, is a foundation stone of National Socialist ideology' (Wolfe 2013b, 311).

Barnes's formula of a 'genital solution' postdates *Nightwood*, and quite likely draws on her later reading of ideological critiques of the Third Reich in texts by Burke, Simone Weil, Hannah Arendt, and also William Shirer's bestselling *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960), which is particularly emphatic on the ideological sequence from Nietzsche and Wagner to Hitler. An emphatic account of the narcissistic libidinal structure operative in Nazism, alongside its eschatological promise, is, however, already present in Wyndham Lewis's *Hitler*, published in 1931, the same year in which Barnes's attempt to interview the latter falls through (Herring 1995, 177). In Lewis's reconstruction of the ''Blonde Beast' theory', narcissistic identification serves to actualise the mythical body of the *Volk* in the living tissue of its adherents (Lewis 1931, 132). Within their metaphysical framework of '*Blutsgefühl*', these 'germanic blood-mystics' are said to 'desir[e] a *closer and closer* drawing together of the people of one race and culture', into a 'true bodily solidarity'. The 'bodily attraction' involved here is depicted as a mutually implicating dynamic of inclusion and exclusion. Blood, sinew, and neurons are synchronised as the 'alien interference' is expelled:

> Identical rhythms in the arteries and muscles, and in the effective neural instrument – that should provide us with a passionate *exclusiveness*, with a homogeneous social framework, within the brotherly bounds of which we could live secure from alien interference[.] (Lewis 1931, 106-107)

In this 'brotherly' hall of mirrors, bodies, in imitation of each other, reproduce the units of individual Aryans who, agglomerated into a 'homogeneous' whole, bring into existence the Aryan *Volk*: both the single body and the body politic are here produced as a function of mimesis. Nazism's racial body, the fetish object of a 'cult of the Kolossal', could thus 'find a place in the anatomical cosmogonies of Hildegard [von Bingen]' (Lewis 1939, 63). Its desire is eschatological in its attempt to recreate a 'Golden Age' of the past in the future, if not the present (Lewis 1939, 129). Out of the numerous misfires of Lewis's analyses of the political project of Nazism, an astute account of a corporeal myth invoking narcissistic investment to encode a specific racial eschatology emerges. With a different critical apparatus, this forms the crux of Hewitt's argument that a 'textbook Lacanian *objet a*' is lodged in Nazism's 'mythic objects of desire' – most notably, its *völkisch* body – the attainment of which marks the end of history, the overcoming of the lack incurred upon entrance into the symbolic order, and the passage to redemptive Being. In this case, the split subject of history is phantasmatically overcome in the whole subject as the political body of the Aryan:

> If the fascist projects the condition of subjectivity into a mythic future as the representation of a racially purified *Volk*, he nevertheless performs subjectivity in the very act of that representation. The political collective is both the object of a mythic representation and the subject of that act of representation. The *Volk* is not merely that which will come, but the collective of those who await its coming. In other words, the desiring structure of fascism is specific not in its projection of the condition of subjectivity […] but in its performative reversal of the condition of lack, in its organization of those who lack Being into the collective subject on the *Zeppelinfeld*. What is specific to fascism is not, then, its mythification of political subjectivity or its inability to constitute a political subject, but quite the reverse – its *enactment* of subjectivity, its withdrawal of political

> subjectivity from the semiosis of a representation into the immanence of a performance. (Hewitt 1996, 202)

The 'enactment' or 'performance' of the Aryan body, as a temporal contradiction that is at once *projective* and immediately *present* – a contradiction that is as such disavowed in the very staging of the acquisition of the mythic body – leaps over the moment of disruption in the Lacanian model of identification to collapse into the fetishized political body. The impossibility of this move in the Lacanian account, which preserves a dialectic of identification and dis-identification, is suppressed in these transfigurative rites on the Nazi assembly grounds in Nuremberg, likened by Lewis to nothing less than the ''Nordic' temples' of Hitler the 'Jingo God' (Lewis 1939, ix). Citing Alfred Rosenberg's claim – 'Odin is dead, but in another way, as essence of the German soul, Odin is resuscitating before our very eyes' – Hewitt holds that the 'characteristic of Nazism […] is to have proposed its own movement, its own State, as the effective realization of a myth, or as a living myth' (Hewitt 1996, 18). The political body of the 'Blonde Beast', together with its constituent units, is thus resurrected. The foregoing analysis encodes the specifically bodily element to what Saul Friedländer has termed the 'redemptive anti-Semitism' of Nazi ideology (2003, 18). Distinct from previous forms of 'racial anti-Semitism', it integrates an 'apocalyptic dimension' that enables the formulation of a Final Solution (Friedländer 2003, 18). Narcissistic merger, in eliminating the interval between the absent political subject of Nazism and its eschatologically realised

form, thus recovers the pleromatic Aryan body in ritualistic performance.[22] Roberto Esposito hence characterises 'totalitarianism' as 'the phantasmatic temptation of abolishing the limit, of filling in the fault, of closing the wound' such that the 'community might be definitively healed of its melancholy' (Esposito 2013, 29-30). The joyous fascist body is thus produced out of a soteriological relation with the sovereign, whose several faces – *qua* Führer or Odin, Aryan or 'Blonde Beast' – serve as the fetish objects that enjoin its subjects in the mimesis of its own form, both promising and presenting in the process undivided Being out of the wounds of history. Delivering over the 'ontologically incomplete' body of the individual to the Lord, in this sense, contributes to the forgery of the glorious image of Aryan Man, producing the redemptive dynamic emblazoned over many of the Nazi propaganda posters in the 1930s: '*Dein Körper gehört dem Führer*' (Esposito 2008, 143). Disabling the production of this restored body of the Reich by turning away from the 'phantasmatic temptation […] of closing the wound' thus names a restructuration of the political unconscious – that is, from narcissism to hysteria.

As I have suggested above, the attribution of a narcissistic libidinal structure to the various characters of *Nightwood* is not entirely unwarranted. In 1935, towards the end of her long and meticulous editing of the novel, Emily Coleman cites a passage from Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) to Barnes, indicating its similarity to the *Nightwood*'s 'prince-princess in

[22] See also the rhetoric of 'whole men [Ganzen]' and 'half men [Halben]' in Hitler 2016, I.675.

point lace'. The overcoming of lack that narcissism promises is, in Malte's self-encounter in the mirror, formulated as an overcoming of sexual difference:

> within the confines of that long mirror lives entombed a person wavering between the feminine and masculine, whom I adore. My God, how impossibly secure that person lives, behind a cold wall of impenetrable thinness! I could with a passionate hand this moment burst that wall open to attain to him, to her, and find, dark on the wall, like my despair, my shadow. (Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 19 December 1935)

Coleman's observation is on point. This eschatological trajectory of the body from its divided state *qua* sexed mortal towards the salvific recovery of the whole body is one that has made its way from Plato's *Symposium*[23] and Gregory of Nyssa's theology[24] to Heinrich von Kleist's 'On the Marionette Theatre' (1810)[25] and Lacanian psychoanalysis, inflecting also Barnes's thoughts on sexual difference and desire. She writes to Coleman in 1938:

> Why angels were made men that they should grow is a mystery to me, does the long falling down make them better? It shouldn't, but perhaps in heaven (?) angels are to that place what babies are to our world, they must grow up, for tho [sic] children are pretty dreadful (they are not those n[i]ce pink bottomed little angels that people like to make out, they squash flies and tear dragons [sic] wings off, and occasionally drown their brothers and sisters in a frenzy of childish experiment and amusement)

---

[23] The round, androgynous bodies of the Aristophanic myth are in fact alluded to in O'Connor's description of the 'doll': 'the conjunction of the identical cleaved halves of sexless misgiving' (*Nightwood,* 134).

[24] On Nyssa's 'eschatologically-oriented theory of gender' and 'the ungenderedness of the soul', see Coakley, 2000 and Williams, 1993 respectively,

[25] In this tale, the corporeal *eschaton,* emerging during 'the last chapter of the history of the world', is the doll, or god: 'grace returns after knowledge has gone through the world of the infinite, in that it appears to best advantage in that human bodily structure that has no consciousness at all – or has infinite consciousness – that is, in the mechanical puppet, or in the God (Kleist 1972, 26).'

> but they are not learned, is learning the whole plan? (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 13/16 October 1938)

Characteristic of Barnes here is the synchronisation of salvational and ontogenetic histories: divine creation and human procreation form the departure gates from which angels and babies make their passage into sexed, mortal beings via the Fall. The questions remain: is it a *felix culpa*? If innocence in children is not to be found, is perfection to be sought in the formative process of becoming-Adult? Does the 'whole plan' – or Divine Economy – lie in the production of neo-angelic bodies through 'learning', understood in the larger sense of a spiritual education or *Geistesbildung*? In the conception of the cross-dressing Matthew O'Connor as an 'angel on all fours', and again as an 'uninhabited angel' (*Nightwood*, 85, 134), *Nightwood*'s response is to disrupt the eschatological trajectory of the body from its mortal, sexed form to its pleromatic fulfilment as a 'glorious body'. Such a body, having fallen from the path of salvational history, is thus not just 'disqualified', '*détraqu*[*é*]', and 'excommunicat[ed]', but also 'damned (*Nightwood*, 8, 47, 85). It is within this theological frame that *Nightwood*'s 'tales of men who became holy and of beasts that became damned' are to be situated (*Nightwood,* 9). O'Connor's failure to become-angel names the failure of the split subject to accede to its whole body – that is, the fetishistically repaired body that has overcome sexual difference. If narcissism disavows this failure, hysteria brings it to the fore as a dialectic involving two antinomian moments: i. the *false positivisation* of the body, come to fulfilment whether as Aryan, Adult, or angel; ii. its *negative reversal*, emptying out the putatively 'completed' or 'whole' body. Hysteria, as such, is founded on a

crisis in the soteriological narrative that narcissism pushes to fulfilment. As I will go on to show, the manic switchbacks between angel and beast, condensed into the formula of a haloed quadruped, are productive of an alternative *jouissance* from that of narcissism.

Conscripted into O'Connor's angelology are the transfigured anthropomorphs of the 'doll' and the 'Prince', both of whom present the supersession of sexed difference. The 'prince-princess in point lace' that Coleman refers to is 'the pretty lad who is a girl […] neither one and half the other', and is raised in O'Connor's attempt to explain 'this love we have for the invert, boy or girl':

> The girl lost, what is she but the Prince found? The Prince on the white horse that we have always been seeking. […] We love them for that reason. We were impaled in our childhood upon them as they rode through our primers, the sweetest lie of all, now come to be in boy or girl, for in the girl it is the prince, and in the boy it is the girl that makes a prince a prince – and not a man. They go far back in our lost distance where what we never had stands waiting; it was inevitable that we should come upon them, for our miscalculated longing has created them. They are our answer to what our grandmothers were told love was, and what it never came to be; they, the living lie of our centuries. (*Nightwood,* 123-4)

The prince *qua* "Prince" thus presents a prelapsarian body that has not suffered the wound of sexual difference. Located 'far back in our lost distance', s/he stands in as the primordial desideratum in the prehistory of the split subject, reached for during pre-maturational childhood and again, phantasmatically, in the present. Like the 'last doll', who, as 'the girl who should have been a boy, and the boy who should have been a girl', s/he is 'foreshadowed

in that love of the first [doll]' – presented during childhood (*Nightwood,* 133-34). The overcoming of sexed finitude exhibited by the 'glorious bodies' of these anthropomorphs, however, is also explicitly formulated by O'Connor as 'the living lie of our centuries' – a statement that encapsulates, as it were, the hysteric's critique of narcissistic desire. It is partially accounted for via a genealogical explanation (handed down by 'our grandmothers'), and adduced additionally to desire's eschatological bent, never satiated with the objects of this world, and hence its 'miscalculated longing'. This exposure of the false positivisation of the body accounts for O'Connor's self-ascription of the epithet 'uninhabited angel': while directed towards the body's eschatological form, its attainment can lead only to the evacuation of the life of the body itself – its mortal substance. The 'third sex', like the 'doll' and the 'immature', exhibits the body redeemed from sexual difference only to have the life drained from beneath it, in its apocalyptic transcendence of history: 'The doll and the immature have something right about them, the doll, because it resembles, but does not contain life, and the third sex, because it contains life but resembles the doll' (*Nightwood,* 133-34). The fetish of the glorious body is thus envisioned, in hysteria, alongside its negative reversal. Its association with a foiled resurrection in Barnes's imagination, encasing the deadweight of mortality within a radiant shell, thickens through a series of recurring dreams the year of *Nightwood*'s publication, as retold to Coleman in a 24 May 1936 letter: 'Thelma is dead in them & being buried in a blue china coffin (queer that) as big only as a childs [*sic*], but when she is laid in it, it becomes the right proportion (cited in Herring 1995, 166).' The porcelain chrysalis that receives Thelma's corpse here, burdened with a body it fails to contain in eidetic stasis, distends from its doll-

like dimensions into 'the right proportion' of her lover – that is, the well-nigh six-feet stretch of her. The deformative pressure placed on the corporeal *eschaton* drains the angelic body of its glory.

While the placement of the hysteric's body 'outside sex' has often led to its association with the figure of the 'transsexual', Patricia Gherovici's recent contribution to the critical discussion highlights the impossibility of sustaining such a position '*hors sexe*', and hence, the various symptomatic attempts to reconstruct a habitable body (Gherovici 2017, 90-91). The logic of hysteria, that is, involves both positive and negative moments, between which the subject moves in the making and unmaking of the body. Affinities between Lacan's conceptualisation of hysteria and *Nightwood*'s O'Connor emerge here through their reference to a common literary and religious tradition, culminating in the Surrealist reclamation of hysteria in the 1928 edition of *La Révolution surréaliste*. In an article commemorating 'The Fiftieth Anniversary of Hysteria', co-signed by André Breton and Louis Aragon, two key features of this 'supreme means of expression' are raised: i. 'the subversion of the links established between the subject and the moral world'; and ii. its basis in a 'reciprocal seduction' (Breton and Aragon 1928, 22).[26] Hysteria, understood as a specific kind of social bond, involving paradoxically attraction and refusal, 'seduction' and 'subversion', becomes formalised by Lacan as a 'signifier link' or a 'signifying articulation' between the split subject ($) and the sovereign (S1) (Lacan 2007b, 89, 94-95). This aporetic relationship complicates the libidinal structure of narcissism

[26] The same issue contains an extract from Breton's novel, *Nadja*, whose name is given to *Nightwood*'s Princess Nadja.

insofar as the moment of 'seduction' between subject and sovereign is at the same time 'subverted', in effect, negating the production of the pleromatic body. Hysteria, unlike narcissism, foregrounds a ruptured soteriology.

The Lacanian account of hysteria thus points to the body's traversal by contrary vectors directed toward positivisation and negation. Projected, on the one hand, into the form of an uncanny anthropomorph – '*l'être-ange* [being-an-angel]' (Lacan 1998, 8) – the hysteric mobilises, on the other hand, 'the body's refusal', and 'goes on a kind of strike' (Lacan 2007b, 94). In the moralising accents of Lorenzo Chiesa's formulation, *l'être-ange* is 'a deceitful mirage of onto-totological reconciliation that would eliminate sexual difference through the body as One […] the hysterical angel intends to occupy the mythical place of the desexualized partner of the noncastrated and hence fully enjoying Father, who would thus be himself asexual' (Chiesa 2016, 11). The hysterical subject, that is, is bound to the sovereign in a soteriological relation. In their co-habitation of a fantasy of wholeness wherein sexual difference might be superseded, they produce, as it were, the glorious couple of Father and angel in a bond of mutual repletion: she, as 'whole woman' or 'The Woman [*La femme*]', is the 'pure 'minus'' to the 'pure 'plus'' of Him, the 'whole man [*touthomme*]' (Chiesa 2016, 123, 128). The hysterical angel thus stands in as 'the alleged essence of femininity' to be 'the fusional partner of the Father/Phallus'; her body is projected against the image of 'the being-One of a chimerical body' (Chiesa 2016, 128, 3). Chiesa's work, however, tends to operate by constructing static models based on Lacan's 'logic of sexuation', the drawbacks of which are at least twofold: how these models relate to the complexities of living subjects are often cursorily

indicated or even reductively assumed.[27] Furthermore, the antinomies internal to their structure lead more often to complacent judgement than to an examination of how these models push beyond their own boundaries – that is to say, *folded within them are their own dialectical reversals*. Chiesa's account of the hysteric thus focuses unilaterally on the push toward eschatological fulfilment, neglecting, however, the opposing vector of the aforementioned 'strike on the body'. His claim that the hysteric's only partner is the 'noncastrated Father' may thus be set beside Lacan's own statement that the hysteric's discourse 'is divided into […] the castration of the idealized father' and 'the assumption, by the subject […] of the *jouissance* of being deprived' (Lacan 2007b, 99). This forms the crux of his adoption of the Surrealist Paul Éluard's line, '*le dur désir de durer* [the hard desire to endure]': by lasting (via a sustained margin of 'deprivation') rather than culminating, joy here is located *in time*, instead of an eschatological fulfilment at *the end of time* (Lacan 2007b, 57). These antinomies are operative in O'Connor's relation to his sovereign, none less than God himself, who is said to be both set up and unseated by the hysteric. If both the narcissist and the hysteric deliver their bodies over to their masters in the hope of redemption – be this the Führer or the Father – it is the hysteric finally who, in her interrogation of Him who authorises her being (and as a result her own ontological status) exposes the ruptured relation between the split subject and the sovereign, and lives out her wounded existence in an alternate mode of enjoyment: this, Barnes names a 'hilarious sorrow' (Barnes to Daniel Mahoney, 14 November 1958).[28]

---

[27] See especially the rather smug footnote on 'transsexuals' and 'the transsexual' (Chiesa, 193).

[28] This hybrid affect is not lost on Felix, who sees 'the melancholy hidden beneath every jest and malediction that the doctor uttered' (*Nightwood,* 35).

A page after he refers to himself as '[t]he uninhabited angel', O'Connor makes a political-theological invocation of 'the holy Habeas Corpus, the manner in which the body is brought before the judge' (*Nightwood,* 135-36). The legal summons, presented in the subjunctive – 'have you the body' – is relocated onto spiritual ground, setting up a divine court of judgement to which the subject is interpellated.[29] The bond between the Father and his subject is distilled here into a relation between mortal body and holy judge, exhibited on the stage of O'Connor's spiritual theatre. The result, here as elsewhere, is not just the mortifying exposure of the inadequacy of the angel's fallen body, but also the 'castration of the idealized father' himself, disrupting, thereby, the soteriological relation between subject and sovereign: 'pray to the good God, she will keep you. Personally I call her 'she' because of the way she made me; it somehow balances the mistake' (*Nightwood,* 135). Remaking the God who 'made' him/her in *her own image*, O'Connor irreverently implements a *quid pro quo* justice to even out the botched patches of Creation. The hysteric, we might say, in both setting up her God and removing the pedestal from under his feet, takes ironic and critical distance from her own libidinal structure. O'Connor's body, shuttling between its eschatologically realised form and its subsequent mortification, is alternately positivised and negated, pushed toward repletion yet drawn back and depleted: as 'the last woman left in this world', he is continually, yet inconstantly, projected against the images of a fast-volatilising glory (*Nightwood,* 90). His phantasmatic

[29] This political-theological invocation may be referred back to Paul: 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2 Corinthians 5: 10).'

presentations of the Absolute Woman are thus continually ironised: 'it was a high soprano I wanted', he croons, 'and deep corn curls to my bum, with a womb as big as the king's kettle, and a bosom as high as the bowsprit of a fishing schooner'. On the contrary: 'what do I get but a face on me like an old child's bottom' (*Nightwood,* 81). Of opera and its making of the 'Diva', he muses: 'there's something wrong with any art that makes a woman all bust!' (*Nightwood,* 92) The Father's interpellation of the angelic body thus produces not its pleromatic form, but an ironic exhibition that burlesques His desire as an interrogative strategy, mounting, as such, hilarity over sorrow. The 'holy Habeas Corpus' thus opens up a histrionic space in which the vicissitudes of the relation between the split subject and the sovereign, ruptured yet retained, play out, and is perhaps most strikingly witnessed in O'Connor's missed encounter with God in the St Merri Church, to which I now turn.

Ellie Ragland-Sullivan has characterised the hysteric's predicament as the simultaneous demand for 'affective proof of an ontological place' and a self-sabotaging refusal of any answers that might come by way of the sovereign (Ragland-Sullivan 1988, 77). Her interrogative repertoire thus includes: 'Who am I?', 'What do I want?', 'Am I man or woman?' O'Connor, described as a 'volatile person' requires incontrovertible proof of his ontological status (*Nightwood,* 16). Affects are the privileged indicators here, given the immediacy by which there are received. No such phenomenological guarantee or 'Revelation', however, comes to him despite his divine solicitation: his blasphemous apostrophe – 'O Book of Concealment' – alludes to the occlusion of the sovereign's desire

(*Nightwood,* 120).[30] O'Connor's demand relates to the Real itself, that which may be extricated from time as his perdurable essence, the place of God's desire: 'So tell me, what is permanent of me, me or him?' – that is, his speaking self, or 'Tiny O'Toole', cephalus or phallus (*Nightwood,* 120). His eclectic songbook, ranging from Paisiello to Schubert and emerging in snippets through *Nightwood*, now seems to reverberate as the lyrical accompaniment to the hysterical *idée fixe*: '*Chi vuol la Zingarella* (how women love it!) […] *Who is Sylvia?* Who is anybody!' (*Nightwood,* 139) The disruption of the antiphonal call and response between subject and sovereign foils the eschatological and erotic union coded in his earlier allusion to the Biblical Song of Songs: 'Why is it that whenever I hear music I think I'm a bride?' (*Nightwood,* 29) O'Connor is bride here to an absconded Father. Invoking the presence of God, he enters the box pew in St Merri 'for the souls in Purgatory', and pulls out his penis, which becomes his one co-actor on this tragicomic stage:

> Kneeling in a dark corner, bending my head over and down, I spoke to Tiny O'Toole, because it was his turn, I had tried everything else. There was nothing for it this time but to make him face the mystery so it could see him clear as it saw me. So then I whispered, "What is this thing, Lord?" And I began to cry; the tears went like rain goes down on the world, without touching the face of Heaven. Suddenly I realized that it was the first time in my life my tears were strange to me, because they just went straight forward out of my eyes; I was crying because I had to embarrass Tiny like that for the good it might do to him. […] And there I was holding Tiny, bending over and crying, asking the question until I forgot, and went on crying, and I put Tiny away then, like a ruined bird, and went out of the place and walked looking at the stars that were twinkling, and I said, "Have I been simple like an animal, God, or have I been thinking?" (*Nightwood,* 119-20)

[30] Like John of Patmos in Revelation 10:9, O'Connor, too, has 'eaten a book […] a bitter book' (*Nightwood*, 115).

O'Connor's visit to the church is, in fact, in the first place prompted by an ecclesiastical demand in the person of Father Lucas: 'Be simple, Matthew, life is a simple book, and an open book, read and be simple as the beasts in the field' (*Nightwood,* 118). Being one with Nature, presumably, would resolve the predicament of his divided self, a mind-body opposition common to all but brought to acuity here by its sexed inflection, explaining hence his later outcry, pilfered from Dostoevsky's Underground Man: 'To think is to be sick' (*Nightwood,* 142).[31] The angel's 'being-One of a chimerical body' is envisioned here as the undivided body of the animal. The Father's final desideratum, 'simpl[ifying]', as it were, the cross-dressing human being to its bare coordinates, thus marks out and encloses the mere life in him. O'Connor, however, parses this demand into its antinomian moments: '[t]his is a terrible thing that Father Lucas has put on me – be simple like the beasts and yet think and harm nobody' (*Nightwood,* 118).

A dialogue between the soul and body in the person of a transvestite doctor who professes himself 'as good a Catholic as they make', but also a 'mystic' and a 'charlatan', thus takes place in St Merri (*Nightwood,* 139, 28). A complex libidinal map emerges: at one level, O'Connor seems to be humiliating himself, as a last resort ('I had tried everything else'), by exposing his aberrant penis before the Father's gaze, in a kind of spiritual discipline after Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who finds a devotee in Felix Volkbein;[32] on another, he seems to be

[31] 'I am strongly convinced that not only too much consciousness but even any consciousness at all is a sickness (Dostoevsky 1993, 7).'
[32] On the shattered and Christologically reconstituted body in Loyola ('par une anamnèse personelle'), see Barthes 1971, 67.

vacating himself into a trance-like state, drawing himself close to the condition of the 'animal' by crying and 'asking the question until I forgot'; on yet another level another kind of joy seems to accrue to his masochistic self-exhibition: 'It is I, my Lord, who know there's beauty in any permanent mistakes like me' (*Nightwood,* 119). The ostensible aim here is the conversion of 'Tiny O'Toole' – and by synecdochal extension, himself – from desiring men to, possibly, desiring women, but primarily to desiring God. In the morphological re-conception of his body, from something of a woman to something of a man, O'Connor delivers himself over to the desire of his sovereign: his genitalia, isolated here as the putative cause of his inversion – and perversion ('*c'est le plaisir qui me bouleverse!*') – emerges from this process a 'ruined bird' (*Nightwood,* 120).[33]

In Ellis Hanson's study of *Decadence and Catholicism*, the 'hysterical symptom' is raised in relation to 'spiritualization': the hysteric, modelled after Christ, 'experiences through the symptom an irruption of the Real on the body, a fragmentation of the familiar fantasy of the body to make way for another, more occult fantasy' (Hanson 1997, 122). The 'familiar fantasy of the body', *qua* genitally organised, is dismantled to be reconfigured in the light of Christ's body:

[33] See also Agamben's reading of 'the ostensive body of the elect' in relation to 'inoperativity' – when, that is, its organs (including those dedicated to procreation), like 'the human instruments scattered around the feet of the melancholic angel of Dürer's engraving', are alienated from use, resulting in the 'enigmatic' presence of something like a 'glorious penis' or a 'purely doxological vagina'. Agamben's project of 'profanation' thus involves returning this body, liberated from a functional teleology only to be reterritorialised in the image of God's glory, back into historical circulation: 'The sexual organs and the intestines of the blessed are only the hieroglyphs or the arabesques that divine glory inscribes onto its coat of arms. The earthly liturgy, like the celestial one, does nothing other than incessantly capture inoperativity and displace it into the sphere of worship *ad maiorem Dei gloriam'* (2011b, 99-100; 2015).

the devotional practice of *imitatio Christi* thus takes place via the libidinal re-articulation of the subject, often displacing the centres of affective intensity from the genitals to the 'stigmatic wounds on the body of Christ' (Hanson 1997, 123). This is where 'hysterical conversion' and 'religious conversion' meet: in the body's exposure to the 'Real', conceived here as the enigmatic signifiers of the Lord's desire, the subject is mortified to be reconfigured in the image of His desire. Hanson's formulation here does however seem to interrupt a 'genital solution' in favour of a Christological one. Insofar as hysteria ultimately ruptures its soteriological relation with the sovereign, the refiguration of the invert's body into that of the convert fails to be sustained as a final solution to wounded existence. The fact that the pleromatic body of Christ is often exhibited with the ostentation of his wounds in fact suggests that the mimetic forms of its subjects might not after all be fully consolidated.[34] The wounded body, rather than the whole body, pre-empts the false reconciliation that would resolve the predicament of the split subject: without an eschatological resolution, the hysterical conversions the body might undergo continue *in time*. Sexual difference, for Barnes, implicates bodies in both infinitude and finitude, projecting, on the one hand, the eschatological image of the undivided angel, while, on the other hand, placing the spiritual ceiling *this* side of it, where the subject remains lodged. The body that reconceives itself in the image of the whole is also a self-negating body, living out its changing libidinal zones. As given in Barnes's cryptic formulation to Coleman in 1938:

[34] Many examples of these from the French Middles Ages are printed and discussed in relation to the Last Judgement in *The Gothic Image* (Mâle 1961, 365-89).

> what the artist craves is the beautiful untruth, that might be made reality, and then, were it so made, would discharge, like the ink-fish, his venom against that, and make another. Man hangs downward, the stalactite wishing to join his stalagmite, sex the double deposit, trying to reach the circle of the whole. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938)

The 'circle of the whole', however, does not come to fulfilment so long as 'sex', broken into a 'double deposit', remains the stigma of ontological division, geologically figured here in the open region between 'stalactite' and 'stalagmite' where the 'artist' writes and unwrites, inks out and inks *out* his 'reality'. The absence of *the* sexual relation that would produce the pleromatic body thus coincides in the hysteric with the absence of *the* soteriological relation between subject and sovereign. In the same letter, Barnes remarks wryly on her numerous idiosyncratic formulations: 'the value of my mind (such as it is) is that it wanders! (Matthew). […] What nonsense I am writing—losing my mind no doubt, along with kidneys, liver etc.'[35] Likening her own manic thought processes to those of *Nightwood*'s O'Connor suggests that Barnes's understanding of speech and writing in relation to the open wound bears affinities to the unlicensed doctor's avowal that he cannot really heal: 'I am no herbalist, I am no Rutebeuf, I have no panacea' (*Nightwood,* 17). Continually solicited for help by the suffering, his attempts 'to take the mortal agony out of their guts' leave him 'the greatest liar this side of the moon' (*Nightwood,* 122). Words, in Barnes's account, do not heal or redeem, and are more fruitfully inscribed in a 'Book of Concealment' rather than Revelation:

[35] O'Connor similarly exclaims: 'my mind is so rich that it is always wandering!' (*Nightwood*, 93)

> You see now why one must be secret? One must not betray that place, or it will heal up […] Why did I just say "will heal up"? Thats [*sic*] exactly it, it just came out. The wound in the side of Christ? (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 November 1937)

As she later claims in a letter to Edwin Muir: 'As I told Eliot, I'm not a 'writer'; once in every twenty years or so, the wound bleeds, that's all' (Barnes to Edwin Muir, 26 October 1957). The corpus of the artist is thus produced by the confluent tributaries of blood and text.

The implications of relating Christic wounding to writing and the body may in fact be found graphically exhibited in an eighteenth-century engraving by Joseph Ottinger, which survives, with eight other Ottinger engravings, in the Djuna Barnes Archive.

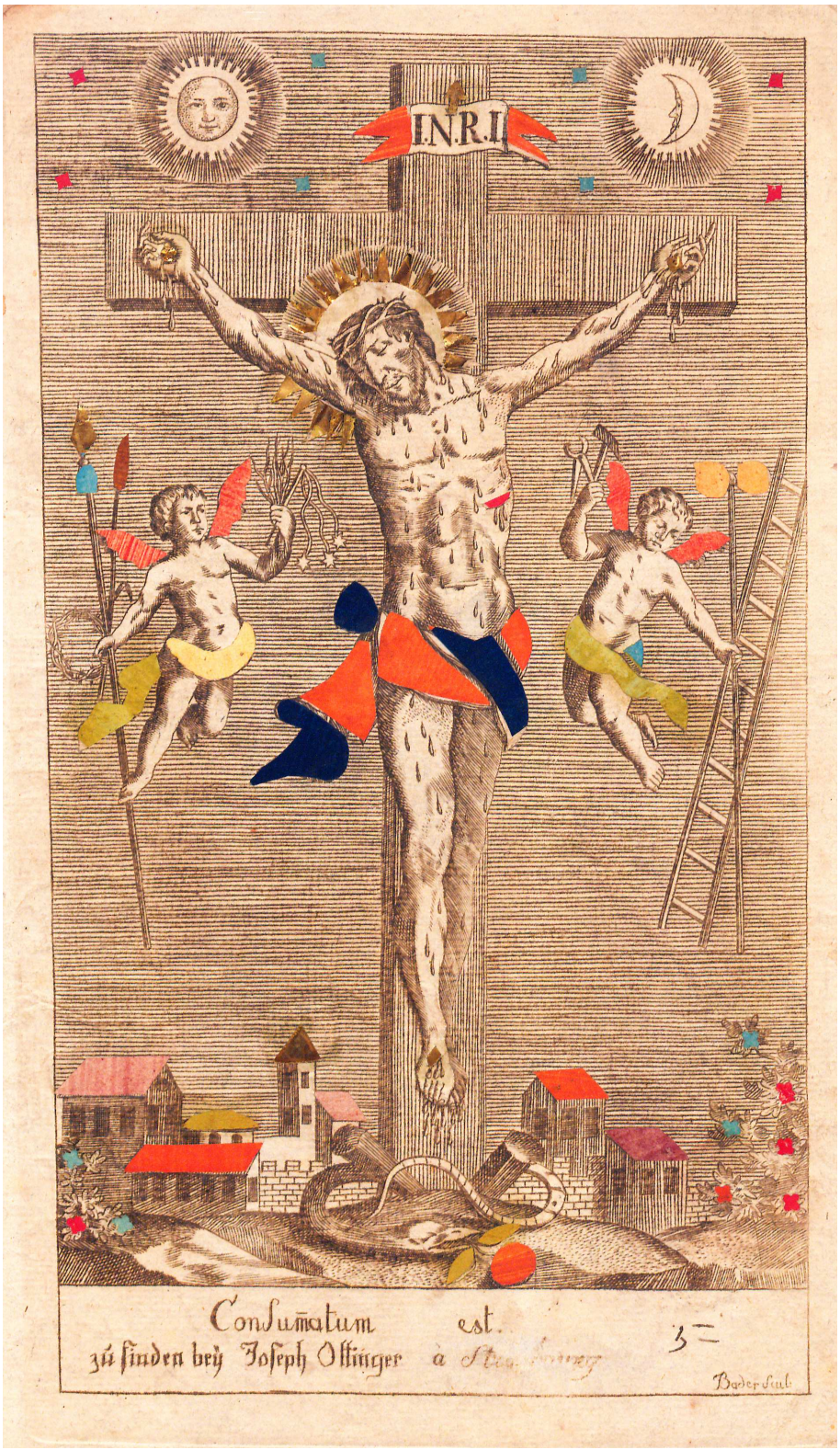



*Figure 4.1* Joseph Ottinger, *Crucifixion*, c.1750-1800. Djuna Barnes Archive, Series VIII, Box 10, Folder 7.

While printmaking is often associated with broad dissemination, consequently shifting value from the material of the artwork to its informing

concept – that is, from the substantial body to the replicable form – the inlaying of coloured paper and gold foil recuperates to some degree the density of matter that circulation vacates. The Protestant tendency of privileging the word over the body, spirit rather than letter, more conformable to the practice of printmaking, encounters here a reverse force that sediments value onto the page itself.[36] One specific form of engraving is in fact referenced in *Nightwood* to magnetise affect within the body itself: 'in the heart of the lover will be traced, as an indelible shadow, that which he loves. In Nora's heart lay the fossil of Robin, intaglio of her identity, and about it for its maintenance ran Nora's blood' (*Nightwood,* 51). Robin's eternal form, incised into Nora's heart as the grooves of a printing plate, brims over with circulating blood-ink. This conjunction of serum and print condenses the libidinal map of the body into a region of affective intensity, redistributing its zones of investment and reshaping its contours and, in this case, delineating the icon of Robin within Nora herself. In Ottinger's engraving, the prominent fuchsia of Christ's side wound, focalises the gaze onto the source of his sorrow and of humanity's succour, setting in relief (via the literal material addition) the place where the ingress of his body simultaneously signs and secretes the redemptive fluids of his blood – conflated here not so much with the milk and vaginal fluids of medieval piety – but with ink and sweat. Framed by the *arma christi* held up by the cherubs, the ostentation of his stigmatic wounds partakes of the glory indicated by the effulgent gold of his aureole, inlaid as it is with the same material. Pain and glory, mutually conversive, coagulate into

[36] For a complex account of the place of the 'image' and its 'negations' in 'the religion of the word', with particular reference to the crucifixion, see Koerner 2004, 19-26, 171-90. With reference to Donne's sermons, see Targoff 2008, 154-84.

affectively dense segments over the body. The Christic body, far from being genitally centred, is traversed by intensities that shatter it into passionate zones, refiguring it as a dynamic patchwork imprinted by the chromatic ciphers of the Real.

Ottinger's engraving is in some ways therefore a collage *avant la lettre.* As developed in the 1930s by the Surrealists, collage, Elza Adamowicz points out, enhances 'the fetishistic appeal of part-bodies and the elliptical erotic narratives of advertising images and slogans' via a 'cutting and pasting practice' (Adamowicz 1998, 11). This fractured and reassembled body disrupts 'mimetic models of representation' by unveiling the fault-lines in the constitution of the visible world, breaking up 'the normally seamless surface of reality by smashing the mirror and importing the other into its cracks' (Adamowicz 1998, 12). Such an aesthetic strategy, moreover, functions in tandem with the political commitment of the Surrealists, expressed with increasing urgency in the thirties in opposition to Nazi encroachment: the 'watchword' here, as reiterated by Breton, concerns 'transform[ing] imperialist war into civil war' (Breton 1972, 238, 249). Considered in the context of the political formations of the body, Breton's insistence on the redirection of exogenous to endogenous hostilities names the conversion of the integrated body into the body in internecine strife. If Nazism attempts to forge the imperial Aryan body via a suppression of lack, the Surrealist resistance envisions a libidinal reconfiguration that would enervate such a body to supply the critical forces that would preserve the turmoil within the organs of the self and State. That the Surrealist resistance is based on an opposing libidinal model may be observed in Aragon's claim in *Le Paysan de*

*Paris* that 'the geography of pleasure' can 'constitute an effective weapon against life's tediums':

> No one has assumed the responsibility of assigning its limits to the *frisson*, of drawing the boundaries of the caress, of charting the territory of ecstasy. All that man has succeeded in extracting so far from the individual experience is a series of vulgar localizations. (Aragon 1980, 44)

To unfetter the body from these 'vulgar localizations' under the rule of genital primacy, Aragon conjures up alternative cartographies of the body's 'erogenous zones', their changeable contours, alongside renewed 'meanderings of pleasure'. Other 'atlases' of being are thus opened up (Aragon 1980, 44). The hierarchical consolidation of these 'erogenous zones', to recall, forms for Freud the final image of the Adult body at the end of the history of the drives. Nonetheless, Freud's own admission that 'any other part of the skin or mucous membrane can take over the functions of an erotogenic zone' indicates that other regions of the body may be raised into affective centres, opening the 'whole body' up once more to be scrambled into another shape. This 'displacement', Freud writes, is common to the production of 'erotogenic' and 'hysterogenic zones' (Freud 2001, 183-84). The body, in short, may be converted by pleasure and by pain. Freud's observation that hysteria 'behaves as though anatomy did not exist' is elaborated by Lacan: the body of the hysteric, fallen from its angelic apotheosis, is riven along various 'lines of 'fragilization'', suffering an 'aggressive disintegration' that simultaneously enables its morphological reconstitution via, that is, an 'organ-morphic symbolism' (cited in Gherovici 2017, 74). Language and symbols thus populate a body that has been described as 'ideogenic' (Grose

2018, xxv). It is, in this sense, put together as an assemblage of interactive organs, affects, and ideas – that is, 'confusions', as the Doctor diagnoses:

> I, as a medical man, know in what pocket a man keeps his heart and soul, and in what jostle of the liver, kidneys and genitalia these pockets are pilfered. There is no pure sorrow. Why? It is bedfellow to lungs, lights, bones, guts and gall! (*Nightwood,* 20)

Here, the heart and soul', first displaced into the "pocket[s]", are subsequently 'pilfered' therefrom by the spasmodic intensities – some kind of 'jostle' – of other organs, producing a changing morphology. 'Sorrow', too, is impure insofar as it is an idea or affect that is not just viscerally embedded, but also, via a breach of the conventional boundaries of the body, yoked to the 'lights' – not just of the eyes – but also presumably of the external environment. This scrambled anatomy of a volatile body is in fact most attributable to the 'volatile person' of O'Connor himself, unable to drop ontological anchor in relation to his vitiated sovereign. Incapable of situating himself in relation to the Father's desire, he avows: 'this lover has committed the unpardonable error of not being able to exist' (*Nightwood,* 84). In the company of his 'Sodomites', who, he knows, cannot love him since 'it's a woman loving one of them', he 'comes down […] a dummy in their arms' – that is, another fallen anthropomorph, an empty form of life (*Nightwood,* 83-84). The hysteric fails to exist since her only partner is a sovereign who also does not exist: her 'ontological status as pure in-existence', Chiesa points out, means that she only '*in-exists* […] in relation to [mere] *man*' since her postulated partner is none less than the Father (Chiesa 2016, 126-28). O'Connor thus withdraws into his spiritual theatre where he remains, in his

words, 'shadow-boxing' with God (*Nightwood,* 84). Ragland-Sullivan explains this impossible predicament: 'Enjoined by unconscious desire to stay true to a denigrated father, to float in the nether land of being neither man or woman, the impotence in her structure shows up as an impossible desire: to exist by not existing' (1988, 79).

In this indeterminate region of 'in-existence', however, the hysteric's body is continually negated and reformulated. If, in 'hysterogenesis', the body is said to be infected by ideas and hence 'converted', O'Connor's self-mortification may be said to occasion its energetic renewal, setting in motion the process by which corporeal zones of intensity are toggled and re-contoured. This is thus the body he delivers over to the gaze of the Other – not, finally, an angelic body – but a disinherited body of jarring constituents, trawled up from the wreck of Creation, articulating, by sheer force of contiguity, a variegated wasteland of fragments from history:

> What an autopsy I'll make, with everything all which ways in my bowels! A kidney and a shoe cast of the Roman races; a liver and a long-spent whisper, a gall and a wrack of scolds from Milano, and my heart that will be weeping still when they find my eyes cold, not to mention a thought of Cellini in my crib of bones, thinking how he must have suffered when he knew he could not tell it for ever – […] And the lining of my belly, flocked with the locks cut off love in odd places that I've come on, a bird's nest to lay my lost eggs in[.] (*Nightwood,* 90)

Presented as a historical collage, O'Connor's body becomes both the inscriptive and storage space for a motley gathering of lost tales and relics, holding everything from a 'kidney' to a 'shoe', a 'long-spent whisper' to 'a wrack

of scolds'. It is eschatologically visualised not so much as a resurrected body but an anatomised one, with its tangle of guts, posthumous heart, and a stillborn narrative in his 'crib of bones', gestating – not Eve here – but the Florentine sculptor and rogue lover of men, Cellini. The archetypal 'wandering womb' of the hysteric, in fact, seems to have found its way for the moment back into O'Connor, inspiriting the 'belly' wherein the fruits of his 'love' are to be incubated. These 'locks cut off love in odd places', Barnes has suggested, have a pubic provenance, their passage from one body to the next made presumably with the Doctor 'going down' on his lovers.[37] The 'bird's nest' they put together, makes for the flimsy gestation chamber for his 'lost eggs' – that is, his lost progeny as much as his lost ovaries. That this hysterical body is produced in 'hilarious sorrow' is made more explicit perhaps in Barnes's memoirs of Paris, where she relates the verbal and medical praxis of Dan O'Mahoney – the figure behind O'Connor – to lacework:

> When Doctor Dan […] held the entire Latin Quarter in the grip of laughter, the great unpaid, funny, medical man drunk every night […] The truths he told and the lies he told made a sort of Venetian rose point of his life. (*Nightwood,* 249-50)

Barnes, here, returns 'text', 'tissue', and 'textile' to their etymological kinship in the Latin *texere*. It seems that her reported advice to Antonia White might after all be a bit more than a joke: 'Keep on writing' – that is, even though 'one may write the most lamentable balls' – since, after all, '[i]t's a woman's only hope, except for lace making' (Herring 1995, 235). Writing and bleeding,

[37] Barnes's awkward formulation to her Italian translator Signor Maffi runs: 'among other things will be found in his stomach body hair, implication obvious considering that he is homosexual' (Barnes to Agenzia Litteraria Internazionale, 8 October 1948).

alongside collage- and lace-making, thus figure as the processes by which the fibres of the body are pulled apart to be strung together again. In this weaving and unweaving of the body, hysterical joy, we might say, involves the caterwaul of the damned that, in its very lugubrious but implacable process, makes of hilarity and sorrow its woof and warp to yield a tracery of pleasure and pain – of pleasure *in* pain: 'A broken heart have you! I have falling arches, flying dandruff, a floating kidney, shattered nerves *and* a broken heart!' (*Nightwood,* 139). Drawing these catachrestic formulations into his body like so many renewed lacerations, O'Connor continually re-sutures his open flesh into new form.

It is possible, at this stage, to resituate Barnes's own association of the saint and the hysteric alongside the significance of O'Connor's failure to coincide with his glorious body. Just as the Madonna is said to be divided from the image of her own sainthood, the Doctor's doctored transfiguration of himself is withdrawn from him. In a 28 October 1942 letter to Coleman in which she disparages the notion of '[s]aintliness', Barnes makes passing mention of Saint Theresa, Thomas, and Augustine and goes on to avow: 'I personally don't see what is so good in a saint's life.' She continues:

> It's a form of hysteria, and like all hysteria, personal and selfish […] I believe a great artist is of more importance – he gives something to everyone who hears, reads or looks upon him – a saint hoards – that is, a saint of the purely contemplative kind. […] Saintliness usually comes in middle or old age, in other words, when we have grabbed all we could get and are beginning to lose – having eaten up the earth, we turn to the sky. I'll probably do it myself.

The 'contemplative' saint is, as it were, 'piggish' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 28 October 1942). His spirit is little more than a holy, 'hoard[ing]' belly that, left unsatiated by the objects of this world, takes a turn heavenward in 'miscalculated longing'. In contrast to Eliot's 'apparently cold and dry', but 'more truly pious' entry into the Church, the saint wrecks his own body in the impetuosity of soteriological despair. Not just 'impaled' upon the image of his salvation, more than even Felix's desperation – '[s]creaming up against tradition like a bat against a window-pane' (*Nightwood,* 138) – the saint, sallying forth to the Kingdom of Heaven 'in the weeping scrambling greedy manner of St Theresa', exhibits 'too greedy a grace', and sullies, thereby, the image of the glorious end: 'to have blood on your palms is an impertinence […] makes of the martyrdom a contamination (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 28 October 1942).' But if the 'great artist' is said to 'give' rather than 'hoard', the binary sketched out here loosens up with the wry avowal: 'I'll probably do it myself'. Insofar as the saints here who rage against the flesh fall from their own divine apotheosis in the pleromatic body, rounded off with its 'hoard' of 'grace', they are cast down once more as 'angels on all fours', bodies porous against the earth. It is not just Theresa of Avila who, in her hysterical excess, 'contaminat[es]' her martyred end with the traces of the inglorious body, but O'Connor too, who *vacates* himself from the 'hoarded' anatomy of the saint, unspooling the flesh held together by the *vita contemplativa*: 'Even the contemplative life is only an effort […] to hide the body so the feet won't stick out (*Nightwood*, 121).'

I will conclude my discussion here of the distinctions between the libidinal structures of narcissism and hysteria, alongside their morphological

correlates, with a few lines from Elaine Scarry to account for the importance of an understanding of the political unconscious of Nazism and the Surrealist resistance, elements of which find their way into *Nightwood*. The body in pain, in Scarry's account, involves nothing less than ontological stakes. '[W]ounding', she claims, can 'open up a source of reality': 'the outcome of war has its substantiation […] in a process of perception that allows extreme attributes of the body to be translated into another language, to be broken away from the body and relocated elsewhere at the very moment that the body itself is disowned' (Scarry 1985, 124). In such a situation there is an *excess* of pain and *deficit* in signification, leading to the demand, on the part of the expropriated body, for another system of meaning – another political or theological order *and* an eschatological horizon – wherein it might be recuperated. So much 'floating flesh', like 'floating signifiers', are amenable to ontological annexation. If Barnes's thoughts are not often articulated in conceptual form, they nonetheless unfold an etiological link here in her deployment of mythic motifs and symbols. It is perhaps possible to suggest a reading of the wild *non sequitur* that follows her discussion of the 'deformed' in her 30 October 1938 letter to Coleman:

> The Normans and Glossies bore us to death, perhaps they are normal sexually? Peters and Sis and Thelmas and Henrys interest us more because..? [*sic*] Because darling they are not "right", a sort of obscenem [*sic*] impossible beautiful fungus or Manna (which fed the prophets) fallen upon our heads in the desert, and manna if you ask me, is my idea of a heavenly fall of the abnormal lichen known as (beastly) beauty.

Barnes, who numbers among the modernists who encountered Frazer's comparative anthropology in *The Golden Bough* (1890), is likely referencing his

interpretation of '*mana*' here as a kind of *metaphysical cause* – irreducible to empirical causation – that can, however, remain embedded in the immanent world: '[t]hat invisible power which is believed […] to cause all such effects as transcend their conception of the regular course of nature, and to reside in spiritual beings, whether in the spiritual part of living men or in the ghosts of the dead' (Frazer 2009, 49). If, in the passage above it is not entirely clear *from whence* and *to where* this 'manna' derives and is driven, its purgatorial wandering, with something both phytoid and flesh-like attached to it, recalls Barnes's own take on the title of her novel: *Nightwood* – 'makes it sound like night-shade, poison and night and forest, and tough, in the meaty sense, and simple yet singular, like Lavengro or whatever it is when spelled right' (cited in *Nightwood: The Original Version,* 211) – *Lavengro* being the title of a novel by George Borrow on gypsies. The extensive suffering recorded in Barnes's novel, it might be said, opens up a nocturnal cosmos in which bodies, everywhere rent, warped, crippled, and ectopic, fail to assume the salvific form of Man, releasing so much loose 'flesh' from the contours of the consolidated ego-imago.[38] The envisioned recovery of this 'floating flesh' into the 'glorious form' of another eschatological body might thus move this host of misshapen pilgrims into a remaking of the world, which, as we have seen, is resisted as too hasty a plunge toward a false redemption.[39] Mana, to recall, is first theorised by Claude-Lévi

[38] I am indebted here to Eric Santner's reading of the '*flesh*' as a marker of '*ontological vulnerability*', 'the stuff of the enigmatic jointure of *zoē* and *bios*, the surplus secreted where biological existence is converted into the minimal office that entitles and enjoins one to "enjoy" life (2001, 6, 58).'

[39] Frazer, in fact, references this soteriological tie to the sovereign here with a citation from Dante: Man, having come into the awareness of his 'entire and absolute dependence on the divine', comes to 'submit his will […] *In la sua volontade è nostra pace* (2009, 57).'

Strauss as a kind of 'floating signifier', whose signified content remains absent – otherwise put, it pushes toward a lost meaning (2002, 63). For Barnes, it seems, this uncanny substance, the placeholder for a peregrine pain, is that which, in pressing toward an absent final destination – an absent horizon of salvation – remains the spiritual gift of the deformed *in this world*. Marked with the insignia of the 'holy […] Devil hoof', some supervenience of a profane grace reaches these latter day 'prophets' – and, as it were, *perverts* – leaving them both 'obscene' and 'beautiful', even if 'impossible' and 'abnormal', and yet still, 'heavenly' and 'beastly'. Abiding in this arrested zone in the soteriological arc from the 'damned' to the 'glorious' body thus permits a certain re-enchantment of the fallen world itself, via its perfusion with the strange flora – and fauna – of fallen life. Nazism's attempt to conscript these pieces of the Real into the forging of the pleromatic Aryan body, it has been suggested here, sheds some light on the critical value that may continue to lie – not in the 'cures' proposed by any final solution, racial or genital – but in the 'remembrance of time and pain' (cited in *Nightwood: The Original Version,* xix). There may still be 'beauty', even joy, in 'permanent mistakes'.

This, unfortunately, is not where *Nightwood*, finally, *ends*. As I have suggested earlier, O'Connor ultimately re-orients himself toward a horizon of radical finitude, a convert to a regnant 'Death in Heaven'. Towards the end of the novel, his accelerated speech breaks forth into the frenzied brushwork of a rudimentary allegory, haunted by a Düreresque scheme:

> Here lies the body of Heaven. The mocking bird howls through the pillars of Paradise, oh, Lord! Death in Heaven lies couched on a mackerel sky, on her breast a helmet and at her feet a foal with a silent marble mane. Nocturnal sleep is heavy on her eyes. (*Nightwood,* 146-7)

While the prosopopoeia of Death, animal symbolism, and even the detail of the 'mackerel sky', are reminiscent of the woodcuts of Dürer's Apocalypse reproduced in Barnes's copy of the Book of Revelation (1926), O'Connor's iconoclastic move here supplants the cloud-ensconced Christ with a female Death.

*Figure 4.2* Albrecht Dürer, print from *Apocalypse*, c. 1496-7, woodcut. London, British Museum.

If it is now an image of an Angel of Death that he leaves himself 'impaled' upon, some of its significance may be traced in a passage marked out by Barnes in Jacques Maritain's *Art and Poetry*:

> All sin is a sorry thing, injuring nature. […] I did not make myself, nor save myself; my sin injures the work of another, and disfigures the visage of another. In making of your sin beauty, you send it like an angel among your brothers. It kills them without a sound. However, this is not your first fault. But that of yourself within yourself for having hidden a corpse in the branches of your arteries, as if God did not see. (1943, 51)

The Catholic paradigm here, which locates 'sin' beyond subjective intention as a kind of objective 'disfigur[ation]' and 'injury' of Creation – the defacing, as it were, of the glorious 'visage' – is unfolded with the boilerplate call to humility: genesis and grace are beyond the remit of the will. If it is the crisis in corporeal assumption in *Nightwood* that spawns its life-forms all *in excess of* the image of Christological Man – in its narrower delineation at least – in effect, incarnating a 'criticism of the Most High', these bodies, nevertheless, are all through the novel raised in beauty.[40] Barnes herself, not too impressed with Coleman's reading of her novel as a 'Catholic Sermon' (Coleman to Djuna Barnes, 4 December 1947), and given to parodies of the association of Creation with order ('the mad strip of the inappropriate that runs through creation'—*Nightwood,* 93), would nonetheless have seen the tragic import of a turn away from the Good News of Life. The corporeal *eschaton* here is no longer the Resurrected body, but the 'corpse', resident in the temporal flesh, re-oriented now toward the idol of Death: *the body is now repeated in the image of its decay*.

[40] See also Coleman's remark in her 27 August 1935 letter to Barnes: 'You make horror beautiful – it is your greatest gift (cited in Herring, xvii).'

If, at the outset of *Nightwood*, the Doctor, 'putting his fingers on the arteries of the body', pronounces – 'God, whose roadway this is, has given me permission to travel on it also' – by its end, what he has made of this 'permission' is indexed with another deictic gesture: 'Here lies the body of Heaven' (*Nightwood,* 28, 146). In this turn to Death, he is now 'the god of darkness' incarnate (*Nightwood*, 114). *Dies irae*, for the Doctor, thus comes as a tragic judgement on the melancholy division of his being. Divested of the Word, the body in tears – like the body in *laughter*[41] – torn and turned from itself, is now decisively stranded in an eternal *ek-stasis:* 'I've not only lived my life for nothing, but I've told it for nothing […] the end […] now *nothing, but wrath and weeping!'* (*Nightwood,* 149)

[41] Robin – similarly *and* conversely – is stranded in the *ek-stasis* of laughter in the final chapter, 'barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching (*Nightwood*, 153).' For a moving account of '*Nightwood*'s journey into wits end', pushing it from the 'tragicomic' to the 'tragic', see Milne 2019, 118, 122-3.

Chapter 5

# Tragedy II: *The Antiphon* and the Refusal of History

In a letter to Natalie Barney dated 29 February 1968, Barnes reports of her invitation by the Instituto Acaddemico di Roma to a congress on the 'Valeurs permanentes dans le devenir historic [*sic*]', to be convened in October. Her response is characteristic of an attitude increasingly solidified in her later years:

> I […] had to tell them that I no longer travel, and never, never speak in public. […] [A]s Sylvia Beach said in her book, I never was one to "sell my wares"..and less and less as time goes on. Perhaps I am becoming as silent as Ezra Pound, or as a better one before him, St. Thomas Aquinas.

Allusions to her withdrawal from life increase: she is an 'anchorite', 'Tibetan-like', and, in a phrase also applied to Miranda in *The Antiphon*, 'trappist-like' (Barnes to Cristina Campo, 2 October 1968). In place of 'reticence' – 'absolutely the thing not done these days' – 'advertising' is 'all the Rage' (Barnes to Natalie Clifford Barney, 14 August 1968); and, 'for not being more amenable to the market', she finds herself 'whipped around the world' (Barnes to Cristina Campo, 2 October 1968).

The invitation by the institute and her subsequent abstention thus occasion some irony. Asked for her contribution to a discussion on 'permanent values', resistant to the tides of history – values the Institute seems to find

enshrined in *The Antiphon* – Barnes's response turns out to be a refusal grounded on a rejection of the historical trends of the day, namely, the dominance of the market, and the language that has been subordinated to its purposes. Withdrawing from 'public' discourse, the economy, and even from the body's displacement in 'travel', Barnes stages her recoil into the privacy of 'reticence' as an aesthetic and spiritual resistance to the fads of the day, authenticated not just by one of literary modernism's luminaries (Pound), but also by an emblem of the medieval mendicant orders (Aquinas), alongside his monastic kin, whether of Tibetan or Trappist provenance. As will be seen, the choice of silence over speech indicated here is, in Barnes's imagination, backed by a broader opposition between a general *retention* – across the levels of discourse, time, market economy, and the body – and, conversely, the *circulation* of the same. Art, for Barnes in her later years, comes increasingly to be situated against history, preserved against the flow of time, and along with it, the flow of capital, the flux of words, and the effluvia of the body. On 15 April 1969, she writes to Christine Koschel, one of the pair of German translators of *The Antiphon*: 'I am not a "modern" after all! Which sound [*sic*] strange for one who is considered avant guard [*sic*]!'

This chapter seeks to account for the tragic judgement on life in *The Antiphon* as a specific *refusal of history*. Such a refusal, as will be seen, consists in a radical disinvestment of the historical world – that is, a libidinal withdrawal from the terms of the socio-symbolic order, whether coded at the level of the market, in discourse, or in the passage of time itself, along with body's implication therein. 'Reality' itself is reconceived in this total recoil of the subject

from a deconsecrated world: the 'real' is now relocated from the order of time and being to a region of non-being outside of time. All of history, along with the entities and events that emerge and elapse within it, is de-authenticated – or in fact, *de-realised* – in this libidinal drainage. Following the terms set out in my introduction, the tragedy enclosed in Barnes's late play inheres in its negative response to the question of theodicy: the past time of Creation is summed up here as *false*, evil, and the source of irremediable suffering, in an aesthetic judgement that places it below the threshold of any minimal reconciliation.

Affinities with the anticosmic orientation of Gnosticism and its appropriations of Plato are thus visible here: the created world now forms the very site of both *evil* and *falsity*. As Jacob Taubes explains, Gnosticism operates by suspending 'cosmic and historical *parousia*' and prioritising 'the entry of the divine into the individual soul', in effect magnetising God's presence within a collapsed, entombed pneumatological point within the fallen materiality of the world (2010, 73). If, however, the task of unfolding this interior reserve of transcendence within Creation ends up constituting a 'decoding of subjectivity' in Taubes's reading of the Gnostics (2010, 68), for Barnes, the result of this deconcealment is not any divine *parousia* but a tragic awakening into nothingness. As will be seen, the transcendental *real* that emerges in the apocalyptic theatre of *The Antiphon*, out of the undoing of the created world, is merely that which it terms the 'uncreate', the void into which the false entities illegitimately torn from it into *ex*-istence return (*Selected Works*, 223). Taubes's association of Gnosticism with Surrealism (2010, 101), given their common commitment to the apocalyptic negation of the world and the corresponding

anticipation of a poetic or divine *parousia*, thus indicates one dimension of Barnes's later move to distance herself from the logic of Surrealist 'negation' ('Nor am I a "Surrealist" […] or Dada'—Barnes to Silas Glossop, 15 February 1978). It is, rather, the tragic cosmos of the pre-Socratics that is ultimately presented in *The Antiphon*. In picking up on the reference to the Anaximander Fragment in Barnes's *Notebook*, this chapter aims to unfold a logic of tragic 'negation' aside from the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian accounts of the 'negative' that have informed some previous accounts of modernist aesthetics (Blanton 2015; Miller 1999).

This account of tragic negation outlined here may in fact be traced by returning to the double negations found in the quotations from Barnes's letters above. In her letter to Barney, the symptomatic doubling of the word 'never' recalls *The Antiphon*'s reprisal of the proliferating negatives of *King Lear* to reproduce the reversed arc of age into infancy and inert germ. Not long into the commencement of the play, Dudley, one of the conspiratorial duo of brothers who later indulge in histrionic attacks on their mother and sister, relates death in the family, and death on the scale of nations, into a genealogical and historical *cul-de-sac*:

> We'll never have so good a chance again;
> Never, never such a barren spot,
> Nor never again such anonymity as war.
> All old people die of death, remember?
>
> (*Selected Works,* 101)[1]

[1] Unless otherwise stated, I follow Julie Taylor in citing from the 1962 edition of *The Antiphon* (Taylor 2012, 189).

In the event, it is of course Augusta – 'Mrs King Lear', as Barnes re-baptises her to Coleman in a 24 September 1942 letter – who brings the curfew-bell down on Miranda, negating nativity itself in the reversal of the mother from life-giver into death-dealer. Barnes's 'never, never' to Barney echoes its appearance in this passage, buried in fragments of negating morphemes: two more 'never's, above and below, brace its already redoubled occurrence, amounting to just one less than Lear's notorious five (1997, V.iii.307); the voicing of a 'nor' returns encased in 'anonymity', sounding another 'non' whilst the negating prefix 'a-' foregrounds the namelessness the word denotes. Where the end, or 'n', coded in 'barren' lexically and aurally, tail-ends both natural life and human history, the iterated 'd's in the tautology, 'die of death', similarly encode that terminus within 'old' itself, aural signs that return, in a dilatory echo, lines on: 'Of man's despairs we've had the deal and dole (*Selected Works*, 108).' In Act Two, Augusta's claim – 'I've seen my daughter die before, and make it (*Selected Works,* 180)' – thus phonetically encrypts the finality that its sense denies, fatefully consigning the 'daughter' not to generation but to the general 'Doom' she sounds (*Selected Works,* 217). If the ear does not catch on immediately, four lines on from the conjunction of daughter and death the plosive beats return: 'Be dead, be done, be modest dead'.

Such phonetic reprisals are a feature of the typological relation that the title of Barnes's play gestures towards: *The Antiphon*, that is, names, on a basic level, a phonetic antitype. Words here are often reiterated in a series of distortions, raised again only to place their conventional associations under

erasure. Enacted as the last movement to a 'Key-gone generation', whose 'figured base [bass]' is now fractured into 'So many scattered minims on the wind', Barnes's last play sets up a profane acoustic chamber in which the harmony of the spheres might rebound, distorted, to be found again as mutilated motifs (*Selected Works,* 218). As with *Nightwood*, which throws back Creation's founding invocation in Genesis 1:3 – 'Let there be light' – in inverted form ('Lord, put the light out'—*Nightwood*, 146), the call-response structure encoded in *The Antiphon* sends the cosmogenetic address ricocheting back as so much desecrated echolalia.

I have considered, in my introduction, one aspect of the 'antiphon' as the artist's production of an antitype to Creation via Pinkerton's notion of a 'transgressive typology' in his recent work on *Blasphemous Modernism* (2017, 10). Pinkerton's reading of 'blasphemy' in the tenor of such orthodox thinkers as T.S. Eliot and G.K. Chesterton, however, ultimately neutralises the tragic import of some of Barnes's writings, reassimilated as it is to the continued '*necessity*' of Christian faith (Eliot 1975, 231): 'What blasphemy requires is not "spiritual sickness" but rather a commitment to playful and critical reworkings of orthodoxy, coupled with a respect and even reverence, not for God, or scripture, or the church, but for *religious faith itself* and its enduring cultural sway (Pinkerton 2017, 5).' For Pinkerton, Barnes's *Nightwood* drives 'transgress[ion] farther and deeper' but ultimately 'in pursuit of salvation', leading to 'sacred regions below and beyond the human', while *The Antiphon* – read as 'an irreverent counterdiscourse aimed at male-dominated institutions of oppression' – comes across more as a political challenge to patriarchy than a

total recoil from the created world (2017, 130, 120). 'Blasphemy', in Pinkerton's account, never exceeds the framework of a minimal theodicy as set out in my introduction, insofar as it remains oriented toward a redemptive horizon: it *revises,* rather than repudiates, a soteriological relation to the world. Where transgression – insofar as it overreaches the terms of present with an eye to the future – is committed on a minimal level to the unfolding of time itself, the *regressive* vision that *The Antiphon* presents, in seeing the 'creeping catafalque/ Toiling backward to the cot' and the 'Perambulator rolling to the tomb', pre-empts any retrieval of an afterlife from the ruins of present time by *reversing* temporal progression itself (*Selected Works,* 219). *The Antiphon*'s refusal of history is thus enacted in a totalising vision that encloses all of Creation within its tragic theatre to be denounced and returned to the void. It is, after all, a general collapse of Creation that is pronounced at the play's end: 'This is the hour of the uncreate' (*Selected Works*, 223). Straining toward a mode of negation *without* dialectical recompense, Barnes's mode of coinage through additive prefixes in *The Antiphon*, from the 'uncreate' to 'disoccur', presses life into fallow seed, recoiling from a linear trajectory into retrograde implosion (*Selected Works,* 213). The antiphonal reversals that take the 'catafalque' to the 'cot' to 'uncreate' Creation and 'un-breath' the living 'breath', thus function to further countersign the 'daughter' in the image of 'death', 'wisdom' as 'winter', 'resurrection' as 'bootless roar', and to bring back to 'child-bed' that which would otherwise, in the Resurrection, 'un-bed […] in paradise' (*Selected Works,* 217, 202, 222-3).

In these systematic reversals of the 'Good News' of life that salvational history hails, *The Antiphon* may be considered to be staged along the lines of a black sacrament and black Mariology, as the tragic artist's profanation of the Eucharist and the Marian Hymns (*Selected Works,* 212). I will follow up on the ambivalences in the idea of 'antiphony' later in this chapter, but note for now the extension of its religious significance into the musical and literary, which Barnes raises in a terse response to Peggy Guggenheim: 'You ask what the word ANTIPHON means. the [*sic*] Oxford Dictionary: Antiphon, n. Versicle, sentence, sung by one choir in reaponse [*sic*] to another; prose or verse composition consisting such passages---' (Barnes to Peggy Guggenheim, 18 March 1958). My claim here is that *The Antiphon*, published in 1958 and set in 1939 during the commencement of the Second World War, articulates a tragic temporality in opposition to *two* forms of salvational time, each conceptualised according to a certain dialectic: i. the time of history as the dialectical unfolding and self-revelation of God in the immanent world; and, ii. the time of a specific form of intersubjective encounter understood as dialectical 'witness' and 'testimony' (Taylor 2012, 36-73; Wallenfang 2017, 37-50). The Hegelian frame of the former situates history on a linear trajectory, at the end of which a 'real theodicy' is to be revealed (cited in Agamben 2011a, 5), while the latter reads salvific promise in the *apertures* in history from which new beginnings emerge, produced each time subjects meet outside the terms of alienated exchange in the socio-economic world. This alternative model of time is in fact conceptualised in terms of an 'I-Thou' relation by Martin Buber, whom Barnes read around the time *The Antiphon* was written, and has since been given a phenomenological formulation as a 'prosopic intercourse' that structures the liturgical practices of the Eucharist

and Mariology (Wallenfang 2017, 183-214).[2] If an *antiphonal* relation is intimated here in the call and response of the I-Thou encounter, *The Antiphon* itself, however, ultimately vitiates its salvific significance.

The judgement against history staged in *The Antiphon* is thus tropologically exhibited most prominently in a chain of reversals. This quite often involves a co-conception of salvational and genealogical time, with filicide standing in as an emblem for retrograde finality. Allegorically sketched, this is 'Death with a baby in its mouth (*Selected Works,* 219).' The allusion here to Francisco Goya or Peter Paul Rubens, may be placed alongside a line from a surviving notebook, which typologically refigures one of the icons of art history, and enframes the filicidal theatre of *The Antiphon*: 'the child decays in the lap of the Madonna (Barnes, *Notebook*).' These two motifs are in fact brought up decades earlier in Barnes's response to a book of drawings from Coleman in a letter dated 2 September 1938: 'I prefer the madonna and child with child in those really horrifying woollies with the two buttons at the neck, its [*sic*] worse that way than naked, more horrifyingly child and mother, nursing enigma and rodent, all the horror you feel for the Christ child in early Italian paintings but with the wicked cleverness of putting him back view'. The second of the 'two best' in the collection is that of 'the man holding the squirming boy […] gets the exact feeling (I remember it as a child) of being held against the will and not being strong enough to break out of it (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 2 September

[2] The 'prosopic trait', Wallenfang clarifies, relates 'to the person or face' (2017, 183).

1938).'[3] In Coleman's drawings, these intergenerational passions – Oedipal or Saturnine – are reduced to the primitivist lines of her pencil-work. A few diacritical marks on the page produce affective masks of moroseness, malice, or motor shock. As for the blank occiput of the infant, its spherical absence, set in relief by the displaced ocelli of the 'woollies', records the *horror vacui* of demands without measure or name. Barnes's appreciation of the religious context of Coleman's drawings reveals her awareness of the ontological and libidinal implications of intergenerational relations. *The Antiphon*, it might be suggested, is her later attempt to refigure the various Madonnas of art history – in the manner of a Raphael or a Crivelli – one that, in her profane imagination, ends up having the mother return her enigmatic rodent of a child into her 'belly full of thumbs' (*Selected Works,* 194).[4] The sense here is of a negation with 'no future' (Edelman 2004).

[3] Barnes, however, avows having mentioned to Silas Glossop she found Coleman's drawings 'not sophisticated' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 7 August 1938).

[4] Lily Briscoe's struggle in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is more explicitly associated with the Raphaelite Madonna (2006, 145).

*Figures 5.1* & *5.2* Emily Coleman, two drawings from 'Book of Drawings', undated. MSS 105, Emily Holmes Coleman papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library. Newark, Delaware.

*Figure 5.3* Peter Paul Rubens, *Saturn Devouring His Son*, 1636. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

*Figure 5.4* Carlo Crivelli, *Virgin and Child*, c.1480. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Crivelli's flesh-tinted apple here, contoured following the folds on the child's rumpled face, arm and thigh, strengthens its association with the maternal breast. If the life of Christ is alluded to in the symbolic flora in the foreground, the disquieting presence of the desiccated tree on the right is perhaps emphasised by the canny eyes of this particularly ratty exemplar of a Renaissance 'Christ child'. Partaking of the apple-breast, as I later show, marks for Barnes the synchronised Fall of Creation and procreation. This conjunction of nativity and sin unfolds in *The Antiphon* in the mother-daughter relation, which finds itself projected onto an allegorical screen in Act Three in Augusta's mind, worked into the dense images of a profane Mariology:

> My daughter is winged serpent, *and* the urn.
> Some damned dark Beatitude that sits
> In her heart's core, mewling like an idiot,

Cribs her out of eminence and profit;
Sweeps her from the kingdom and the general world—
And she sits by, and strokes its bloody head.
(*Selected Works*, 203)

Raised into the emblems of sin and death, Miranda, now an Isaian reptile (Isaiah 14: 29; 30: 6) and a vessel for the dead, is devotionally bound – not to the Virgin Mother – but the 'mewling […] idiot' entombed in her, a cryptogram of '[s]ome damned dark Beatitude' draining her attachments to the socio-symbolic order ('eminence and profit'; 'the kingdom and the general world') with a reverse investment in a vampiric nursling, who 'cribs' her in a double operation: *nesting within* and *pilfering from* her. Withdrawn from Creation, Miranda implodes into 'her heart's core', leeched of her self. This ontological theft, implicated as it is in the genealogical bond, begins already with Augusta, who incriminates Miranda as the 'Magpie' of her being: 'In what pocket have you my identity?/ I so disoccur in every quarter of myself/ I cannot find me'. An eschatological trace returns again with her appropriation of Isaiah: 'I still dangle for the cockatrice/ My unsucked eggs (*Selected Works,* 213).' In *The Antiphon*, this genealogical decline is framed within a larger cosmic theatre: gestating, suckling, and birthing *death* rather than life ('some women have no breasts/ Till they have buried children'—*Selected Works*, 173), Creation itself is consigned to the 'hour of the uncreate'.

Barnes's eschatological concerns seem to have resurfaced with renewed intensity in her later years, as is suggested by her reading around this time, which includes Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be* (1952), as well as Pieper's *The*

*Silence of St. Thomas* (1957) and *The End of Time* (1954).[5] This last, opening with '*[t]he question of the end of history*', reads the Christ event as the inauguration of historical time proper – that is, 'a directed happening […] a process with a beginning and an end', headed 'irreversibl[y]' towards its '*end-state'* (1954, 15-16). The conventional *eschaton* of Christianity, however, as the arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven, is replaced in *The Antiphon* by something more similar to a tragic going-under of 'the Christian aeon' itself (1954, 15). Instead of the Divine Parousia, the apocalyptic negation of Creation leads only to Death and Non-Being; and the body, instead of being resurrected, reverses into an aborted zygote, a 'balking embryo', as it were (*Selected Works,* 194). When Jacques Maritain singles out Jack Blow's concluding lines in Barnes's play back to her approvingly, he alludes to the notion that humanity's final 'home' is located *outside* history: 'Say I was a man, of home so utterly bereft/ I dug me one, and pushed my terror in (Maritain to Djuna Barnes, 12 November 1958).' Maritain's appreciation of *The Antiphon*'s withdrawal of humanity's 'home' from history thus registers the eschatological perspective said to be inaugurated by the Christ event, orienting history henceforth toward the horizon of Revelation. It is possible to qualify this, however, with the absence of any City of God that might arrive after the end of time. If a relocation of the real from *this* world to the *next* is intimated here, it is, however, merely the void of nonbeing that awaits one.

As for Tillich, his account of negation, meant 'dialectically', follows that of 'Neoplatonism, Hegel, and the philosophers of life and process'. Here, too, the

[5] Barnes in fact requests for a copy of *The End of Time* – as well as a book on Paul Valéry – from Eliot in a letter on 15 July 1954, having sent him a draft of *The Antiphon*.

triumph of life is proclaimed by situating tragedy within the framework of a comic ontology, embedding, at the heart of every 'No' itself, an eternal 'Yes': 'No actual negation can be without an implicit affirmation' (1952, 162-6). Aligning the human being with the 'self-affirmation of being-itself' is, for Tillich, both an act and source of 'courage'. His conclusion runs: courage 'participates in the power of being which prevails against nonbeing' (1952, 166). Against Tillich's assembled cortege of various philosophical idealisms and vitalisms, however, the very announcement that opens *The Antiphon* resounds as a direct riposte: 'The very fad of being's stopped (*Selected Works*, 82).' *Non-Being* – rather than the resurrective continuity of Being, whether in the Kingdom of Heaven or in history – forms the eschatological horizon of *The Antiphon*'s tragic theatre. The transcendental law of being and time here, as will be seen, is coded in the tragic formula of the Anaximander Fragment, whose significance is marked not only in Barnes's own metaleptic incorporation of it, but also in the way it informs a number of influential philosophical meditations on tragedy (Heidegger 2015; Heidegger 2016, §69; Nietzsche 1962, 45; Benjamin 1996; Hamacher 2002). My argument proceeds as follows: the first half articulates the logic that weaves together the circulation of time, money, and the body into an economy of guilt, a fateful nexus that results from the vitiation of linear history and its timeline of sublimations; the second half considers the ambivalences in the term 'antiphon' as deployed by Miranda, which raises the spectre of redemption only to collapse it from the I-Thou relation into a lock-joint economy which returns each indentured unit of 'Creation' back to the 'uncreate'.

## Sublimation and its Discontents

In a letter to Coleman on 6 June 1939, the year of *The Antiphon*'s setting, Barnes launches into another of her formidable rants on the futility of love:

> Love is so horrible, its [*sic*] bloody, it's the most awful and evil thing in the world, and all books, poems, pictures to the contrary are LIES! LIES! LIES! and we are stuffed on them from the cradle, and go into the grave crying for that "pacifier" (in case you dont [*sic*] know what that is, its [*sic*] a rubber nipple on a bone ring flung to the baby when mother is tired!)

Some of the themes raised here are familiar by now. Love as 'evil' recalls the 'Satanism' of Baudelaire, Lautréamont, and de Sade, a point underscored several lines on in Barnes's letter by being appended to original sin: 'Adam and Eve found out "love" and lost Eden, thats [*sic*] the truth and everyone has been making out its <u>only</u> sex that lay in the heart of that apple!' Placing 'love' beyond mere or '<u>only</u> sex' points to a region beyond the immediacy of the physical acts of genital copulation. The constitutive insatiability of 'love', raised as it is beyond the purely physical dimension of inseminative intercourse, is inaugurated with the decisive expulsion from Eden, condemning one to a lifetime of lack and substitute objects. From 'cradle' to 'grave', the oral cavity remains a site of absence, a psychosomatic recess where returning demands cancel out all customary dole – compensatory at best, if not downright false. The edifice of culture, conjured as the fanciful arabesques of 'books, poems, pictures', turns out to be a compendium of 'LIES! LIES! LIES!', so much insubstantial feed with which 'we are stuffed', a monumental 'pacifier' for a history of pining souls. As an ersatz

'nipple' of 'rubber' and 'bone' rather than 'flesh', the 'pacifier' names the ghosted teat of the retiring 'mother', as much forcemeat as false meat. Weaning and individuation thus form the basis of a human history of dissatisfactions and lies, the 'deal and dole', that is, of 'man's despairs'.

This association of culture and dissatisfaction forms the gist of the rereading of Freud and Marx in Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilisation* (1956) and Norman Brown's *Life Against Death* (1959), texts that Barnes would later encounter in Susan Sontag's review of them in an essay collected in the volume *Against Interpretation* (1966). History in these accounts is conceptualised as a timeline of 'sublimation' and 'sublation', over the course of which the human body and civilisation develop and dovetail. The sequence of drive objects, from nipple to genitalia and books, are, Ricoeur explains, the 'noematic correlates to sublimation' which culture provides, synchronising, to a degree, the historical sequences of body and society (1977, 519). Freud's own accounts in the late 1920s in *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilisation and its Discontents* baptise the aggravated field of physical need and resource scarcity ('the exigencies of reality') with the names of *Eros* as well as the Greek goddess of necessity, *Ananke* – a prominent fixture of Attic tragedy – whose pressures are mitigated on the other hand with 'our god Logos', that is, reason and rational history, whose store of symbolic substitutes redirects desire to its cultural objects (*SE* XXI, 139, 54). The conjunction of Logos and Eros, as witnessed in the 'divine Plato' (*SE* VII, 134), thus opens up the possibility of 'sublimation', which names, as Joel Whitebook puts it, 'the mutability of Eros […] to cathect nonempirical objects', providing hence the 'immanent "ladder" within the empirical domain […] by

means of which one can pull oneself out of the pure immanence of the totality of empirical determination (1996, 245).' Love, that is, takes us from 'mother' to 'books, poems, pictures'.

Barnes's rejection of 'sublimation' as so many 'lies', however, is more in line with the Enlightenment critiques of Brown and Marcuse, paralysing the trajectory of the drives into a stalled dialectic of 'nipple' and 'pacifier'. As Sontag points out, Brown's reading of this neo-Platonic body as, in the last instance, stunted with abnegation, leads him to place his hopes instead in 'the resurrected body' of the theologians, replacing historical meliorism with 'Christian eschatology' (1966b, 261). The ultimate 'real', as dictated by the body, is to be found no longer *in time*, but *at the end of time*. Sontag hence quotes Brown: '*The speciality of Christian eschatology lies precisely in its rejection of the Platonic hostility to the human body and to 'matter,' its refusal to identify the Platonic path of sublimation with ultimate salvation […] Luther's break with the doctrine of sublimation (good works) is decisive* (1966b, 261)'. On this account, the 'ladder' of desiderata that sublimation produces can only hollow out into a string of pacifiers, libidinal falsities that make up the history of human civilisation, characterised by Brown as nothing less than a history of 'neurotic compromise': 'historical process' and 'neurotic process' are mutually implicated (1985, 11, 232). History's end in the *eschaton* – with specific reference to the eschatological body – holds the only real. This forms the 'deepest psychoanalytical insight of Lutheran Protestantism': the 'massive withdrawal of Eros from sublimations and therefore from life in this world' results in the derealisation of the contemporary world and its chronological – or rather, *chronic* – progress (Brown 1985, 232).

Lutheranism, for Brown, constitutes a critique of the desiderata of *this world* – a critique, hence, of love and gold. Barnes, here, seems to share certain elements of Brown's reading of Luther, likely provoked further by her discussions with Eliot on the neo-Orthodox Tillich.[6] By the end of March 1940, pressured into the sanatorium by the parsimony of her family, she writes again to Coleman. Referencing her poverty ('I starve'), she nonetheless refuses the palliatives afforded by the job market:

> to tell the truth just in the matter of earning a living I dont [*sic*] want any job in the whole of Manhattan no matter what if I could have any one I asked for. Why? Because you see Emily, it does not mean anything, not a damned thing, except keeping ones body and soul, etc, and who cares, when what it really comes down to is merely keeping ones [*sic*] body. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 March – 1 April 1940)

The slippages here between 'body' and 'soul' mark a kind of faltering in the conception of what 'matters', and 'means', and 'really comes down to' – in short, the 'real'. The mouth that would not be satisfied with mere provender would also not be palliated by lies. The security of a living wage and a place in society counts as acquiescence to a historical world now transformed into an exchange economy in which the objects of finance and the objects of body's drives become fungible desiderata. Her brother, Saxon, she claims in the same letter, has been 'changed' by 'bloody psychiatry', from 'a sensitive (tho [*sic*] not

[6] Barnes's notes on Eliot record a joke shared with Valerie Eliot on her husband's preoccupation during their honeymoon: 'Tillich's *Systematic Theology*—Volume One' (*Collected Poems*, 233). Barnes herself did request this same volume from Eliot, who sends her White's *Book of Beasts* instead. Valerie reports: 'Mr. Eliot suggests that you should borrow Tillich's book from the library and read it first, as he doubts whether you would want to keep it. If, however, he is wrong, please let him know (Valerie Eliot to Djuna Barnes, 7 February 1955).' The Barnes archive nevertheless holds volumes one and two.

intelligent) creature into a monster […] whose sole ambition was money, money, money', fulfilling a stereotypical narrative of '[p]sychoanalytic treatment' characterised by Sontag, Marcuse, and Adorno as 'anti-Utopian and anti-political', 'return[ing] us to the world' without 'challeng[ing] society' (1966b, 258).[7]

Life in capitalist modernity, Barnes reflects wryly, is caught in necessity's vice; reduced to bare sustenance, the body that would rebel comprises, *qua* labouring body, the basic units in a cost-benefit analysis that paralyses spiritual revolt: 'I was nobly intent upon sitting in the park…but of course found my nobility nowhere. In any case, I decided if I killed off my body for the fury and loathing I feel for my family, I should also spoil and lose the instrument of whatever it has left of profit (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 8 April 1940).' If the 'nobility' of the 'soul' might still be distinguished through suicide, it constitutes finally an outmoded ethic, lacking in reality as much as the de-authenticated financial world. In the event, 'body' and 'nobility' are weighed in the balance, but to no end.[8] The two conflicting positions ventriloquized here thus no longer seem to hold their ground. She rails, in the same 'sanatorium letter', with a telling solecism:

> Anyone who leaves the scene and goes abroad (for any length of time) is sunk financially. You become something that is no longer palatable to the New Yorker; you become terribly homeless; you begin to see through that

[7] Barnes herself characterises 'psychiatry' as the 'new fad, taking the place of psychoanalysis (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 27 November 1939).'
[8] She remarks again to Coleman on 3 August 1940: 'After all my grand gestures I take Peggy's money!! Well, there goes my "spiritual gain" and oddly enough I don't seem to care.'

> dark glass…you see the hocum [*sic*] of nearly <u>everything</u> they do, including (and especially) these psychiatrists and all the other isms. (Barnes to Coleman, 30 March – 1 April, 1940)

Money, psychiatry, civilisation, the new world: all are cast aside universally as the 'ho[k]um' that time has dredged up. The subject dislocated from the socio-economic order is thus 'homeless'. Of these modern 'isms', the proliferating ontic 'fads' of the New World, as it were, she notes in another letter: 'Mother a Christian Scientist, living on New Thought etc – everyone I've seen hanging onto some ism – Mad!' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 27 November 1939) The things of the world and their evaluative systems, now de-authenticated, retreat behind a 'dark glass', as in the New Testament: 'For now we see through a glass, darkly' (1 Corinthians 13:12). 'Hokum' indicates this spectrality on the one hand whilst gesturing to another kind of substance, set in relief by Barnes's spelling: etymologically, the term probably derives from the Latin of the Roman Catholic liturgy: *Hoc est corpus meum* ('This is my body').[9] The logic of profanation here thus comes to the fore, by which the sublimated objects of the historical and spiritual world are *desacralised*: the Eucharistic *res* of Catholic-ism, as much as its modern variants of 'Christian Science', psychiatry, and economy, are desubstantialised into fatuities behind a turbid pall. The very body of Christ, in Miranda's depiction in *The Antiphon*, is reduced to bestial provender: 'I've seen my people set the canine tooth/ Into the Host (*Selected Works*, 216)'.

[9] Wallenfang notes the derivation of 'hocus-pocus' from this liturgical formula (2017, 1).

Such a desacralisation of the world forms a key juncture in Tina Beattie's account of the 'making of modernity', attributed historically to Luther's theology and the Reformation it provoked in its wake. On this reading, Luther's vision of 'radical human exile in relation to the world' is consolidated on two counts: i. by dismissing the 'value of all human works' and insisting on 'salvation by faith alone', he effectively relocates the 'real' from the public world to a private relation – 'in radical solitude' – with God; and, ii. by 'placing all natural human existence in the grip of the satanic', the 'soul stands bereft' of a graced cosmos (Beattie 2013, 169-72). As Tillich puts it: 'the Protestant principle cannot admit any identification of grace with a visible reality' (1948, xx; cited in Brown, 1985, 224). The created world, in its sociohistorical *and* material dimensions, is spiritually and libidinally drained: the 'bleeding dry of the sacramental imagination […] herald[s] the emergence of a symbolic order in which matter mutates from graced organic life to meaningless and inaccessible otherness' (Beattie 2013, 171-2). This 'dis-gracing' of matter and the material world hence underlies the Lutheran judgement on the world as a desecrated heap: *scatet totus orbis* (Brown 1985, 226). A certain degree of such a desacralisation of the world thus accounts for Barnes's anamorphic presentation of the aesthetic edifice of Europe in a letter to Coleman, exhibiting simultaneously the outcrops of its genius and their scatological desublimation. Contrasting her inability to find straightforward solace in the natural world with Coleman, she writes:

> its why I love France more than you do, France being covered with the guano of fitful (imaginative minds), here too of course if one goes to Canterbury, or any old town, what I seem to be in love with are the droppings of genius!! <u>you with what they eat, me with what they void</u>, its just a different destination. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938)

Barnes's archaeological lens here thus performs a similar function to Freud's self-professed transformation, in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, into a 'new Midas': 'I can hardly tell you how many things I […] turn into—excrement' (cited in Brown 1985, 259). If, however, the Old World is still enchanted shit, the New World, more straightforwardly, as financial shit, is proper shit: 'Paris nothing, London is nothing, N.Y. is less' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 28 June 1939). If the French capital is now a 'morgue' to her, the American is, as it were, less than nothing (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 4 Feb 1939). In the midst of another tirade against Peggy Guggenheim, the following Lutheran sentiment makes its appearance bracketed: 'anyone who loves the world or things of the world is not of the Father' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 20 March 1939). Disenchantment sets in already in the thirties: 'I am tired, tired of my own history' (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 13/16 October 1938). Even in the Thomism of Jacques Maritain, a diagnosis of modernity as 'chronolatrie' is offered: the new idol of the day is now time itself.[10]

These ideas are condensed in *The Antiphon* into a logic relating time, money, and the wastage of the flesh into a denaturalised economy in which these fungible units circulate. Augusta's vitriol, directed most acutely at her daughter, but also toward her sons, contrasts retention with flow and loss:

[10] The term is employed in a review of Maritain's work, in a tearsheet enclosed in Coleman's letter to Barnes on 15 February 1967.

But I know women, son. Before I'm cold
They'll have me off the sheets […]
Before you can say 'Knife!' take pot and pan;
Snatch my very pediment; and from my poke,
(With finger-tips like greedy Florentines
Compounding mischief with the hurricane)
Take all, clasping my hand, for sorrow's seal,
Though in truth but cunning's gyve, to grapple
The finger-rings from hungry *rigor mortis*.

(*Selected Writings,* 172)

The daughter will unseat the mother, 'snatch[ing]' the 'pediment' on which she stands. 'Poke', lexically condensing monetary and reproductive stores, is situated before a bracketed clause across which a gruesome process of excretion, effusion, and plunder draws out, as the body, broken into, breaks forth into so much stolen loot and blood. The 1958 edition, in fact, reads: 'Compounding pledge against the "Hemorrhage of time"', recalling Barnes's 1939 self-diagnosis on her 'hemmorhage for a menstruation' (*The Antiphon*, 132). The 'finger-tips' of 'greedy Florentines' gestures toward the merchants of the time of the Medici as well as surgical entry, turning flesh, coin, and time, into the analogues of loss. Temporal flow, bodily erosion, and monetary drain, are conjoined here as the circulating liquidities in a universal exchange economy, with a cannibalistic implication. Even in death, this oral drive remains insatiable: the daughter dresses up in 'sorrow's seal', her 'finger-tips' formerly busy in her mother's 'poke' now 'grappl[ing]' for her 'finger-rings', which the dead fingers still clutch in 'hungry *rigor mortis*'. All sublimated objects in *The Antiphon* become insubstantial even as they are hunted down, and everyone is reduced to hunger: 'Starving, sir,' Jeremy, disguised as Jack Blow, claims at the plays outset – 'as all the world is (*Selected Works,* 97).' It is the daughter, however, who

receives the brunt of her mother's contempt. Unable to provide, she is the parasite in an economic order inhabited by men:

> See how the bind-weed hauls against the ground
> And on the winch of autumn puts out hooks,
> To clamber greatness down. How like the vine,
> The female-vetch, that low perfidious crawl,
> That winding thief with estuary mouth
> That nibbles at the root, and topples boys,
> And thinks by climbing to the privet of the head
> To be the glory that she fattens on.
>
> (*Selected Writings,* 171)

Barnes here 'out-curses'[11] John Donne in the acrid formula of a 'female-vetch', vermicular, vinous, vulvar, vampiric, and venomous all at once.[12] The 'low perfidious crawl' of a serpentine 'bind-weed' recalls *Nightwood*'s 'snarl of the groin', which she glosses as a 'curse on the female sex'. This vaginal opening turns 'thief', foaming 'with estuary mouth' in a mixture of hunger and abject lust to 'topple' the 'boys' it feeds and foists itself on, 'nibbling' them at the 'root', and slithering up their erect posture or phallus to 'the privet of the head' where it 'fattens' itself into 'glory'. 'Haul[ing]' and 'hook[ing]' her way to the top, she 'clamber[s] greatness down', reversing the usual prepositional direction of 'clamber' – that is, *up* – and perverting it, in the process, into a transitive verb cleaving to its direct object: man. On these terms, Miranda is synecdochally reduced to '[her] starving puss', an 'abominable slug of vengeance' (*Selected Works*, 178). If the brothers Elisha and Dudley, integrated into the economic

[11] 'For if it be a shee/ Nature before hand hath out-cursed mee' ('The Curse', Donne 2012, l.31-2).
[12] See also her letter to Coleman on 7 August 1938: 'Ah, the damned womb, its [*sic*] always sucking out anothers [*sic*] oyster instead of its own! (Sorry to be so vulgar)'.

world, still stand, with their financial turnovers, as worthy investments in Augusta's eyes, in the form of an exchange of maternal flesh for filial coin, Miranda the wandering artist is merely wasted matter. Within such a world, the daughter is reversed from a symbol of futurity and generation into dung, that is, the substance robbed from the body of the mother. Augusta's repeated complaints of 'starving' throughout the play is partially explained by Miranda's existence as 'that part of me I can't afford (*Selected Works,* 131).' Miranda is manure; as she declares:

> Of that sprawl, three sons she leaned to fairly:
> On me she cast the privy look of dogs
> Who turn to quiz their droppings.
>
> (*Selected Works*, 87)

Dislodged from the financial order of modernity, the daughter, excreted onto the scene of life, remains at the level of valueless substance. Barnes's association here of daughter and dung recalls Luther's notorious statement of man as God's anal excreta. In Žižek's reading of this Lutheran paradigm, the subject's withdrawal from the order of Creation is said to involve a scatological tropology that, from one angle, reduces the secular world to shit since the subject's relation to God is now the sole 'real' (*sola fide*), and from another, reads the subject itself as the shit at odds with the order of things. Luther's battle with the devil is thus notoriously enacted as an elaborate fusillade of farts and counterfarts (*Fürze*), alongside mutual mooning, and the shit-slinging iterated in the German verb *bescheissen* (Luther 1881-1910, XXII, 232, 804, 880-1; cited in Brown 1985, 225-9):

> Modern subjectivity has nothing to do with the notion of man as the highest creature in the 'Great Chain of Being', as the final point of the evolution of the universe: modern subjectivity emerges when the subject perceives himself as 'out of joint', as *excluded* from the 'order of things', from the positive order of entities. For that reason, the ontic equivalent of the modern subject is inherently *excremental*: there is no subjectivity proper without the notion that at a different level, from another perspective, I am a piece of shit. (Žižek 2000, 157)[13]

Where the 'isms' of the world – or the 'positive order of entities' – reign, the daughter is looked on as absolute alterity: 'Without Protector,/ Husband, son or bank-account', she is, effectively, shit (*Selected Works*, 168). Reversing perspectives, however, it is Creation itself that is monumental crap: 'And still dung-beetle Atlas carried on (*Selected Works,* 165).' Miranda's quip transposes the *ananke* of the Sisyphean myth into a scatological and entomological register: the eschatological time of the Occident winds up its linear form back into pagan circularity, collapsing teleologically directed Creation into the meaningless labour of an insect Atlas trapped in the eternal repetition of the weight-lifting of so much cosmic crap. The retreat of the 'real' from the world thus cedes it to Satan as *princeps mundi.* The antagonism of 'the Devil and the Daughter', staged in Act Two in the 'profaned monstrance' of the doll-house, thus conjures the parallax whereby each party is alternately figured as shit (*Selected Works,* 185). Earlier on, it is Miranda herself who is named 'the Devil' and hence dung by her mother (*Selected Works,* 140). Jeremy, too, recounts his encounter with Miranda '[d]escending the terraces of Sacré Coeur': 'Now I am he who knows that Lucifer/ Not only fell, but came down bunged in stars (*Selected Works,* 104).' The

[13] See also Oberman 2006.

daughter herself is here conscripted on the side of the devil, and hence, in an ambivalent figure, 'bunged in stars', implicated in sublime waste, leaving her 'out-of-joint' with Creation, and, thereby, Creation's own incarnated critique.

Barnes's reconfiguration of the Sisyphean myth into the meaningless labour of fecal production thus desublimates Creation into hokum and linear time into eternal recurrence. Time's absorption into the *ananke* of the pagan world, along these lines, may be said to be founded on a general crisis of sublimation, which, accompanied by a libidinal drainage of the symbolic order, reduces its logic of elevating substitutions to an eternal labour of recompense. Since no substitutes would suffice, whether on its own or in sum, entry into existence itself names a grounding debt – of the subject to its progenitors, or, more generally, of each unit of being to non-being – payable, ultimately, only upon the strict equivalence of a return in kind. In *The Antiphon*, this lock-joint economy is indicated by an accounting discourse that comes to dominate all relations of exchange, turning each transaction between persons or entities into another incurrence of debt without remission. This founds the transcendental law of being and time in *The Antiphon* and constitutes its tragic principle, one that is in fact coded in a line jotted down in Barnes's *Notebook*: 'Time was first divided into hours 293-B.C.'

Ostensibly, the specific date of 293 BC would refer to Pliny's *Natural History*, which cites it as the date of installation of the first sundial in Rome (Hannah 2009, 134). The 'theory of shadows and the science called gnomonics', however, is attributed by Pliny to 'Anaximenes of Miletus, the pupil

of Anaximander' (Pliny 1938-93, 2.187), whereas Diogenes Laertius associates it directly with Anaximander (Hannah 2009, 68).[14] The Anaximander Fragment, said to be the one surviving line of his writing, is cited in Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots*, which reads as follows in the English translation of Barnes's copy:

> It is out of indeterminateness that things take their birth; and destruction is a return to indeterminateness, which is accomplished by virtue of necessity. For things are subject to chastisement and expiation at one another's hands, because of their injustice, according to the ordering of time. (Weil 1952, 274)[15]

Things emerge and pass away according to the law of 'necessity'. Their very 'birth' is a mark of an existential guilt atoned for ('expiated') only by a corresponding 'destruction'. This forms the very 'ordering of time': justice (*dike*) and injustice (*adikía*), becoming and perishing, credit and debt, are bound together in systematic barter, whose basic unit, *qua* aboriginal medium of exchange, is time – or, more precisely, the positing or ordinance (*táxis*) of time – a unit that can only be substituted in strict equivalence and never sublimated. This, as Werner Hamacher explains, constitutes 'the time of the *quid pro quo*', 'a guilt- and debt-continuum, continually advancing without a gap in its eternal recurrences':

---

[14] Karlheinz Schaldach also rejects Pliny's attribution to Anaximenes (2006, 23-24).

[15] The term 'indeterminateness' here may be misleading in its over-specification. The Greek *ex hōn* has a plural relative pronoun in the genitive case. Glenn Most and André Laks give this as 'the things out of which' in the Loeb edition (2016, 283); Hermann Diels has 'Woraus' (1912, 15). Compare this with Nietzsche's translation of this indeterminate origin with 'Woher', or *whence*: 'Woher die Dinge ihre Entstehung haben, dahin müssen sie auch zu Grunde gehen, nach der Notwendigkeit; denn sie müssen Buße zahlen und für ihre Ungerechtigkeiten gerichtet werden, gemäß der Ordnung der Zeit (2009–, eKGWB/PHG-4; Nietzsche 1962, 45).'

> Its measure is a justice that represents itself as a *táxis* and thereby as the positing and the law of all becoming and vanishing, the law of *physis* and its demise as an onto-economic law. This taxiological order of time places every realm of the natural and human world under a law of substitution without exception; this also allows ethical, juridical, and economic concepts to substitute for one another within this order. […] The time of history, ethical time, is thus interpreted in Anaximander's sentence as a normative time of inculpation and expiation. (Hamacher 2002, 82)

'Provenance' and 'guilt' are united in the Greek *aítion*: the logic of causation, etiology, thus traces existence back to its ontological debt (2002, 83). The *táxis* of time is also a taxation on being. The Anaximander Fragment, I argue, codes the transcendental law of being and time in *The Antiphon*, perverting the typological relation from eschatological fulfilment into a lock-joint economy of Creation in guilt and 'uncreat[ion]' in restitution. By the end of the play, Miranda's words at the outset resound as prophesy:

> If, say, this afternoon the earth should quake
> Sending a thousand flaggings stark upright,
> Would not the canted beetle stick his mark?
> […]
> And on the dial's dislocated time
> Wind up his purpose?
>
> (*Selected Works,* 85-6)

What would have been the raising of the dead, imaged in the overturned flagstones of a shaken earth, leads to nought, and 'dung-beetle Atlas', presumably overturned ('canted'), would 'wind up his purpose' with a fixing of the cosmic 'dial', folding over 'dislocated time' into a return to nonbeing. Augusta's words toward the end of the play thus refer to this 'taxiological order', or 'arrangement',

of time: 'The excellent arrangement of catastrophe;/ The nice matter of the closed account!' (*Selected Works,* 219) The numerous references to time and various timepieces that open the play gesture toward this transcendental postulate of *The Antiphon* of a time and a world – hearkening back to *Hamlet* – 'out-of-joint'. Miranda refers to Augusta's marriage to Titus as her falling 'victim to a dial without hours' (*Selected Works,* 85), a sentiment reprised in Act Two when Augusta herself alludes to her birth:

> I find my cradle, unlike the rocking-stone
> That recovers quickly when it's pushed,
> Rocked out of date.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 119)

The recoil that would fold her existence back into death eventuates in Act Three, bringing to date what is now 'out of date' in the existential tally. The Greek reference to the sundial as a shadow-catcher, preserved in Pliny, is recapitulated in Dudley's call to vengeance – 'Let's pull their shadows out from under them (*Selected Works,* 101)'. The brothers Dudley and Elisha in fact seem to stand in as incarnations of the time of inculpation and debtorship; hence, Miranda's redoubled exclamation: 'I fear merchants'; 'I fear brothers' (*Selected Works,* 89-90). Dudley is thus first introduced holding '*a large gold watch, chain dangling*', alongside Elisa, '*diligently strewing almond shells*' as though marking time (*Selected Works,* 97). The latter, inquiring about Dudley's watch – initiates the following repartee:

> Elisha: Why are you holding up that tell-tale watch?
> […]

Dudley: Timing.
Elisha: Timing? What time have you?
Dudley: Borrowed.

(*Selected Works*, 100-1)

The characters of *The Antiphon* all live on 'borrowed' time, their existence thieved from the void to which they return as guilty entities brought to justice, subsumed within a talionic law whose presence is enhanced here by the deadlocked rhythm in the redeployed stichomythia of the Greek tragedians. Time's commencement, in this scheme, signals the Fall. The 'Grand Conception' (*Selected Works,* 176) – of both Creation and procreation – is doubled into a grand *deception*:

The salt spilled, the bread broke. Unmuzzled bone
Drew on the hood of flesh, entombing laughter:
Tongues came forth, and forth the hissing milk
Its lashing noose, and snared the gaping mouth.
A door slammed on Eden, and the Second Gate,
And I walked down your leg.

(*Selected Works,* 194-5)

Miranda depicts her own birth here with an allusion to the Biblical covenant of salt, now a profane contracture of nutritive substance between mother and daughter. Intercourse and gestation fold over in an overdetermined phrase: raw bone without flesh or face ('unmuzzled') is vested with body, in a line that simultaneously runs through the inseminative act as an 'unmuzzled' pistol-penis with its foreskin ('hood of flesh') 'dr[awn]', its barrel primed for launching, reabsorbing life into death. Laughter, 'entomb[ed]' in the flesh, returns again as the Satanic presence in humanity, with its salvific significance

drained. Both Creation and procreation are conjoined here into a Fall that synchronises the egress of the daughter from Eden's door with the 'Second Gate' of the mother. Miranda's theatrical entry onto the scene of life, in a quick recovery of the poise of her homunculus-self – 'I walked down your leg' – is suspended in a lukewarm limbo between the comic and the tragic. The mother's milk is henceforth the 'noose' by which the daughter is bound, eternally indebted – with her 'gaping mouth' – to the maternal body. In the passage that leads up to this, the foetus itself is relentlessly savaged in an execrative tide, as a 'trick of tricks', 'balking embryo', 'mischief's parcel', 'legless flight', 'gizzard brain', 'sitting hummock', and 'orphan' – strangled by that first noose of the umbilical cord ('A dockless hawser 'round about its neck') – '[p]urblind' and 'faceless' in 'the belly's Thames', and '[p]raying without hands' – the conclusion to which is the tragic inception: 'And time commenced (*Selected Works,* 194).'

At this stage the 'onto-economic' law of exchange that Hamacher reads in the Anaximander Fragment may be referred to the psychic structure co-implicated in the nexus of guilt. It is perhaps in Melanie Klein's record of the 'sexual development of the girl' that the link between 'oral frustration' and the theatre of guilt and foiled restitutions is most concretely depicted (1997, 203). The child's ambivalent relation to its parents is dramatised in a series of attacks, 'fear of being counter-attacked', attempts at reparation, in turn countered 'by the fear of not being able to make restitution (1997, 214, 218).' Luther's theological stage over which the battle between the soul and the devil unfolds is transplanted here to a psychic theatre in which the charged negotiations between the child and its parents play out, the arsenal on both sides taking the

form of 'urine, faeces and flatus'. For Klein, in fact, 'the girl's destructive impulses against her mother's body are more powerful and enduring than the boy's': 'she will evolve stronger clandestine and cunning methods of attack, based upon the magic of excrements and other excretions and upon the omnipotence of her thoughts, in conformity with the hidden and mysterious nature of that world within her mother's body and her own' (1997, 214-5).

For Klein, morphological similarities between daughter and mother render the process of individuation more difficult to sustain, more fraught with the sense of rapine and the threat of recrimination. If, in the girl's 'phantasy', the mother's body features as the 'store-house' of desiderata, the act of drawing satisfaction from her becomes 'equated […] with the complete demolition of that reservoir', leading to the 'impulsion to make restitution' (1997, 217). Daughter and mother, in their anatomical kinship, become vessels of unknown quantities whose transactions are marked by gain on the one side and depletion on the other: 'the structure of her body' does not 'afford her any possibility of knowing what the actual state of affairs inside her is (1997, 219).' If 'numerous sublimations' are made on the way to individuation – for instance, 'little stars or crosses, which signify faeces and children' directed toward the 'mother's reconstituted body' – the 'fear of not being able to make restitution' may lead to more the vitiating forms of exchange noted in 'obsessional neurosis': 'the girl is governed by a compulsion both to take away and to give back, and this compulsion […] is essential for the origin of obsessional neurosis (1997, 217-8).' *Disrupted sublimation* forms an 'obstacle to all constructive trends', paring down the transactions between mother and daughter to the stringent economics of

close barter: 'will the things she gives back to her mother be 'good', and can she give them back correctly as regards quality and quantity and even as regards the order in which they should be arranged inside (for that, too, is a part of the precondition of restitution)?' (1997, 218) In *The Antiphon*, the attempted recompense of the children is directed toward Victoria, Augusta's mother, rather than Augusta herself, who disparages her as a '[s]cavenger' (*Selected Works,* 155). The 'children's votive offerings', however, running the gamut of '[m]arbles, ribbons, pebbles, broken dolls/ And all such things that frightened children leave/ In tigers' dens', are desublimated in the 'staggered sanctuary' of the Hobb's family, reduced to so much insufficient food for parents transformed into predators (*Selected Works,* 156).

If in the Kleinian narrative of individuation the 'phantasy' is on the side of the developing girl, *The Antiphon* returns the aging Augusta to a second childhood, often inverting the genealogical precedence of the mother. Hence, Augusta's address to her daughter: 'You who should have been the first born of the two (*Selected Works,* 203).' The economy of the 'obsessional neurotic' is solidified in this shared theatre of a world founded on atavistic barter, daughter and mother exchanging roles in plunder and recompense, bound to each other in a mythic cycle of vengeance enacted in the flesh itself *qua* basic units of being. Miranda, Augusta repeatedly claims, is 'that part of me/ I can't afford.' Alternately, she slips into the role of daughter and cries to Miranda, now mother: 'Unpack your purse—afford me (*Selected Works,* 214).' Instead of individuation, the two are noosed to each other: '[Miranda]'s all Augusta laid up in Miranda;/ Born again to be my new account—' (*Selected Works,* 146). As Miranda later

claims: 'Every mother, in extortion for her milk—/ With the keyhole iris of the cat—draws blood (*Selected Works,* 210).' In a world where sublimation is defunct, flesh can only be restored in kind: the daughter who takes her mother's milk has robbed the living substance of a cat-eyed miser. Revenge ('draw[ing] blood') and restitution are one. Such a return, however, will never be possible, bar the total reabsorption of the daughter into the mother. So Augusta claims:

> My hoard of me, remission, recompense.
> See how she darkens; how compounds me.
> But does she not breathe short of ransom?
>
> (*Selected Works,* 190)

Miranda may 'compound' her mother, accumulating more life as it were, yet her 'breath', in monetary terms, still runs 'short of ransom'. In the transvaluation of all values into financial units that the brothers represent, the 'compounding' of beings takes place through 'reverberation of […] coin', in the form, that is, of interest: 'You have such sons/ Would mate the pennies on a dead man's eyes/ To breed the sexton's fee (*Selected Works,* 221).' If sublimated exchange enables the 'self-expansion of value' or 'surplus-value', the libidinal withdrawal from it returns it to non-being (Brown 1985, 258).[16] The breeding of gold in interest takes on an undead factor. The daughter, withdrawn from the fraternal order of finance, lives only on borrowed time and borrowed flesh, a '[s]elf-appointed increment': 'I was slumming', Augusta remarks, 'when I let you wear my belly (*Selected Works*, 176, 194).' Miranda's riposte, feeding into this

[16] See also the passage marked out in one of Barnes's copies of Baudelaire: 'Commerce is, in its essence, *satanic*. Commerce, is the loan returned, it is the loan with an understanding: Return more than I gave you (1919, 241).'

lock-joint economy of bodies, is that stringent equivalence on the daughter's part produces as inferior a substance as the mother:

> Would you propose a beggared silk-worm draw
> From out of her haggard poke so brave a silk
> Could card a paragon?
>
> (*Selected Works*, 213)

The impoverished being of the mother – here, the meagre strands of silk drawn, once again, from her 'haggard poke' – when 'card[ed]' or combed through, could hardly produce the 'paragon' of a daughter. The mother is merely 'hemorrhaged' once more by the double operation of economic and temporal subtraction ('beggared'; 'haggard'). But if this taxation on being is placed on the intergenerational relation, it names, in consequence, a doomed recurrence handed down the years as a ghastly filial inheritance. Augusta, too, claims, 'I was a victim' and gives up her flesh in return for flesh: 'I've done my duty to the state—in children (*Selected Works*, 159).' If the state might be said to carry a more paternal reference, Victoria, her mother, is hardly spared, compared now to an ant exploiting her adopted aphids or ant-cows:

> She whistled, and the girls, like thieves, came running.
> A ready and a milking tongue could stroke
> One out of store as quick as any ant
> As keeps a cow.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 154)

In the economy of the obsessional neurotic, a *lex talionis* as fateful on 'Hobb's Ark' as on the House of Atreus comes to exhaust the filial relation

wherein each molecule of milk is titrated against another. The gift of life, in this tragic enchainment is rendered as the *guilt of life*, measuring out the length of the mother's gestation as the temporal debt whose restitution is to be undertaken by the daughter's own repetition – without difference – of the mother – that is, via her own insemination, gestation, and parturition. Each ounce of substance demands a similar return: 'You're the terrier runs back without the bone (*Selected Works*, 212).' Sublimation, no longer operative, reduces all recompense that makes a move beyond bare flesh, to shit. Miranda laments:

> To think I had a mother should betray me!
> Tax me guilty both of audit and default;
> Tot me up, as idiots their droppings,
> And as indifferently, tick off the count.
>
> (*Selected Works*, 195)

Once again, accounting turns into a fecal tally. If generation itself incorporates this logic, Creation and procreation collapse into a universal gastronomic chain as primordial units of being make their passage from body to body: 'Truly, a monstrous munching earth' – Augusta observes – 'But stand upon it/ And you find you stand on appetite.' If it's a platitude that Dudley regurgitates ('dog eats dog'— *Selected Works*, 100) with Jeremy it is 'Sir Thomas [Browne]' he brings up hashed (''All flesh that we behold—you know—'in at the mouth'').
Time itself – 'Age' – is 'all fork and pot', Augusta continues (*Selected Works,* 170). Despairing, Augusta later cries out in a trammelled formulation: ''Man owes a death to God', you say? So be it./ But if there is no God, then God forgive him!' (*Selected Works*, 202) Where existence itself is founded on ontological theft, exculpation comes only in the return of one's created body to the Creator; the

*catch* here, however, is His own inexistence. The only 'redemption' available is the profane one of a reversal into the 'uncreate'. In this world, life is only ever 'lease[d]' in guilt (*Selected Works,* 191).

I move on, in the next section, to consider a form of renewal suggested in the alternative temporality of the antiphon, one that charts a course away from the economic world the brothers embody without moving into a wholesale rejection of time itself. The latter half of the citation from Corinthians in fact names the move from the de-authenticated material world toward the redemptive relation of a kind of prosopic intercourse: 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known (1 Corinthians 13: 12).' If hope is intimated here, however, it is finally foreclosed.

## Play and Repining

> Let's jump the Day of Wrath. Let us pretend.
> The play is over and the boys are put to bed.
> Let's play at being Miranda and Augusta.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 197)

If, in much of *The Antiphon*, time is congealed into a history and economics of guilt, and existence frozen into an awaited exoneration in death, another temporal logic is raised in Act Three in these lines voiced by Augusta.

The Apocalypse, Augusta suggests, can be overleapt. Evading the Last Judgement of the time of guilt, the fulfilment of genesis with demise in the settling of ontological accounts, another time unfolds: *playtime*. The historical time that the men represent is now at an end ('The play is over and the boys are put to bed'; 'The boys asleep, and we are girls again'— *Selected Works,* 193), mother and daughter are free to resume their game.

The ambiguity of this 'play at being' is operative on several levels: first, the suggestion that both Miranda and Augusta have never been or are not quite themselves is made, both of them only ever partially existing in a masculine symbolic order from which they are at the same time partially withdrawn (they could therefore, now that the time of the boys is over, 'play' themselves); yet, if they are only 'playing' themselves then it is not so much a return to authenticity that is intimated than a histrionic staging or restaging of themselves; furthermore, it is not quite clear who gets to play Miranda and who Augusta. As the rest of *The Antiphon* plays out, this impression that mother and daughter are swapping roles is to some degree corroborated. If Augusta once had Miranda 'wear my belly', she now wears her clothes: '*Without asking permission,* AUGUSTA *takes off* MIRANDA'S *shoes, puts them on her own feet, and in exchange puts her slippers on* MIRANDA'. The desire to be delivered from the time of tragic enchainment produces a manic array of place-names, a psychic geography of Edens brought to earth: 'Let's go to Ostend, Monte Carlo, Brighton;/ The Lido, Palm Beach, Breisgau, Carcassonne—' (*Selected Works,* 197) The list goes on: Vauxhall, Fontainebleau, the Trianon, Longchamp, Ascot, Aintree, Epsom, the Corso, Bartholomews, Billingsgate – in short – 'Anything' (*Selected Works,* 198).

Historical implausibilities multiply: 'I'll sit in a supper box with Richelieu—'; 'I am Empress Josephine […] Or no, Lily Langtry […] Waiting on the inert Prince of Somewhere'. These truncated vignettes of a life elsewhere carve out an opening from linear temporality: '*Did I sleep a hundred years?*' Augusta whispers, wondering – 'Was I ever a princess in a legend?' – soon to wake up from the nightmare of history into the fulfilment of love (*Selected Works,* 199). Playtime, here, becomes soteriologically invested.

Donald Winnicott, the object-relations psychoanalyst most associated with the notion of the 'transitional space' opened up by 'play' – conceptualises this '*potential space* between the baby and the mother' as, in some ways, a reconsideration of the Freudian account of sublimation. Quoting Lionel Trilling's claim that 'an unfailing note of exasperation and resistance' attends Freud's discussions on 'culture' – a sign of 'ambivalen[ce]' that works against his teleological account of sublimation's drainage of the id into the ego – Winnicott offers 'playing' as an alternate 'foundation' and source of 'cultural experience' (2005, 143-4). The transitional space of play enables a negotiation of individuation and merger without trauma, permitting explorative ways in and out of the omnipotence of inner fantasy and external resistance with its interwoven elements of reality and pleasure principles. It is where subject and object entwine, the '*intermediate area* […] *allowed to the infant between primary creativity and objective perception based on reality-testing* (2005, 15).' Navigation through this 'interplay between separateness and union' facilitates transitional, rather than traumatic, passage from 'me-extensions' to the 'not-me', '*continuity*' to '*contiguity*' (2005, 134-6). Partially a developmental account, then, this '*third*

*area*', sustained as it is through life, also relates the adult to the child *structurally*, providing pathways toward renewed negotiations with objective reality (2005, 138). Play, that is, both recalibrates and resists the reified world.

That Winnicott's 'in-between' has often been yoked to Martin Buber's notion of '*das Zwischenmenschliche* [the between-human]' is not unexpected given the latter's explicit association of the 'I-Thou' relation to the 'ante-natal life of the child' of 'purely natural combination, bodily interaction and flowing from the one to the other (1958, 25).' Theological import is thus conferred on the mother-daughter relation, God's presence now preserved in this unalienated bond. Given Barnes's extensive reading of Buber probably around the time of *The Antiphon*'s publication, it would not be out of place to propose a heuristic schema dividing, on the one hand, the onto-economic world order of the brothers as the 'I-It' world of reified relations, against the 'I-Thou' relation coded in the transitional space between mother and daughter. The 'sphere of "between"', Buber writes, is 'the real place and bearer of what happens between men […] ever and again re-constituted in accordance with men's meetings with one another' (2002, 241). As with Winnicott's 'play', this intermediate region names an eternal beginning, an 'aperture' out of a history that has been absorbed into tragic necessity: 'if I and another come up against one another […] there is a remainder, somewhere, where the souls end and the world has not yet begun' (2002, 242). It is this return to a form of prelapsarian love – prior to their mutual Fall into the created world – that Miranda alludes to and undermines in response to Augusta's plea: 'Come, play me daughter (*Selected Works*, 193).' A 'thee' –

recording a 'lost endearment' – is brought up here to address a 'Carrion Eve', still 'grazing' somewhere in an Eden poised already for the Fall:

> There was a time when we were not related.
> When I first loved thee—I say 'thee' as if
> It were to use a lost endearment
> That in the loss has lost the losing world—
> When I first loved thee, thou wert grazing:
> Carrion Eve, in the green stool, wading,
> In the coarse lilies and the sombre wood;
> Before the tree was in the cross, the cradle, and the coffin,
> […]
> When yet the salt unspilt, the bread unbroken,
> The milk unquested, unwept for, and unsprung,
> […]
> The cock crew, the spur struck, and Titus Adam
> Had at you with his raping-hook
> And you reared back, a belly fully of thumbs.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 193-4)

Prior to their individuated forms as mother and daughter, and thus prior, strictly speaking, to 'relation' itself, within the primordial I-Thou fold, Miranda and Augusta dwelled in a prelapsarian region of love. Reference to paradise as the 'losing world', however, intimates that the Fall is nigh or, in fact, underway, an omen thickened with the thorny theological issue of prelapsarian nature, depicted here with a scavenging Eve and 'green stool' – that is, tree stumps, but also animal dung – where the 'lilies of the field' of Matthew 6:28 are now 'coarse' and the woods 'sombre'. Creation and procreation are once again compressed into a single Fall whose consequences – suffering, birth, and death ('cross', 'cradle', 'coffin') – are aurally implicated with daybreak itself ('The cock crew'), as earthly progenitor and Edenic predecessor are conjoined into a 'Titus Adam', who, as first man and first cause (*proton aítion*), commits with his 'raping-hook'

('that breeding inch; it was the cause'— *Selected Works*, 184) – the ultimate sin against eternal nonbeing: creation. Redemption is thus resituated here as a form of infolding or reversal of the cosmos, indicated in the negative prefixes of 'unspilt', 'unquested', 'unwept', and 'unsprung'.

Before sin, before Man, and before the inauguration of time, mother and daughter remain united beyond the contractual terms signalled by salt, bread, and milk. The 'play' that Augusta attempts to initiate thus hearkens back to 'the world [that] has not yet begun', producing an 'aperture' through which one might be released from history in order to stall, perhaps redirect, its end. 'How do we thaw from history', as Augusta remarks, re-assessing her time spent with Titus (*Selected Works,* 183). Miranda, in fact, sees in this her resurrected body, a princess in the 'last […] world': 'Looking down the barrel of your eye,/ I see the body of a bloody Cinderella/ Come whirling up (*Selected Works*, 193).' Playtime, it might be said, suspends *ananke*. In the antiphony between I and Thou, a time out of the time subsumed into a law of stringent substitutions might be found: 'On the far side of the subjective, on this side of the objective, on the narrow ridge, where *I* and *Thou* meet, there is the realm of "between" (Buber 2002, 243).' Something of this sentiment is carried over into Barnes's formulation of the 'antiphon' in her play, all the more striking for its symptomatic reprisal of the syntactical structure of Buber's articulation, which first apprises one of a psychic topography of renewal beyond the reified world of modernity ('On the…'; 'where…') before anchoring it in its conceptual cartography ('there…'). The only passage in *The Antiphon* in which the word 'antiphon' appears reproduces this structure:

Where the martyr'd wild fowl fly the portal
High in the honey of cathedral walls,
There is the purchase, governance and mercy.
Where careful sorrow and observed compline
Sweat their gums and mastics to the hive
Of whatsoever stall the head's heaved in—
There is the amber. As the high plucked banks
Of the viola rend out the unplucked strings below—
There is the antiphon.
I've seen loves so eat each other's mouth
Till that the common clamour, co-intwined,
Wrung out the hidden singing in the tongue
Its chaste economy—there is the adoration.
So the day, day fit for dying in
Is the plucked accord.

(*Selected Works,* 214)

The only three topics Barnes professes interest in – 'beauty, art and religion' – are woven together here in an esoteric portrayal of the antiphon and its redemptive potential. Even so, the dissonant compression of natural and sacred registers does not merely embed unredeemed life within a larger tapestry whose theme is fulfilment and harmony, but, in weighing salvation down and keeping it tethered to the secular world, installs the potential – or even propensity – for the antiphon to be diverted towards its own profanation. *Nightwood*'s 'angel on all fours' may be said to make its reappearance here as angels turned, not to beasts, but this time to birds and bees. 'Redemption' here, in its uneasy appearance in the natural world, makes precarious passage across incommensurable settings and images, each time coding and recoding it with an alternate sense till it sounds its final cadence in the manner of a contrived picardy third, forcing a 'plucked accord' out of 'dying', and a 'chaste economy' out of 'co-twined' tongues. If the 'martyr'd wild fowl' find 'purchase, governance, and

mercy' through the Biblical motif of 'honey', this promised desideratum, already uneasily close to the market, sheds its sacred provenance when redoubled as 'amber', inset as it is within the redoubling of the entire image sequence: birds roosting on honeyed cathedrals morph into bees producing amber in their cells.

Thus, while the fulfilment intimated in these passages is given its salvific sense with its religious lexicon, the manner of its combination is strained, densely collagistic rather than integrated, working by force of dreamlike condensation and syntactical correspondence rather than a traceable logic. The progression into the less esoteric musical figure of sympathetic strings (recalling the music of the spheres) disperses the lexical density accumulated in the previous lines, but, to the extent that it clarifies it also reduces, leaving the relations between 'honey' (or 'purchase, governance and mercy'), 'amber', and 'antiphon' both *overdetermined* (reducible to the *musica universalis*) and *underdetermined* (logically loose) all at once. The next two terms introduced in this sequence of syntactic parallels – 'adoration' and 'accord' – continue the alliterative slide begun with 'amber' as assonant overtones to its redemptive note, but, conversely, work to compress the call-response structure of protasis ('where…') and apodosis ('there…') into the very taxiological order of tragic time itself, the 'excellent arrangement of catastrophe' that answers *emergence* into life with *merger* in death. If love, here as elsewhere in Barnes's writings, contains a soteriology in seed, it is one that is caught two ways between the gastronomic law of 'eat[ing] each other's mouth' and its sublimated double of the 'singing' of 'tongue[s]', tending toward a 'chaste economy' that at the same time threatens to slide back into the cannibalistic. Uncanny plosive *pizzicati* steadily profane the

'compline' into a 'common clamour, co-intwined' and an uncertain 'economy' of grace. By the time the 'plucked accord' is sounded, the final rearticulated 'c' comes accompanied with two terminal 'd's, which, doubling those of the line before, drive through the semantic coagulate, and wind up the 'day' with 'dying'. Buber's 'sphere of the between', that is, implodes between call and response, protasis and apodosis; or, in more Winnicottian terms, the intermediate zone of play shuts down when the logic of the sentence catches up; or, once more, to modulate to a key more fitting to the musical reference of the play, the *rubato* – or 'robbed time' – enabling the imagistic latitude ranging from angels to amber-production, violas to wild fowl, succumbs to the syntactic *stringendo* that pushes the 'day' to its 'dying'. Each *da capo* of the 'antiphon' theme, that is, alters its meaning in the direction of the conventional till the final cadence sounds, clinching meaning, with a cliché. The '[k]ey-gone generation' built on a 'figured base [bass]' realised as '[s]o many scattered minims on the wind' is thus resolved on a tonal chord, bringing disharmony into 'accord'. The 'antiphon', tucked into the centre of the entire passage, ends up as the pivot on which redemption as 'mercy' lapses back into redemption as the restoration of the ontological tally. All profane songs and sacraments – 'downward obsequies,/ Lauds, canticles, requiems and masses' – thus find their end in nullity, numerically sealed: 'The upraised finger pointing zero (*Selected Works,* 218).'

'[R]esurrection' itself, so named, turns into a 'tussle in that trench', a battle over the units of grace left to the dead, and a continuation of this-worldly plaints and prejudices to 'justice' – *qua* 'bootless […] vindication' – in the

afterlife. Augusta, Miranda claims, would redistribute life from her daughter to one of the men of the family:

> You who would un-breath my dying breath
> From off the tell-tale mirror plate
> To blow into the famine of my brother's mouth,
> Haggling in a market place.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 217)

An unrelenting Mrs Lear, unfazed by her Cordelia's death, she would stall the latter's revival, or, at best, continue her hair-splitting into the next world:

> Why, at the first trump of impending Doom
> You'll come roaring up the galleys of the dead,–
> […]
> Crying '*J'accuse!*' and hale me by the browse
> And in alarm bark out 'Not this arouse!
> Guilt has her, let guilt haul her house!'
> […]
> Counting which of my hairs be summoned at the root.
>
> (*Selected Works,* 217)

The anaphoric formulation, leaping from 'guilt' as conditional ('Guilt has her') to 'guilt' as consequence ('let guilt haul her house!'), reinstates the onto-economic law of time towards the play's close in one summative line. The antiphon to the nursery reference of Act Two ('The king was in his counting house'— *Selected Works,* 120) turns out to be an accountant queen parsing graced follicle from damned. Resurrection, in *The Antiphon*, fails to take off: 'the phoenix runs upon the ash' (*Selected Works,* 201).

Julie Taylor's emphasis on the reparative – even 'redemptive' – potential of traumatic re-enactment is thus relevant but ultimately, I propose, shut down internally by a collapse of the antiphonal relation within *The Antiphon* itself (2012, 58, 62). Taylor's account, based on Seremetakis's study of Greek antiphonic mourning rituals, may in fact be supplemented by another study of the antiphonal relation with a more direct reference to the liturgical practices of the Eucharist and Mariology. Wallenfang's recent phenomenological account of the 'prosopic intercourse' involved in these practices characterises it as a 'dialectical relationship between *logos* and *fiat*' – that is, of the word given and its meaning received (2017, 209). The I-Thou relation of prosopic intercourse, Wallenfang continues, names an 'antiphony of the gift' whose 'partners' are 'engaged in lively dialogical play around the object of truth.' Such a 'dialectic', articulated explicitly outside of a Hegelian trajectory in which – so it is claimed – 'a sublation (*Aufhebung*) would resolve all polarity', works on the wayside of historical necessity to enable 'the interplay' or 'perpetual play of polarities between questions, assertions and meanings – in a word, communicative wonder.' The recognition here is of 'difference in proximate play' (2017, 42-3).

Such a non-Hegelian 'dialectic' derived from the sacramental relation would have been familiar to Barnes, who marks out in her copy of Maritain's *Art and Poetry* passages situating 'Gregorian melody' next to the music of Arthur Lourié (1943, 103). Lourié, in Maritain's esteem, stands for something like a figure of the 'anti-modern ultra-modernism' (Schloesser 2000, 189), whose *Dialectical Symphony*, written in his period of spiritual maturity that opens with the *Liturgical Sonata*, bears no 'reference to any logical play at all of thesis and

antithesis', but relates rather to 'that inner dialogue by which we converse continually with ourselves or with God (Maritain 1943, 98).' In another tendentious claim, the twentieth-century composer is likened to 'Mozart, angel of the word', one of the two composers of Marian hymns whose music Barnes imagines *The Antiphon* to be scored with (1943, 98).[17]

The 'prosopic intercourse' linking the Eucharist to Mariology is in fact depicted in *The Antiphon* as the parting or 'listing of the veil', under which, 'Either other head, empalmed, incline' – a sequence that is itself set within the protasis-apodosis structure ('if you hear, when you hear'; 'If the unleashed hand […] then under the listing') of the passage on the 'antiphon' (*Selected Writings*, 167). Yet, as Wallenfang himself notes, the 'dialectic' structuring of this intercourse is in essence a 'trilectic of testimony' (2017, 201). If the dialectic of 'the original I-Thou relation demands a role-reversal […] critical for the play of the gift' – which, as seen above, is enacted between August and Miranda – it requires, in addition to this, a *third term* that keeps a differential zone open between 'giver' and 'givee' for 'interrogative play' (2017, 201, 207). Without this, Wallenfang writes, following Louis-Marie Chauvet, of 'the danger for the

[17] See her 2 October 1968 letter to Cristina Campo: 'I wonder what The Antiphon would sound like? What would it be like as an Opera (music, naturally, by Monteverdi, or Mozart!)?' The references to Mozart's 'Queen of the Night' (from *Die Zauberflöte,* K.620) and the 'Queen of Heaven' (from the Latin Marian antiphon, *Regina Coeli,* K.276) within the play underscore this connection (*Selected Works,* 131, 212). Stromberg notes Barnes's gift to Peter Hoare in 1939 of a book on Mozart as an 'antidote' to the outbreak of the war, characterising him – though without citing any evidence – as Barnes's 'bevorzugte[r] Komponist' (1989, 119). That Maritain's writings were on her mind during the composition of *The Antiphon* is suggested by the fact that Barnes mailed a copy of her play to the Thomist scholar in order to solicit his opinion. The very phrase that Maritain deploys in his analysis of Lourié's music – 'a gaze contained in nothing' – also appears in *The Antiphon* (1943, 98; *Selected Works,* 215).

gratuitousness even of grace to become sinister', reducing the 'authentic human subject' into 'a mere mannequin without voice', a 'frozen receptacle or pawn of the repressive power of the gift' – 'trapped', in his words, 'in a lock-joint economy of exchange' (2017, 201-2).[18]

Here again, the redemption the antiphon promises is absorbed into the onto-economic law inscribed in the Anaximander Fragment. On the one hand, therefore, the 'boundless fecundity of the Eucharist' is ascribed to 'the interrogative play around the symbolic phenomenality' that arises insofar as 'Christ prototypically absents himself to the senses', necessitating thereby the 'inversion' in the 'subjective intentionality of faith' – that is, 'the inverted intentionality' that allows body to communicate as word. Simply put, the withdrawal of Christ from empirical perception prompts the interrogative attention of the devotee, who receives a provisional response from the host in the form of symbols. On the other hand, this continued production of 'symbolic phenomenality' in the antiphonal relation is prone to its profanation given the 'closing up' of 'every fissure between body and word' (2017, 207-9). The meaning of the gift, in such a scenario, is not a symbolic or sublimated return, but an identical substitute. In the filiative relation of *The Antiphon*, the gift of life becomes an existential debt to be settled only in the return of life, that is, as *ontological expiation*: milk for milk; flesh for flesh. In Barnes's play, the profanation of the antiphonal relation thus leads to the implosion of the intersubjective dialectic, resulting in a prosopic encounter that turns cannibal: more than a meeting of faces, it intussuscepts into a meeting of mouths.

[18] See also Chauvet 1995, 108.

These exchanges between *prosopa* are profaned first by Dudley and Elisha's donning of animal masks, pig and ass, bestialising not only themselves but also their mother and sister with their sexual taunting. The description of Titus's first 'dead bastard child' is, similarly, focalised on its collapsed *prosopon*: its 'Face shut, foreclosed' (*Selected Writings*, 165). Further on, it is the visage of Christ itself that is profaned, whose impress on the Veil of Veronica is drained of its sacral reference, mutating into the creaturely dimensions of dodging matador (the red 'veronica' of bullfighting) and flightless bird: 'a moor-hen, watching a hawk heel in,—/ Draw 'round in dust the broken wing/ Its last veronica (*Selected Works*, 222).' The true (*vera*) image (*icon*) of Christ, impressed onto the veil that Saint Veronica offers to him on his passage to Golgotha – a motif depicted by, among others, Dürer and Memling – carries now little by way of salvation as life confronts the final summons of death. If the sacrament grounds the production of symbols by withdrawing Christ from the immediate phenomenality of the Eucharistic *res*, by the end of *The Antiphon*, the entire realm of symbols is bracketed out from reality. The prosopic intercourse turns barren, a 'clocked encounter': 'we are face to face/ With this the fadged up ends of discontent'; 'So we stare on each the other with unbuttoned eyes' (*Selected Works,* 189, 213-4). Augusta, despairing, laments – 'Women were not saved, then, after all', to which Miranda responds:

> Saved!
> I've seen my people set the canine tooth
> Into the Host;
> I've heard them lapping at the wound.
> What think you?
>
> (*Selected Works,* 215-6)

*Figure 5.5* Hans Memling, *Saint Veronica*, c.1470/1475, oil on panel. Washington, DC, National Gallery of Art.

The anti-theodicy enclosed in the tragic theatre of *The Antiphon* is thus based on a form of 'negation' that is inassimilable to a variety of Hegelian and neo-Hegelian formulations. If scholarship on 'late modernism' has often considered its aesthetic practices as the negated afterlife to 'high modernism''s investments in redemptive form, the 'negation' that is invoked here is often implicated in a Hegelian logic (Miller 1999; Blanton 2015). Blanton's retrospective of the critical field is perhaps an exemplary formulation: the aesthetic logic of 'late modernism', he writes, is the '*determinate* negation, in the full Hegelian sense' of 'high modernism' (2015, 12). If the divergent accounts of 'late modernism' that have arisen in critical scholarship present a chronological

inconsistency, they may, however, be consistently conceptualised – not *chronologically* – but *logically*, as manifestations of 'the dialectical fold *within* the logic of modernism as such, the completion of its thought' (2015, 19-21). For Blanton, the 'lateness' of late modernism inheres in its displaced commitment to totality, no longer to be found in aesthetic form itself, but encrypted in a negative relation: 'a late style disarticulates or encrypts a totality that it cannot quite name […] a totality that it cannot express but must aesthetically register nonetheless (2015, 21).' Instead of a recovery of the ruins of history within the formal contours of the artwork, the late modernist text *includes* such a displaced totality only by way of an *exclusion*, via, that is, a *negative* relation to the present. The logic of the 'Mosaic negative',[19] for Blanton, operates in bracketing out 'modernism's present – that whole conjuncture formed in the long revolution between 1914 and 1945 – into a state of mimetic unrepresentability', in order to recover from this, 'the concept itself as dialectical compensation' (2015, 17, 331). The entire traumatic sequence of war and interwar years, that is, forms the cultural unconscious encrypted in the artwork itself, which undertakes, at the same time, the critical work that enables it to be read. If, for Blanton, a 'belated critical *knowledge*' emerges from the negation of the attempted totalisation of history in art (2015, 328), we might say then with Augusta as she approaches her life's end: 'You call this wisdom? Aii, I call it winter!' (*Selected Works*, 202)

In staging a form of negation more in keeping with the tragic principle of the Anaximander Fragment than the comic narrative of the dialectical self-progression of spirit, *The Antiphon* insists on an end without recompense: as a

[19] This is Ezra Pound's formula ('A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste', 201).

'last judgement' on past time, it draws in the diverse and the dappled in order to monumentalise the end, bringing it to fulfilment as the antitype to Creation.[20] If, within a neo-Hegelian framework, the 'late style' of late modernism inheres in 'a willingness to let irreconcilable elements of a work remain as they are: episodic, fragmentary, unfinished (i.e. unpolished)', this oppositional relation to 'resolution and reconciliation' in the form of 'irascible transgressiveness' nonetheless continues to preserve a negative relation to an excluded totality, insofar as it is displaced to the future, in the afterlife of such transgression (Blanton 2015, 302).[21] The antinomies of history, that is, are retained and foregrounded in the artwork, rather than resolved. Against this account, the 'late style' of *The Antiphon* pushes rather toward the universal de-authentication of life in a summary judgement – in the negative – of past time from the vantage ground of the end, involving a *totalising*, rather than 'fragmentary' or 'unfinished', presentation of Creation as barren and defunct. Another kind of *epoché* thus bookends the interwar years: set in 1939 at the outbreak of the war, with the departure of the last ships out of Europe stranding the remaining residents,[22] *The Antiphon*, it would seem, encloses the interwar years not as the

[20] In this, *The Antiphon* operates on an apocalyptic principle more similar to that of Heidegger, who detects 'the essence of the tragic' in 'Der Spruch des Anaximanders' (1946) – not just 'psychologically or aesthetically', but in 'its essential form, the being of beings' (2015, 357-8). As Karen Gover observes: 'whereas for Hegel the story [of Being] is comic, as the dialectic resolves itself in Absolute Knowing, for Heidegger it is a tragic going-under; a devastating recognition of a hidden destiny of being in which Western humanity discovers itself to be both unwitting victim and protagonist (2009, 42).'

[21] Blanton's reference here is to Adorno's *Spätstil*, which he elaborates via Edward Said (2004, 28-9).

[22] In her correspondence with Eliot, however, Barnes inquires as to whether there was, technically, a 'last ship': 'Or was there a last? I was in Paris in 1939, at the beginning of the war and when I tried to return to London (in October) I was

time of trauma – the unlived and unliveable time driven into the unconscious, reclaimed only latterly, *nachträglich*, as critical knowledge – but as 'borrowed' time, the time, that is, of the contraction of *ontological guilt*. 'Negation', here, is conceived not so much as a dialectical process, but as the return of this stolen time, the expiation of existence itself.

Barnes herself, in a letter to Coleman on 15 December 1938, makes reference to an account of modernity based on a history of consciousness seemingly inflected by a Hegelian logic – one that, as with Blanton, retrieves conceptual thought from the afterlife of the image.[23] It is this very movement of sublation that is raised and resisted:

> I've just discovered what I am (reading an article on "The History of Ideas"), a woman of the Old Stone Age. "The Stone Age artist saw what he was drawing, like a waking dream in front of him. But that power had to go if men (when men) began to think how they saw and drew – I dont [*sic*] want to lose that power.

If, according to this 'history of ideas' it is reflective thinking that arises from the negation of the unmediated image, a late Barnesian aesthetic that repudiates history, it would seem, equally ends up refusing the recompense that comes with time. This other mode of 'negation', as I have suggested, is better

---

told that no ship could be had for channel crossing' (Barnes to T. S. Eliot, 26 September 1956).

[23] For Blanton, the 'concept itself as dialectical compensation' is retrieved from the negation of 'Poundian *phanopoeia*' or 'modernist picture-writing'. Late modernism no longer depicts the 'concrete universal' (*qua* image of history) but negates and supersedes this as the 'thought of universality as such' (*qua* logic of history), 'universalizing in tendency rather than merely complete' (2015, 12, 331-2).

characterised as *regression* than transgression: if images are born to the 'Stone Age artist' as a kind of revelation or 'deconcealment' of being, they do not so much find their negated afterlife in the concept in the late modern artist as return to concealment. Barnes's refusal of the passage from image to thought, vision to concept, departs from the trajectory of history, without, however, being able to authenticate the phenomenal world of the 'Stone Age'. The *negation* of the image, that is, produces not the concept, but simply, the collapse of phenomenality itself. What this implies is that the notion of art's provenance in the epiphany finds its fulfilment in the recognition of itself as a dream in *longue durée* – that is, that the epiphany itself has been all this while *apophany*: false sight.

In withdrawing the 'real' from time and being, all of history is bracketed out as 'hocum', and life, not just 'love's labour's lost', but 'love's debris' – '[t]hat horrid holocaust' strewn over the cosmic theatre of *The Antiphon* (*Selected Works,* 207). The play's return to Oedipus is thus one sign in this direction: 'Yet who knows, when Oedipus grubbed out/ The luggage of his sight upon a pin,/ For what in-caverned vision then he mined?' (*Selected Works,* 204-5) Not the birth of an image that would find its way into existence as a cave-painting then, and thereafter the whole edifice of culture, but an 'in-caverned vision' that turns the individual against himself. The reversal, once again, is articulated in a typological relation that folds Creation back to the 'uncreate': Augusta, made to witness her daughter's violation in miniature, becomes 'pregnant' with an 'eye-baby' that she will 'carry in [her] iris to the grave', gestating trauma and tragic time within her, as it were, as a kind of ticking-toward-death (*Selected Works*,

185). It is not just Oedipus, after all, who bleeds out his eye as a figure for the apophany staged in *The Antiphon*: 'some rudiment of forgotten nature squalls/ In the horned-toad's eye, that it spills blood/ Who is too hideous to mourn' (*Selected Works,* 181).

The 'lateness' of Barnes's 'late style' thus consists in a totalising gesture by which all of past time is hauled into the *epoché* of the 'time of guilt' rather than salvational history, contractually bound to nonbeing. Of this desacralised, creaturely time, she writes to Barney on 12 April 1968: 'The worlds [*sic*] history (to date) A beastly time for beasts.' Its *refusal* – without the prospect of a negated afterlife – thus names the tragic decision summed up in Miranda's last judgement: 'Mother, there's no more time. All's done (*Selected Works*, 199).'

# Conclusion

> Love is death, and death is maidenly.
> It wrestles in the brasses and the rods
> Of whatsoever trestle love lies on.
> What else but murder with the mackerel eye
> Couples with the tenants of that bed?
>
> (*Selected Writings*, 196)

> Perhaps all women are really obscene, for they make love to death in their hearts. So did Swann. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 20-23 March 1939)

For Barnes, it is perhaps with the loss of Thelma that the divided self, canonically formulated by Freud in 'Mourning and Melancholia', is aggravated into a crisis of spiritual filiation – one that simplifies itself, in the *last* instance, into an existential either/or: *life or death*. Freud's melancholic Fury, initially named 'the critical activity of the ego', said to hunt down the very self from which it is in the first place spawned, is in fact later revealed to be one of the 'myrmidons of death' (*SE* XIV, 249; *SE* XIX, 28-59; *SE* XVIII, 39). The entombed lover of the melancholic courts – and *crushes* – her subjugated partner into the coffin of herself. A recurrent motif in Barnes's work exhibits this splitting of the melancholic into internecine bondage in aesthetic terms: *Death and the Maiden*, having emerged from the *memento mori* of the medieval *Totentanz*, and made

passage from Dürer, Memling, and Hans Holbein, through Schubert and the Romantics into the modern world of Edvard Munch, Egon Schiele, and Ingmar Bergman (*The Seventh Seal*),[1] now finds a Barnesian formulation. Whether death is named the transitive object of love ('make love to death'), or referenced in the form of an ethical dative – that is, as it were, under his 'mackerel eye' or its 'mackerel sky' (*Nightwood*, 146) – it is now indissociable from 'love' itself, which drains the living world into a scene of vastation.[2] Thelma Wood, taking up spectral residence in Barnes, binds her in an erotic contract with the afterlife. As Barnes writes in her 13/16 October 1938 letter to Coleman:

> I think I am taking on to myself Thelma's wish to murder me, doing it myself, so it wont [*sic*] be suicide after all, when it happens (how many suicides <u>are</u> suicide and how many proxy murders?)

In this account, familiar to readers of Freud, the melancholic entombment of the departed lover within the spaces of the self results in its division into an active agency of negation and its subordinated remainder, effectively apportioning the subject into the principalities of life and death. The partial expropriation of the self in love, it is suggested, is to be consummated vicariously by one's own hand, 'proxy' here to the departed, whose pain – *and* the pain she has induced – is pinned to a murderous wish. Dispossessed of her own life, the melancholic is now repossessed by death: 'Thelma's wish' now resides with her.

---

[1] Barnes's admiration of Bergman's films – in particular *The Seventh Seal* and *Virgin Spring* – is recorded by O'Neal: 'she saw all his movies'; 'his ideas about God and religion are very similar to her own (1990, 37).'

[2] In *The Antiphon*, 'the whole of love's debris' is thus characterised as a 'horrid holocaust': 'insects shed, and birds in copulation/ Moult; and in some kinds the very beaks are wrung/ And scattered all about the forest floor!' (*Selected Works*, 207)

Two years later, back in America and confined in the sanatorium, a reference to *King Lear* (IV.i.50-1) reintroduces this bifurcated self, now depicted in an image of autophagy:

> "Humanity must prey upon itself like monsters […] of the deep". So I did upon myself perform, I forgot myself, how shall I be marvelled when I have eaten up my relique and antiquity in my own time? […] We all bring ourselves to the grave but the artist like two people is one who pushes and who is pushed. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 30 March/1 April 1940)

Barnes's *memento mori* takes a morbid turn in this formulation: the Dance of Death that afflicts the multitude ('we all bring ourselves to the grave') is re-choreographed into a *pas de deux* by the divided parts of the 'artist', given over now to a fatefully coordinated pulse of action (pushing) and submission (pushed). The eschatological question, however, remains: in turning against itself, is her geminated body, engaged in self-consumption, re-oriented toward that radical finitude signalled in Heidegger's 'being-toward-death', or toward that anticipated renewal that Ricoeur finds 'in the light of the Resurrection'? (Ricoeur 1974, 409-10) Touched by death, the subject is interpellated by the theodistical question: in the posthumous existence of something like a 'walking mort',[3] does she finally affiliate herself with *life*, or repeat herself into *death*? Divided from herself in melancholic existence, does she take the *leap* toward a reunification with comic *continuity* or tragic *closure*?

[3] Barnes's late poem, 'The Walking-Mort' was published on 15 May 1971 in the *New Yorker* (*Collected Poems*, 138). Decades earlier, in a letter to Natalie Barney dated 27 April 1934, Barnes already references herself as the walking dead: 'so when I told I was dead, I realized that it was quite correct – only the body is still walking.'

As I have suggested in my introduction, the antiphonal return to suffering encrypts an existential decision and *judgement* on Creation, along with the Creator, as, in the last instance, *comedy* or *tragedy*. My individual chapters have offered differing answers, reading each of Barnes's works as the instantiation of a self-contained ontology of the comic or tragic, suggesting that each reconsideration of life from the perspective of the end, is re-opened once more with the passage of time. The paradox here, then, of *aesthetic decisions* made in a temporal continuum of *indecisions* – that is, of literary *antitypoi* produced after the *typos* of past time – suggests that insofar as there still is life and 'the time that remains' (Agamben 2005), the *question of theodicy will be re-posed*. Does the body into which melancholy has made its incursions – a 'relique and antiquity' immured in a sanatorium – in devouring its own past, sedimented in the flesh, awaken after all to a new youth? This cryptic intimation embedded in Barnes's 1940 letter emerges again a year later. If the stakes of a decisive affiliation are clearer here, the verdict, however, remains ambivalent:

> I'd really be quite content (as the word goes) now in this room to myself, and the trees coming into leaf, only it were not for Europe. It is bearable because I have lost everything. What I have now is a new, almost new life, lean and full of memories; because of losing everything, those memories are dead memories; not lost, but different: the finishing cut was made in this country. Now I can begin again "naked as I came into this world"..an aged birth. It is in the Bible so. I am laid in the skeleton instead of the cradle. (Barnes to Emily Coleman, 19 April 1941)

If 'the finishing cut' – consummating the injuries dealt by poverty, familial estrangement, broken loves, ill health, transatlantic alienation, and a Europe torn apart by war – is now made, Barnes's return to the New World, with an 'almost

new life', occasions ambiguous relief. Predicated on death, having 'los[t] everything', a host now to 'dead memories', her rebirth from melancholia remains paradoxically an 'aged birth' *into* death. Having superseded death, she returns once more re-oriented toward it: 'I am laid in the skeleton instead of the cradle.' The walking-mort is resurrected *as* the walking-mort. The reference to the lines in the Book of Job here where divine contestation gives way to – if not reconciliation – at least resignation, is shadowed in Barnes by a renewed commitment to death.[4]

In my reading of melancholy as a soteriological crisis, I have situated it at the existential region into which one *falls* – from mythic unity into ontological division. The *embodied subject,* as a psychosomatic aporia. is expropriated from itself to be exposed to the uncertainty of grace: in the liminal zone between denaturalisation (from Animal-being) and divinisation (into Christological Man), s/he remains bonded to a bride behind whose veil may be found either Christ – or his profane antitype, Death. Here in the lived space of melancholia, involving the bodily effects and affects ranging from laughing and crying to hybridisation across sex- and species- difference, the divided subject decides, in an *aesthetic judgement*, on the *end*. Is the aftermath of melancholy – its dialectical overcoming – rooted, finally, in the existential choice of life or death?

I conclude my thesis here by returning to the question of theodicy. Whether implicitly or explicitly, recent critical scholarship on melancholy has

[4] 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly (Job 1:21-22).'

often embedded it within a general ontology of the comic. If Bahun's 'symptom' is predicated on the *continuity* of wounded existence, proposing the notion of a 'countermourning' in modernist art as a partial 'cure', Flatley draws on Adorno's notion of the 'aesthetic shudder' to suggest that a certain kind of death ('the liquidation of the I'), provoked by the artwork, shatters the melancholic subject to return her – *re-subjectivised*, or, as it were, 'rethrown' – into the world disclosed now in alternate dimensions, in a new *mood* and *mode* (Bahun 2013, 9, 33; Flatley 2008, 82; Adorno 2013, 333). Melancholy, in both cases, is dialectically constellated with comedy. Aligning himself with Martha Nussbaum's understanding of tragedy as a kind of 'healing without cure' – even 'therapy' – Rowan Williams, similarly, reads 'reconciliation' alongside the shattered subject's return to life, its 'reconstitut[ion] […] as *psyche*', however fragile this remains (Williams 2016, 78-9; Nussbaum 2001, 82, 93).

This names, in essence, a ''conversion', in the biblical sense of a radical change of perception (Williams 2016, 27).' Here too, comic continuity follows from – in fact, *enframes* – tragic closure, reduced now to the finite perspective of the individual or the artwork, inset within Christianity's Divine Comedy: the time that remains is thus read as a 'showing of the sacred, that excess of unearned, unexpected life that sustains us in going on speaking and thinking (2016, 27).' Along these lines, those who attempt to put an end to time and narrative affiliate themselves with 'the demonic' (Williams 2008, 13). The *repetition without*

*difference* of mortal life *as* mortal life is hence characterised, in Williams's thought, as a 'neutral reportage of the world's "being-toward-death"' (2008, 74).[5]

These make *strong* claims, in two different senses: i. in their ethical commitment to life, they instate, however minimally or however *weak*, a theodicy that sustains a continued libidinal tie to the created world; ii. in the *leap of faith* that is taken toward that 'sacred excess' of time known as the future. *Time, here, remains the eternal gift*. The possibility of another outcome, however, has been raised – even if, perhaps, not endorsed – by one of modernism's most prominent voices – and victims – of the twentieth century. Having spoken of the '*weak* messianic power'[6] that remains in the hands of the living, bequeathed with the resuscitative force to *rewrite* the past – an act whose salvific reach, in spite of its weakness, entails nothing less than the reclaiming of the dead – Walter Benjamin goes on to suggest that we might after all be *too weak* to seize even this *weak power*:

---

[5] Williams characteristically excludes the possibility of a tragic decision. Christological Man, by definition *chooses* comedy: 'Actual authorship […] like actual choice, is both a response to the seductive lure of negation (as defined in the Inquisitorial world) and a negation of that negation. It is a protest against premature closure and an act that makes such closure more difficult by further complicating the human narrative (2008, 79).' Yet *tragic authorship*, like *tragic choice*, constitutes, arguably, more than just 'neutral reportage', and may be formulated instead as a *differential repetition* of past time in the direction of radical finitude.

[6] This '*weak* messianic power' is thus distinct from the panoptic redemption of all past time: 'only a redeemed mankind is granted the fullness of its past – which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. Each moment it has lived becomes a citation *à l'ordre du jour*. And that day is Judgment Day (Benjamin 2003, 390).' For a reading of Benjamin's '*weak* possibility of theology' – or 'anatheology' – of 'unfinished time', as a qualified redemption of 'the missed or the distorted – hunchbacked – possibilities' of history, see Hamacher 2005.

> The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer; he comes as the victor over the Antichrist. The only historian capable of fanning the spark of hope in the past is the one who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious. (Benjamin 2003, 391)

The 'Messiah' and the 'Antichrist' are opposed here as the factions of life and death. These terms, moreover, splinter into finer ones: more than just the physical markers of sentience, they reference the notion of something like a *second life* and a *second death.*[7] If death comes to all mortal bodies, the 'historian' who retrieves these in his seizure of the past preserves them in the long narrative of the Holy Community; that he might fail in his task, however, is not only possible, but perhaps inevitable: '*even the dead*' – in their first death as mortal beings – 'will not be safe from the enemy if he is victorious'. The strident qualifier introduced with the conditional ('*if*') expands, in fact, into tragic dimensions: the Antichrist, it turns out, 'has never ceased to be victorious'. A portion of humanity has already been delivered over to their *second death*. It is possible to understand this as a consignment to total oblivion, an exclusion from the *logos* itself, unregarded by the gaze of the Creator and those created in His image. This too, however, raises the consideration of *two* situations in which such oblivion and such exile from language and community might hold: i. in the reign of '*acedia*' – the spiritual frailty emblematically attached to 'melancholy' itself in medieval and Early Modern thinking – under which the past fails to attain its typological fulfilment in the present via historical consciousness – when past time, that is, fails to be *rewritten* due to 'the indolence of the heart', and can only be non-differentially repeated (Benjamin 2003, 391); and ii. *when*

[7] See also the 'second death' of Revelation 21:8.

*there are none left to look to the past*. No remembrance of past time is to be had in a world *after humanity*. Williams's sacred excess of 'unearned, unexpected life', that is, may not come. What Benjamin reminds us of here as he faces the irreducible evil looming in the horizon of the Holocaust is that humanity's final *decision* to affiliate itself with *life* or *death* – one that is existentially enacted even if not thematised – remains to be settled.

If I have suggested that each of Barnes's works encloses an aesthetic last judgement on the question of theodicy, which finds itself overturned or confirmed in the next, would it be possible then to pose here in my concluding segment the question of a *last* last judgement? Does Barnes, that is, finally commit herself to life (in the light of the Resurrection) or death (as a decision against Creation)? In one of her letters to Natalie Barney in later life, the same ambivalence is retained in a joyous reach toward the prospect of seasonal renewal. Yet, given the ironic form of its contracted nominalisation, 'springtimeconce [once; comes] again' *again* raises the spectre of its companion saboteur. 'Spring Again!', to recall, ushers in the 'Grim Raper':

> To greet you back to springtimeconce again—and in the same domain, all furbished fresh, but long since the trotting horses gone, but then what price our glory, all who yet remain?
>
> That's what keeps getting turned over and over—and if you haven't a late and dreadful picture of yourself printed and in the public eye, as I, looking like […] Holbeins [*sic*] Erasmus, shot into it, without the gradual preparation, the yearly (or nearly so) press portrait of this so-and-so so, doing this and this, then the dereliction is not so abrupt, the notice [not?] so startling. I now can start afresh—I'm no longer me!' (Barnes to Natalie Barney, 12 April 1969)

Nearly into her eighth decade, Barnes greets the return of another spring 'in the same domain', with a reflection on the 'price' of those 'who yet remain' in the 'glory' of Creation, 'furbished fresh'. In the uncertain place of a recurrence to no end – as *sacred gift* or *Sisyphean snare* – 'what keeps getting turned over and over' turns on an existence whose 'glory' remains hanging in the balance against its 'price': is life, after all, worth it?

Here too, the dialectic of the body before its visual double is reprised: projected against the eidetic stasis of the photographic – or painted – image, the mortal flesh appears to die to itself – not, however, necessarily *into life* in the manner of Keats's Apollo (1982, l.127-30) – but possibly, into a return to 'The End Game' of the decrepit, eternally decrescent, body.[8] It is not so much in the aesthetic avatar of the organism that redemption is to be found, since here too, it is retrieved in 'dereliction' – etymological tied to the desiccated 'relique' to be consumed. Its 'abrupt' transport ('without gradual preparation') from flesh to filmic surface is brought into relief by the conjugation of spatialisation and death, 'shot into' in the flash of the camera's lens, dispossessed from oneself to be disseminated beneath the 'public eye'. The *memento mori* of the 'press portrait', like spring itself, comes 'yearly (or nearly so)'. Holbein, well-known for his oblique inclusion of death in *The Ambassadors* (1533) and his *Totentanz* in the *Alphabet of Death* (1538), thus forms Barnes's point of reference here after she

[8] The reference to *Endgame* (1957) is addressed to Beckett himself, in a 2 January 1971 letter in which she reports of her 'savage operations, and now arthritis. It is arthritis that puts one into The End Game.' She adds: 'Nothing saves one but money. It's dying that has now become prohibitive.'

comes upon the Bo Beskow's photograph of herself in his 1969 biography of Hammarskjöld.[9]

*Figure C.1* Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 1523, oil on wood. London, National Gallery.

[9] See, in particular, Greenblatt's reading of the anamorphic skull in *The Ambassadors* – its 'uncanny inaccessibility and absence' at the heart of life and conquest (2005, 11-73).

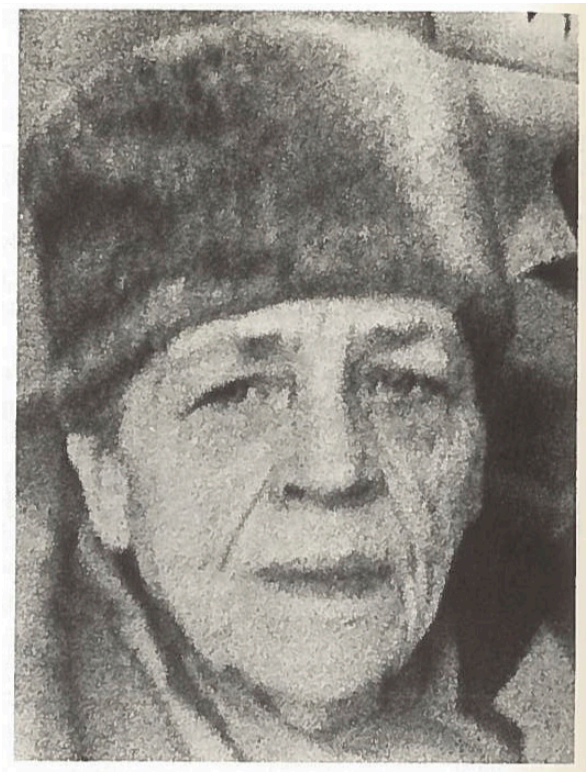


*Figure C.2* Bo Beskow, Photograph of Djuna Barnes, *Dag Hammarskjöld: Strictly Personal*. © Bo Beskow

*Figure C.3* Photograph of Djuna Barnes leaning on her hand, October 1957. © Author's League Fund.

All the same, a sense of renewal is registered in Barnes's lines to Barney in the spring of 1969, even if lingering doubts do come through its gay irony. With a kind of 'aesthetic *shutter*', as it were, Barnes, like *Ulysses*'s Bloom, retrieves a '[n]ew lease of life' from a public broadcast of death (Joyce 1986, 6.796), *re-thrown* into the world: 'I now can start afresh—I'm no longer me!' It is worth recalling, after all, that after *The Antiphon* came *Creatures in an Alphabet*. This move to enclose tragedy *within* comedy may, however, be set beside another remark of hers to James Scott in 1971 after being put through a battery of surgical interventions: 'Old people should be killed; you know that? There should be a law. This business of keeping them alive – its inhuman! I'm already dead. Do you know that? I've already died, and they brought me back. Now I have to go through the whole horrid business again!' (cited in Herring 1995, 309-10) The inverse enclosure of comedy within tragedy is suggested here: in the perennial repetition of death, in choosing it over and over again against the resurgence of that life deemed not worth living, the outlines of an anti-theodicy once again emerge.

*Figures C.4* & *C.5* Hans Holbein the Younger, 'S' and 'Z' from *Alphabet mit dem Todtentanz,* 1538, woodcut. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

In the melancholic's decisive marriage to Death in tragedy, then, a fundamental turn away from the medieval trope of the *Totentanz* is taken. The latter, in essence, places the *first death* of the mortal body, alongside the contingent ephemera of the present world, in the service of a Divine Comedy which raises, from the remains of an apocalyptically re-visioned world, that of the Kingdom to come. The *tragic decision*, however, is affirmed precisely where futurity itself – the very prospect of the time 'to come' – is judged *false* and/or *evil* – that is, it may not come, and if it does, is either illusory or wrong, necessitating refusal. In this *counter-judgement* against Creation, the tragic artist typologically repeats the body of God with that of the Antichrist, to whom she is now bound. This, then, constitutes the choice of that *second death*, taken during the time of the living, and consummated after such time itself. *Creatures in an Alphabet* may suggest that this is, finally, *not* the decision that Barnes takes on; yet, placed beside the Holbein *Alphabet of Death,* the comic frame of the former

becomes, perhaps, less certain. If Death in Holbein's woodcuts sweeps up the work of the living in its rhapsodic waltz across the world – analogically represented in the alphabetical series – making its rounds across the strata of society, with ports of call at the King's and the Queen's, the Soldier's and the Scholar's – including, inevitably, an erotic tryst with the Maiden – his task is folded, finally, with the concluding 'Z' imprint of the Last Judgement and the Resurrection. In Barnes's *Alphabet*, however, it is precisely this last 'Z' stanza that never comes.

# Bibliography


*Oxford English Dictionary: The Definitive Record of the English Language.* 2010. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

*The Revelation of Saint John The Divine*. 1926. Foreword by Ernest H. Short. Plates by Albrecht Dürer. London: P. Allen.

Abraham, Nicholas and Maria Torok. 1994. *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, Volume 1*, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Adamowicz, Elza. 1998. *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, Theodor Wiesengrund. 2013. *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
———. 2005. *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott London: Verso Books.
———. 1990. *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton. London: Routledge.
———. 2016. *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
———. 2002. *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone. London: Routledge.

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 1993. *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron. London: Verso Books.
———. 2011a. *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa, with Matteo Mandarini. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 1991. *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. Karen E. Pinkus and Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
———. 2011b. *Nudities*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 2004. *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans Kevin Attell. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 2015. *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
———. 2005. *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2005. *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 1997. 'Vocation and Voice'. *Qui Parle* 10, no. 2 (Spring/Summer): 89-100.

Anderson, Elizabeth, Andrew Radford, and Heather Walton, ed. 2016. *Modernist Women Writers and Spirituality: A Piercing Darkness.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Apollinaire, Guillaume. 2001. *Apollinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews, 1902-1918*, ed. LeRoy C. Breunig. Boston, MA: ArtWorks.
———. 2011. *The Bestiary: or Procession of Orpheus*, trans. X.J. Kennedy. Woodcuts by Raoul Dufy. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
———. 1911. *Le Bestiaire ou cortège d'Orphée.* Woodcuts by Raoul Dufy. Paris: Deplanche, Éditeur d'Art.
———. 1978. *Poésies libres*, ed. Michel Décaudin*.* Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert.
———. 2015. *Selected Poems*, trans. Martin Sorrell. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aragon, Louis. 1980. *Paris Peasant*, trans. Simon Watson-Taylor. Cambridge MA: Exact Change.

Aristotle, Longinus, and Demetrius. 1995. *Aristotle: Poetics. Longinus: On the Sublime. Demetrius: On Style,* trans. Stephen Halliwell, W. Hamilton Fyfe, Doreen C. Innes, W. Rhys Roberts. Revised by Donald A. Russell. Loeb Classical Library 199. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Armond, Kate. 2012. 'Allegory and Dismemberment: Reading Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* Through the Forms of the Baroque Trauerspiel'. *Textual Practice* 26 (5): 851–70.

Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. 2008 [1954]. *The City of God. Books XVII-XXII (The Fathers of the Church: Vol. 24)*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press.
———. 2008. *Homilies on the First Epistle of John (In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos)*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, Daniel E. Doyle, and Thomas Martin, trans. Boniface Ramsey. Hyde Park, NY: New York City Press.
———. 1912. *St. Augustine's Confessions*, trans. William Watts. 2 vols. London: William Heinemann.

Ayers, David. 2017. De Anima: Or, *Ulysses* and the Theological Turn in Modernist Studies. *Humanities* 6 (3). https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0787/6/3/57.

Babb, Lawrence. 1951. *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642.* East Lansing: Michigan State College Press.

Bahun, Sanja. 2013. *Modernism and Melancholia: Writing as Countermourning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1984a. *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
———. 1984b. *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Balsamo, Gian. 2004. *Joyce's Messianism: Dante, Negative Existence, and the Messianic Self*. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina.

Barnes, Djuna. 1922. 'Against Nature: In Which Everything that is Young, Inadequate and Tiresome is Included in the Term Natural'. *Vanity Fair* 18, August 1922. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 12, Folder 5.
———. 2000 [1958]. *The Antiphon*. København & Los Angeles: Green Integer.
———. 1916. 'Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians'. *New York Morning Telegraph Sunday Magazine*, 19 November 1916. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 17, Folder 4.
———. 2005. *Collected Poems, With Notes toward the Memoirs*, ed. Phillip Herring and Osías Stutman. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
———. 1996. *Collected Stories*, ed. Phillip Herring. Los Angeles: Son & Moon Press.
———. 1982. *Creatures in an Alphabet*. Design by Francesca Belanger. New York: The Dial Press.
———. 1929a. 'The Dear Dead Days: Love is Done Different on our Current Stage'. *Theatre Guild Magazine*, February 1929. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 12, Folder 14.
———. 1914. 'The Girl and the Gorilla'. *New York World Magazine*, 18 October 1914. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III Box 17, Folder 26.
———. Undated. 'History of an American Family'. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 5, Folder 17.
———. 1985. *Interviews*, ed. Alyce Barry. Foreword by Douglas Messerli. Washington, DC: Sun & Moon Press.
———. 1913. 'The Joke in the Tragedy of the Other Man's Life'. From 'Types found in Odd Corners About Brooklyn'. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 1 September 1913. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series VIII, Box 9, Folder 1.
———. 2006 [1928]. *Ladies Almanack*. Afterword by Daniela Caselli. Manchester: Carcanet.
———. 1948. Letter to Agenzia Litteraria Internazional. 8 October 1948. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 5.
———. 1934. Letter to Natalie Clifford Barney. 27 April 1934. Chancellerie des Universités de Paris, Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris.
———. 1968a. Letter to Natalie Clifford Barney. 29 February 1968. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 46.
———. 1968b. Letter to Natalie Clifford Barney. 12 April 1968. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 46.

———. 1968c. Letter to Natalie Clifford Barney. 14 August 1968. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 46.
———. 1969. Letter to Natalie Clifford Barney. 12 April 1969. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 46.
———. 1971. Letter to Samuel Beckett. 2 January 1971. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 50.
———. 1966. Letter to Fabienne Benedict. 9 November 1966. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 1, Folder 52.
———. 1968d. Letter to Cristina Campo. 2 October 1968. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 2, Folder 43.
———. 1936. Letter to Emily Coleman, 13 August 1936. Emily Holmes Coleman Collection, University of Delaware Library Special Collections.
———. 1937. Letter to Emily Coleman. 30 November 1937. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 10.
———. 1938a. Letter to Emily Coleman. 21 May 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 11.
———. 1938b. Letter to Emily Coleman. 24 June 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.Series II, Box 3, Folder 11.
———. 1938c. Letter to Emily Coleman. 25 July 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 11.
———. 1938d. Letter to Emily Coleman. 7 August 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938e. Letter to Emily Coleman. 11 August 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938f. Letter to Emily Coleman, 2 September 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938g. Letter to Emily Coleman. 13/16 October 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938h. Letter to Emily Coleman, 30 October 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938i. Letter to Emily Coleman. 13/19 November 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1938j. Letter to Emily Coleman. 15 December 1938. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 12.
———. 1939a. Letter to Emily Coleman. 4 February 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.
———. 1939b. Letter to Emily Coleman. 28 February 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.
———. 1939c. Letter to Emily Coleman. 3 March 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.

———. 1939d. Letter to Emily Coleman. 20-23 March 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.
———. 1939e. Letter to Emily Coleman. 6 June 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.
———. 1939f. Letter to Emily Coleman. 28 June 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 13.
———. 1939g. Letter to Emily Coleman. 11 July 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 14.
———. 1939h. Letter to Emily Coleman. 12 November 1939. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 14.
———. 1940a. Letter to Emily Coleman. 30 March/1 April 1940. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 15.
———. 1940b. Letter to Emily Coleman. 8 April 1940. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 15.
———. 1940c. Letter to Emily Coleman. 3 August 1940. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 16.
———. 1941. Letter to Emily Coleman. 6 June 1941. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 17.
———. 1942a. Letter to Emily Coleman. 24 September 1942. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 18.
———. 1942b. Letter to Emily Coleman. 28 October 1942. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 18.
———. 1954. Letter to T. S. Eliot. 15 July 1954. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 4, Folder 62.
———. 1956. Letter to T. S. Eliot. 26 September 1956. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 4, Folder 63.
———. 1934. Letter to Charles Henri Ford. 10 April 1934. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 7, Folder 14.
———. 1978. Letter to Silas Glossop. 15 February 1978. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 8, Folder 3.
———. 1958. Letter to Peggy Guggenheim. 18 March 1958. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 8, Folder 28.
———. 1959. Letter to Wolfgang Hildesheimer. 5 June 1959. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 9, Folder 27.
———. 1969. Letter to Christine Koschel. 15 April 1969. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 10, Folder 47.
———. 1958. Letter to Dan Mahoney. 14 November 1958. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 11, Folder 31.
———. 1957. Letter to Edwin Muir. 26 October 1957. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 12, Folder 24.
———. 1971. Letter to James Scott. 15 April 1971. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 14, Folder 57.
———. 1972. Letter to James Scott, 1 April 1972. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 14, Folder 58.

———. 1968d. Letter to Elémire Zolla. 23 April 1968. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 16, Folder 62.
———. 1945. 'Matron's Primer'. Review of *Wars I Have Seen*, by Gertrude Stein. *Contemporary Jewish Record* (June 1945). Reprinted in *The Critical Response to Gertrude Stein*, ed. Kirk Curnutt. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2000.
———. 1990. *New York*, ed. Alyce Barry. Foreword by Douglas Messerli. London: Virago Press.
———. 2001 [1936]. *Nightwood*. Preface by T. S. Eliot. London: Faber & Faber.
———. 1995. *Nightwood: The Original Version and Related Drafts*, ed. Cheryl J. Plumb. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
———. Undated. *Notebook*. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series I, Box 4, Folder 7.
———. Circa 1960. 'Notes Toward a Definition of *The Antiphon*'. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 5, Folder 7.
———. Undated. Response to Emily Coleman's unpublished essay on *Nightwood*. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 24.
———. 1990 [1928]. *Ryder*. Afterword by Paul West. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
———. 1962. *Selected Works*. London and Boston: Faber & Faber.
———. 1987. *Smoke and Other Early Stories*, ed. Douglas Messerli. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press.
———. 1974. *Vagaries Malicieux: Two Stories by Djuna Barnes*. New York: F. Hallman.
———. 1923. 'What Is Good Form in Dying: In Which a Dozen Dainty Deaths Are Suggested for Daring Damsels'. *Vanity Fair*, June 1923. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 13, Folder 25.
———. 1929b. 'Why Actors? Brother Sumac Searches for an Answer'. *Theatre Guild Magazine*, December 1929. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series III, Box 13, Folder 27.

Barth, Karl. 1958. *Church Dogmatics*, *III.2, The Doctrine of Creation.* London: T&T Clark.
———. 1968. *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1971. *Sade, Fourier, Loyola.* Paris: Seuil.

Batten, Guinn. 1998. *The Orphaned Imagination: Melancholy and Commodity Culture in English Romanticism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Baudelaire, Charles. 1919. *Baudelaire: His Prose and Poetry*, ed. T.R. Smith. New York: Boni & Liveright.
———. 1956. *The Essence of Laughter, and Other Essays, Journals, and Letters*, ed. Peter Quennell. New York: Meridian Books.
———. 1942. *The Mirror of Baudelaire*, ed. Charles Henri Ford. Preface by Paul Éluard. Drawing by Henri Matisse. Norfolk: Connecticut, New Directions.

———. 1981. *Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, trans. P.E. Charvet. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bauer, Bruno. 1843. *Die Judenfrage*. Braunschweig: Friedrich Otto.
———. 1841. *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen. Ein Ultimatum*. Leipzig: Otto Wigand.
———. 1852. 'The Present Position of the Jews'. *New York Daily Tribune*, June 7, 1852.

Beattie, Tina. 2013. *Theology after Postmodernity: Divining the Void – A Lacanian Reading of Thomas Aquinas.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beckett, Samuel. 2009. *Company/ Ill Seen Ill Said/ Westward Ho/ Stirrings Still*, ed. Dirk Van Hulle. London: Faber and Faber.
———. 1983. *Disjecta: Miscellanous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn. London: John Calder.

Beer, Gillian. 2010. 'Rhyming as Comedy: Body, Ghost, and Banquet'. *English Comedy*, ed. Michael Cordner, Peter Holland, and John Kerrigan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Béhar, Henri, Marieke Dubbelboer et Jean-Paul Morel. 2009. *Commentaires pour servir à la lecture de l'Almanach du Père Ubu, illustré, 1899.* Paris: Société des amis d'Alfred Jarry.

Béranger, Elizabeth. 1981. *Une époque de transe: l'exemple de Djuna Barnes, Jean Rhys et Virginia Woolf.* Unpublished doctoral thesis. L'Université de Paris VIII.

Berni, Christine. 1999. '"A Nose-Length into the Matter": Sexology and Lesbian Desire in Djuna Barnes's "Ladies Almanack"'. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 20 (3): 83-107.

Bernstein, Richard J. 2002. *Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Berry, David. 1982. *The Creative Vision of Apollinaire: A Study of Imagination.* Saratoga, California: Anma Libri.

Bersani, Leo. 1986. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press.
———. 2013. *Marcel Proust: The Fictions of Life and of Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 2010. 'Psychoanalysis and the Aesthetic Subject'. In *Is the Rectum a Grave?: and Other Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Benjamin, Roger. 2000. 'Ingres chez les Fauves'. *Art History* 23, no. 5 (December): 734-711.

Benjamin, Walter. 1996. 'Capitalism as Religion', *Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
———. 2006. *On Hashish*, ed. and trans. Howard Eiland. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
———. 2003. *On the Concept of History*. In *Selected Writings, Volume 4, 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and others, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
———. 2005. *Selected Writings: Volume 2, part 1, 1927-1930*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Benstock, Shari. 1986. *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Beskow, Bo. 1969. *Dag Hammarskjöld: Strictly Personal*. *A Portrait by Bo Beskow.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Bevis, Matthew. 2012. *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bhabha, Homi. 1992. 'Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt'. In *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler, 56-66. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Blake, William. 1970 [1789, 1794]. *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.
-'The Tyger' (1794), plate 42.
-'A Poison Tree' (1794), plate 49.

Blanchot, Maurice. 1995. *The Work of Fire,* trans. Charlotte Mandel. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Blanton, C.D. 2015. *Epic Negation: The Dialectical Poetics of Late Modernism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bloom, Harold. 1997. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bohn, Willard. 2010. *Apollinaire on the Edge: Modern Art, Popular Culture, and the Avant-Garde*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Boone, Joseph Allen. 1998. *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Booth, Wayne. 1974. *A Rhetoric of Irony.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bouchard, Larry D. 1989. *Tragic Method and Tragic Theology: Evil in Contemporary Drama and Religious Thought*. University Park: Penn State University Press.

Bowie, Malcolm. 1999. *Proust Among the Stars*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bradshaw, David. 2016. 'Modernism's Missing Modernity'. In *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity*, ed. David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus and Rebecca Roach. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Breton, André. 2009. *Anthology of Black Humour*, trans. Mark Polizzotti. London: Telegram.
———. 1994. 'Introduction to the Discourse on the Paucity of Reality', trans. Robert Sieburth and Jennifer Gordon, *October* 69 (Summer): 133-44.
———. 1972. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
———. 1998. *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*, ed. Franklin Rosemont. New York: Pathfinder Press.

Breton, André, and Louis Aragon. 1928. 'La cinquantenaire de l'hystérie (1878-1928)'. *La Révolution surréaliste* 11, 15 (March): 20-22.

Brillat-Savarin, Jean Anthelme. 1926. *The Physiology of Taste, or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, trans. Frank Crowninshield. New York: Boni & Liveright.

Brontë, Emily. 2009. *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Ian Jack, with Helen Small. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brooks, Peter. 1987. 'The Idea of a Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism'. In *Discourse in Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. London: Methuen.

Brown, Norman O. 1985 [1959]. *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History.* Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Browne, Thomas. 1972. *Religio Medici, Hydrotaphia, and The Garden of Cyrus*, ed. Robin Robbins. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 1929 [1895; reprinted 1906, 1911, 1922]. *Sir Thomas Browne's Hydriotaphia and the Garden of Cyrus*, ed. W.A. Greenhill. London: Macmillan & Co.
———. 1912. *The Works of Sir Thomas Browne*, ed. Charles Sayle. 3 vols. Edinburgh: J. Grant.

Buber, Martin. 2002 [1947]. *Between Man and Man*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. Abingdon: Routledge.
———. 1958 [1923]. *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Budington Thurn. 1952. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 20 September 1952. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series I, Box 6, Folder 8.

Bürger, Peter. 2011. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Burke, Kenneth. 1945. *A Grammar of Motives.* New York: Prentice-Hall Inc.
———. 1957. 'The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle''. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 164-89. New York: Vintage Books.
———. 1992. 'Version, Con-, Per-, and In- (Thoughts on Djuna Barnes's Novel *Nightwood*)'. In *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method*, 240-53. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Burstein, Jessica. 2012. *Cold Modernism: Literature, Fashion, Art.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Burton, Robert. 1989-2000. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair. Introduction and Commentary by J.B. Bamborough and Martin Dodsworth. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
———. 1923. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Vol. 1. London: George Bell & Sons.
———. 1887. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies that Matter.* London: Routledge.
———. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. London: Routledge.
———. 1997. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Byrne, Muriel St. Clare, ed. 1979 [1926]. *The Elizabethan Zoo: A Book of Beasts both Fabulous and Authentic*. Boston: D. R. Godine.

Carlston, Erin G. 1998. *Thinking Fascism: Sapphic Modernism and Fascist Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Caselli, Daniela. 2019. '"If Some Strong Woman": Djuna Barnes's Great Capacity for All Things Uncertain'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 147-62. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
———. 2009. *Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes's Bewildering Corpus*. Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. 2008. 'The Knight's Tale'. In *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chauvet, Louis-Marie. 1995. *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Interpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Patrick Madigan and Madeleine Beaumont. Collegeville, Minnesota: Pueblo Books.

Chiesa, Lorenzo. 2016. *The Not-Two: Logic and God in Lacan*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Clewell, Tammy. 2002. 'Mourning beyond Melancholia', *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 52 (1): 43–67.

Coakley, Sarah. 2000. 'The Eschatological Body: Gender, Transformation, and God'. *Modern Theology* 16 (1): 61-73.

Colebrook, Clare. 2004. *Irony.* London and New York: Routledge.

Coleman, Emily. 1935a. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 27 August 1935. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 6.
———. 1935b. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 16 November 1935. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 7.
———. 1935c. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 19 December 1935. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 7.
———. 1947. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 4 December 1947. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 18.
———. 1967. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 15 February 1967. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 3, Folder 20.

Connor, Steven. 2000. *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooper, Helen. 2011. 'Literary Reformations of the Middles Ages'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Culture*, ed. Andrew Galloway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Curley, Michael J., ed. 1979. *Physiologus*. Introduction by Michael Curley. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Dalton, Anne B. 1993. 'Escaping from Eden: Djuna Barnes' Revision of Psychoanalytic Theory and Her Treatment of Father-Daughter Incest in *Ryder*'. *Women's Studies* 22, no. 2: 163–79.

Daniel, Drew. 2013. *The Melancholy Assemblage: Affect and Epistemology in the English Renaissance.* New York: Fordham University Press.

David-Ménard, Monique. 1989. *Hysteria from Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Catherine Porter. Foreword by Ned Lukacher. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

De Fournival, Richard. 1986. *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love and Response*, trans. Jeanette Beer. Berkeley: University of California Press.

De Lauretis, Teresa. 2008. *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

De Thaün, Philippe. 1900. *Le Bestiaire de Philippe de Thaün*, ed. Emmanuel Walberg. Paris: H. Welter.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1997. *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco. Introduction by Daniel Smith. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
———. 2013. *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
———. 2008. *Proust and Signs*, trans. George Braziller. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
———. 2013. *A Thousand Plateaus,* trans. Brian Massumi. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
———. 1994. *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchill and Hugh Tomlinson. London: Verso.

De Beistegui, Miguel. 2013. *Proust as Philosopher: The Art of Metaphor*, trans. Dorothée Bonnigal Katz, with Simon Sparks and Miguel de Beistegui. Abingdon & New York: Routledge.

De Man, Paul. 1996. 'The Concept of Irony'. In *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. Andrzej Warminski. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1987. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
———. 2001. *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge.

DeSalvo, Louise A. 1994. *Conceived With Malice: Literature as Revenge in the Lives and Works of Virginia and Leonard Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, Djuna Barnes, and Henry Miller*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
———. 1991. '"To Make Her Mutton at Sixteen": Rape, Incest, and Child Abuse in *The Antiphon*'. In *Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Dickens, Charles. 2008. *Great Expectations*, ed. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Diels, Hermann. 1912. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.

Domestico, Anthony. 2017. *Poetry and Theology in the Modernist Period.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Donne, John. 2012. *John Donne: The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Helen Gardner. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. 2004 [1880]. *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. London: Vintage Books.
———. 2007 [1866]. *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. London: Vintage Books.
———. 2008 [1872]. *Devils*, trans. Michael R. Katz. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 1993. *Notes from Underground*, trans. Larissa Volokhonsky and Richard Pevear. London: Vintage Books.
———. 1913. *The Possessed*, trans. Constance Garnett. New York: The Macmillan Company.
———. 1916. *The Possessed*, trans. Constance Garnett. London: W. Heinemann.

Douglas, Mary. 1975. 'Jokes'. In *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Duchartre, Pierre-Louis and René Saulnier. 1925. *L'imagerie populaire: les images de toutes les provinces françaises du XVe siècle au Second Empire. Les complaintes, contes, chansons, légendes qui ont inspiré les imagiers.* Paris: Librairie de France.

Dwan, David. 2015. 'The Problem of Romanticism in Wyndham Lewis'. *Essays in Criticism* 65, no. 2 (1 April): 163–186.

Edelman, Lee. 2004. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Edkins, Jenny. 2013. 'Time, Personhood, Politics'. *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone, 127-40. London: Routledge.

Edmunds, Susan. 1997. 'Narratives of a Virgin's Violation: The Critique of Middle-Class Reformism in Djuna Barnes's *Ryder*'. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 30 (2): 218–36.

Ekner, Reider. 1953. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 12 November 1953. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 4, Folder 58.

Eliade, Mircea. 1969. *Le mythe de l'éternel retour.* Paris: Gallimard.

Eliot, T.S. 1951. *Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber.
———. 1975. *Selected Prose*, ed. Frank Kermode. London: Faber & Faber.

Eliot, Valerie Fletcher. 1955. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 7 February 1955. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 5, Folder 3.

Esposito, Roberto. 2008. *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy Campbell. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 2013. *Terms of the Political: Community, Immunity, Biopolitics*, trans. Rhiannon Noel Welch. New York: Fordham University Press.

Faltejskova, Monika. 2010. *Djuna Barnes, T. S. Eliot and the Gender Dynamics of Modernism: Tracing Nightwood*. New York & Abingdon: Routledge.

Ferber, Ilit. 2013. *Philosophy and Melancholy: Benjamin's Early Relections on Theater and Language.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Fiddes, Paul S. 1991. *Freedom and Limit: A Dialogue between Literature and Christian Doctrine.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
———. 2000. *The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
———. 2013. 'Suffering In Theology and Modern European Thought'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought,* ed. Nicholas Adams, George Pattison, and Graham Ward, 169-92. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Field, Andrew. 1983. *Djuna: the Life and Times of Djuna Barnes*. New York: Putnam.

Flanner, Janet. 2003 [1972]. *Paris Was Yesterday: 1925-1939*, ed. Irving Drutman. Foreword by James Campbell. London: Virago Press.

Flatley, Jonathan. 2008. *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism.* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1989. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.* London: Routledge.

Frank, Joseph. 1945. 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature: An Essay in Three Parts'. *The Sewanee Review* 53, no. 3 (Summer): 433-456.

Frazer, James George. 2009. *The Golden Bough*, ed. Robert Fraser. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freeman, Elizabeth. 2014. 'Sacra/Mentality in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*'. *American Literature* 86, no. 4 (December): 737–65.

Freud, Sigmund. 1963. 'The Dynamics of the Transference' (1912). In *Therapy and Technique*, ed. Philip Rieff. New York: Collier Books.
———. 2001. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, Alan Tyson, and Angela Richards. 24 vols. London: Vintage Books.
-*Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). *SE* XVIII, 7-64.
-*Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930). *SE* XXI, 64-145.
-'A Connection between a Symbol and a Symptom' (1916). *SE* XIV, 339-40.
-*The Ego and the Id* (1923). *SE* XIX, 3-66.
-*The Future of an Illusion* (1927). *SE* XXI, 3-58.
-*From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (1918). *SE* XVII, 7-122.

-*Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). *SE* XVIII, 67-143.
-'Humour' (1927). *SE* XXI, 161-6.
-*Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926). *SE* XX, 77-174.
-'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes' (1915b). *SE* XIV, 117-40.
-'Medusa's Head' (1922). *SE* XVIII, 273-4.
-'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917). *SE* XIV, 237-58.
-'Negation' (1925). *SE* XIX, 235-9.
-'On Narcissism' (1914). *SE* XIV, 69-102.
-'On Transience' (1915c). *SE* XIV, 303-8.
-*Studies on Hysteria* (1895). With Joseph Breuer. *SE* II.
-'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915a). *SE* XIV, 273-300.
-*Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics* (1913). *SE* XIII, 1–161.

Friedländer, Saul. 2003. 'Ideology and Extermination: The Immediate Origins of the 'Final Solution''. In *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*, ed. Moishe Postone and Eric Santner, 17-33. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Friedrich, Kluge. 1989. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, ed. Elmar Seebold. 22nd edition. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Frye, Northrop. 1990. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* London: Penguin Books.
———. 1983. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature.* London and New York: Harcourt Brace.

Gardiner, Bruce. 2019. 'Djuna Barnes's *Creatures in an Alphabet*: From A for Anecdotage to Z for Zoomancy'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 75-94. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

George, Wilma and Brundson Yapp. 1991. *The Naming of the Beasts: Natural History in the Medieval Bestiary*. London: Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd.

Geuss, Raymond. 1999. 'Art and Theodicy'. In *Morality, Culture, and History: Essays on German philosophy*, 78-115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gherovici, Patricia. 2014. 'The Art of the Symptom: Body, Writing, and Sex Change'. In *A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature, and Culture,* ed. Laura Marcus and Ankhi Mukherjee, 250-70. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
———. 2017. *Transgender Psychoanalysis: A Lacanian Perspective on Sexual Difference*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gherovici, Patricia and Manya Steinkoler. 2016. 'Introduction'. In *Lacan, Psychoanalysis, and Comedy,* ed. Patricia Gherovici and Manya Steinkoler. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. 1989. *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, Volume 2, Sexchanges*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Gillespie, Michael Allen. 1984. *Hegel, Heidegger, and the Ground of History.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Glassco, John. 2007 [1970]. *Memoirs of Montparnasse*. New York: New York Review of Books.

Glavey, Brian. 2016. *The Wallflower Avant-Garde: Modernism, Sexuality, and Queer Ekphrasis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Glossop, Silas. 1965. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 14 June 1965. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 8, Folder 1.

Goldstone, Andrew. 2013. *Fictions of Autonomy: Modernism from Wilde to de Man.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Goncharov, Ivan. 1916. *The Precipice*, trans. M. Bryant. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Goody, Alex. 2007. *Modernist Articulations: A Cultural Study of Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, and Gertrude Stein*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gover, Karen. 2009. 'Tragedy and Metaphysics in Heidegger's 'The Anaximander Fragment''. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 40(1): 37-53.

Gowland, Angus. 2006. *The Worlds of Renaissance Melancholy: Robert Burton in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greenberg, Jonathan. 2011. *Modernism, Satire, and the Novel.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Greenblatt, Stephen. 2005. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Greet, Anne Hyde. 1977. *Apollinaire et le livre de peintre.* Paris: Minard.

Grose, Anoucka. 2018. 'Introduction: Reclaiming Hysteria'. In *Hysteria Today*, ed. Anoucka Grose, 16-33. Abingdon: Routledge.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 1994. *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Guarnieri, Romana and Paul Verdeyen, ed. 1986. *Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Medievalis*, Volume 69. Turnholt: Brepols.

Guégan, Bertrand et al., ed. 1920a. *L'almanach de cocagne pour l'an 1920: Dédié aux vrais Gourmands Et aux Francs Buveurs.* Paris: Sirène.
———. 1920b. *L'almanach de cocagne pour l'an 1921: Dédié aux vrais Gourmands Et aux Francs Buveurs.* Paris: Sirène.
———. 1921. *L'almanach de cocagne pour l'an 1922: Dédié aux vrais Gourmands Et aux Francs Buveurs.* Paris: Sirène.

Hadot, Pierre. 2006. *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Halberstam, Jack [Judith]. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.* London: New York University Press.
———. 2011. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Hallward, Peter. 2006. *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation.* London: Verso.

Hamacher, Werner. 2002. 'Guilt History: Benjamin's Sketch "Capitalism as Religion"', trans. Kirk Wetter, *Diacritics* 32 (3/4): 81-106.
———. 2005. ''Now': Walter Benjamin on Historical Time'. In *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, 38-68. London: Continuum.
———. 1998. *Pleroma: Reading in Hegel*, trans. Nicholas Walker and Simon Jarvis. London: Athlone Press.
———. 1996. *Premises: Essays on Literature from Kant to Celan*, trans. Peter Fenves. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Handwerk, Gary J. 1985. *Irony and Ethics in Narrative: From Schlegel to Lacan*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Hannah, Robert. 2009. *Time in Antiquity.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Hanson, Ellis. 1997. *Decadence and Catholicism*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Hardimon, Michael O. 1994. *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haynes, Doug. 2010. 'She Disappeared into Unhappy Consciousness: Louise Bourgeois and the Bathos of Surrealism'. In *On Bathos*, ed. Peter Nicholls and Sara Crangle, 90-111. London: Continuum.

Hector, Kevin. 2016. *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and the Conditions of Mineness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hegel, G.W.F. 2010. *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art. Volume 2*, trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
———. 1931. *Jenenser Realphilosophie II, Die Vorlesungen von 1805-1806,* ed. J. Hoffmeister. Leipzig: F. Meiner.

———. 2012. *Lectures on Natural Right and Political Science*, trans. Michael J. Stewart and Peter C. Hodgson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Heidegger, Martin. 2010. *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, revised by Dennis J. Schmidt. Albany: State University of New York Press.
———. 2015. 'Der Spruch des Anaximander', *Holzwege*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, 321-74. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Vittorio Klostermann.
———. 2016. *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary. London: Bloomsbury.
———. 2001. *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag.

Heimann, Paula. 2018 [1952]. 'Certain Functions of Introjection and Projection in Early Infancy'. In *Developments of Psychoanalysis*, Melanie Klein et al., 122-68. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Herf, Jeffrey. 1984. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herring, Phillip. 1995. *Djuna: The Life and Work of Djuna Barnes*. New York: Penguin Press.

Herring, Scott. 2007. *Queering the Underworld: Slumming, Literature, and the Undoing of Lesbian and Gay History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hewitt, Andrew. 1996. *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hick, John. 2010. *Evil and the God of Love.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hitler, Adolf. 2016 [1925]. *Hitler, Mein Kampf: Eine kritische Edition*, ed. Christian Hartmann, Thomas Vordermayer, Othmar Plöckinger, and Roman Töppel. 2 vols. München-Berlin: Institut für Zeitgeschichte.

Hobson, Suzanne. 2011. *Angels of Modernism: Religion, Culture, Aesthetics 1910-1960*. London: Palgrave.

Holland, Eugene W. 2006. 'The Utopian Dimension of Thought in Deleuze and Guattari'. In *Imagining the Future: Utopia and Dystopia*, ed. Andrew Milner, Matthew Day Ryan, and Robert Ian Savage. Melbourne: Arena Publications Association. http://works.bepress.com/eugene_w_holland/7/.

Hollywood, Amy. 2016. *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays: Mysticism, History, and the Study of Religion*. New York: Columbia University Press.
———. 2002. *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual difference, and the Demands of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
———. 2001. 'Suffering Transformed: Marguerite Porete, Meister Eckhart, and the Problem of Women's Spirituality'. In *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics:*

*Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete*, ed. Barnard McGinn, 87-113. New York: Continuum.

Hopkins, Gerard Manley. 1956. *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Claude Colleer Abbott. London: Oxford University Press.
———. 1931. *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Robert Bridges. London: Humphrey Milford.
-'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves', 52.
———. 1953. *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W.H. Gardner. London: Penguin Books.

Huysmans, Joris-Karl. 1977. *À Rebours*, ed. Marc Fumaroli. Paris: Gallimard.

James, William. 1982. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, ed. Martin E. Marty. New York: Penguin.

Jameson, Fredric. 2005. *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions.* London: Verso.
———. 2016. *The Modernist Papers.* London: Verso.
———. 2002. *The Political Unconscious*. Abingdon: Routledge.
———. 1994. *The Seeds of Time.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Jones, James W. 1993. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Joyce, James. 2000 [1916]. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 2012 [1939]. *Finnegans Wake*, ed. Robbert-Jan Henkes, Erik Bindervoet, and Finn Fordham. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 1986 [1922]. *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler, with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior. Preface by Richard Ellmann. Afterword by Michael Groden. New York: Vintage Books.

Justaert, Kristien. 2012. *Theology after Deleuze*. London and New York: Continuum.

Kannenstine, Louis. 1977. *The Art of Djuna Barnes: Duality and Damnation.* New York: New York University Press.

Kant, Immanuel. 1987 [1781/1787]. *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
———. 2018. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni. Revised with an Introduction by Robert Merrihew Adams. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kaup, Monika. 2012. *Neobaroque in the Americas: Alternative Modernities in Literature, Visual Art, and Film*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Keats, John. 1935. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman. New York: Oxford University Press.
———. 1982. *John Keats: Complete Poems*, ed. Jack Stillinger. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
-*Hyperion: A Fragment* (1820), 248-69.
-'Ode on Melancholy' (1820), 283-4.
———. 1906. *The Poems of John Keats*. London: Everyman's Library.

Kermode, Frank. 2000. *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Klein, Melanie. 1997. *The Psycho-Analysis of Children*, trans. Alix Strachey, revised H.A. Thorner. London: Vintage.

Kleist, Heinrich von. 1972 [1810]. 'On the Marionette Theatre', trans. Thomas G. Neumiller. *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 3 (September): 22-26.

Koerner, Joseph Leo. 2004. *The Reformation of the Image*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kristeva, Julia. 1992. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 2007a. *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink, with Héloïse Fink and Russell Grigg. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
———. 1988. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954*, ed. Jacques Alain-Miller, trans. John Forrester. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
———. 1991. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
———. 2011. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XIV: The Logic of Phantasy, 1966-1967*, trans. Cormac Gallagher. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/14-Logic-of-Phantasy-Complete.pdf.
———. 2015. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VIII: Transference*, trans. Bruce Fink, trans. Bruce Fink, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller. Cambridge: Polity Press.
———. 2007b. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Russell Grigg. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
———. 1998. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, On Female Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge,* trans. Bruce Fink. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company.
———. 2013. *The Triumph of Religion*, *preceded by Discourse to Catholics*, trans. Bruce Fink. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Laks, André and Glenn W. Most, ed. and trans. 2016. *Early Greek Philosophy, Volume II: Beginnings and Early Ionian Thinkers, Part 1.* Loeb Classical Library 525. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Laplanche, Jean. 1985. *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Lapoujade, David. 2017. *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Joshua David Jordan. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e).

Lautréamont, Comte de. 1924. *The Lay of Maldoror*, trans. John Rodker. Introduction by Remy de Gourmont. Plates after Odilon Redon. London: The Casanova Society.

Leader, Darian. 'Hysteria today'. In *Hysteria Today,* ed. Anouchka Grose, 27-34. London: Karnac Books.

Lechte, John. 1990. 'Kristeva and Holbein, Artist of Melancholy'. *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 30, no. 4 (October 1990): 342-50.

Lepenies, Wolf. 1972. *Melancholie und Gesellschaft.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 2002. *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*, trans. Felicity Baker. Abingdon: Routledge.

Levenson, Michael. 1991. *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, Pericles. 2010. *Religious Experience and the Modernist Novel.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis, Wyndham. 1989 [1926]. *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. Reed Way Dasenbrock. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press.
———. 1931. *Hitler*. London: Chatto & Windus.
———. 1939. *The Hitler Cult*. London: Dent.
———. 1993 [1927]. *Time and Western Man,* ed. Paul Edwards. Santa Rosa, California: Black Sparrow Press.

Lichtmann, Maria. 2001. 'Marguerite Porete and Meister Eckhart: *The Mirror for Simple Souls* Mirrored'. In *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics: Hadewijch of Brabant, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Marguerite Porete*, ed. Barnard McGinn, 65-86. New York: Continuum.

Lossky, Vladimir. 2001. *In the Image and Likeness of God,* trans. Thomas E. Bird, ed. Thomas E. Bird and John H. Erikson. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.

Loy, Mina. 1997. 'Auto-Facial-Construction'. In *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, ed. Roger L. Conover. Manchester: Carcanet Press.

Lukacher, Ned. 1986. *Primal Scenes: Literature, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lukács, György. 1963. *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. John and Necke Mander. London: Merlin Press.
———. 1971. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock. London: Merlin Press.

Lund, Mary Ann. 2010. *Melancholy, Medicine and Religion in Early Modern England: Reading The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Luther, Martin. 1880-1910. *Sämmtliche Schriften*, ed. J.G. Walch. 23 vols. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

MacDougall, Allan Ross. 1931. *The Gourmets Almanac*. London: D. Harmsworth.

Magnus, Bernd, Jean-Pierre Mileur, and Stanley Stewart. 1993. *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Mâle, Émile. 1961 [1913]. *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Dora Nussey. London & Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press.
———. 1949 [1945]. *Religious Art from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century*. New York: Noonday Press.

Marcus, Jane. 1991. 'Laughing at Leviticus: *Nightwood* as Woman's Circus Epic'. In *Silence and Power*: *A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Marcuse, Herbert. 2007. 'The Affirmative Character of Culture' (1937), trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro. *Art and Liberation: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Douglas Kellner. Vol. 4. Abingdon: Routledge.
———. 1998 [1956]. *Eros and Civilisation: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Marin, Louis. 1976. 'Les corps utopiques rabelaisiens'. *Littérature* 21 (Février): 35-51.

Maritain, Jacques. 1943. *Art and Poetry*, trans. Elva de Pue Matthews. New York: The Philosophical Library.
———. 1947. *Art and Scholasticism, with Other Essays*, trans. J.F. Scanlan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
———. 1953. *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. New York: Pantheon Books.
———. 1958. Letter to Djuna Barnes. 12 November 1958. Djuna Barnes Papers, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Series II, Box 11, Folder 39.

Martin, Ann. 2007. *Red Riding Hood and the Wolf in Bed: Modernism's Fairy Tales*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Mazzio, Carla, and Douglas Trevor, ed. 2000. *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

McHale, Brian. 1987. *Postmodernist Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge.

Mengue, Philippe. 2010. *Proust-Joyce, Deleuze-Lacan: lectures croisées*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
———. 2009. *Utopies et devenirs Deleuziens*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Mensendieck, Bess M. 1954. *Look Better, Feel Better*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Miller, J. Hillis. 1963. *The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Miller, Tyrus. 2019. '"The Havoc of Nicety: Djuna Barnes's *Ryder* and the Catastrophe of Epochal Change'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 162-76. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
———. 1999. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.

Milne, Drew. 2019. 'The Critique of Modernist Wit: Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 114-29. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Moggach, Douglas. 2003. *The Philosophy and Politics of Bruno Bauer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moi, Toril. 2000. 'Is Anatomy Destiny? Freud and Biological Determinism'. In *Whose Freud? The Place of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Peter Brooks and Alex Woloch, 71-92. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Morfee, Adrian. 2005. *Antonin Artaud's Writing Bodies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Muecke, D.C. 1969. *The Compass of Irony*. London: Methuen.
———. 1982. *Irony and the Ironic.* London and New York: Methuen.

Muir, Edwin. 1939. *The Present Age from 1914*. London: Cresset Press.

Mulhall, Stephen. 2007. *Philosophical Myths of the Fall.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2016. *Ego Sum: Corpus, Anima, Fabula*, trans. Marie-Eve Morin. New York: Fordham University Press.

Nehamas, Alexander. 1985. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nicholls, Peter. 2009. *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nieland, Justus. 2008. *Feeling Modern: The Eccentricities of Public Life*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2010. *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, And Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
———. 1914. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Helen Zimmern. New York: Macmillan.
———. 2009–. *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe*. Under the direction of Paolo d'Iorio. Paris: Nietzsche Source. www.nietzschesource.org/eKGWB.
———. 2001. *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
———. 1962. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan. Chicago: Regnery Gateway.
———. 2006. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Adrian del Caro and Robert Pippin, trans. Adrian del Caro. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nigianni, Chrysanthi. 2009. 'Introduction'. In *Deleuze and Queer Theory,* ed. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Meryl Storr. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

North, Michael. 2009. *Machine-Age Comedy.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Nussbaum, Martha. 2001. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oberman, Heiko A. 2006. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, trans. Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Origen. 1899-1955. *Origenes Werke*, ed. Paul Koetschau, Erich Klostermann, Erwin Preuschen, and W.A. Baehrens. 12 vols. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.

O'Neal, Hank. 1990. "*Life is painful, nasty and short…in my case it has only been painful and nasty." Djuna Barnes 1978-1981.* New York: Paragon House.

O'Sullivan, Simon. 2001. 'The Aesthetics of Affect: Thinking Art beyond Representation'. *Angeliki* 6, no. 3 (December): 125-35.

Paddison, Max. 2003. 'Stravinsky as Devil: Adorno's Three Critiques'. In *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, ed. Jonathan Cross, 192-202. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Parsons, Deborah. 2003. *Djuna Barnes*. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers.

Parvulescu, Anca. 2010. *Laughter: Notes on a Passion*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pascal, Blaise. 1943. *Pensées*, trans. W. F. Trotter. Introduction by T. S. Eliot. London: Dent.

Paster, Gail Kern. 2004. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pender, Elizabeth and Cathryn Setz, ed. *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*. Afterword by Peter Nicholls. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Pfau, Thomas. 2005. *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790–1840.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Pleij, Herman. 2001. *Dreaming of Cockaigne: Medieval Fantasies of the Perfect Life*, trans. Diane Webb. New York: Columbia University Press.

Plessner, Helmuth. 2003 [1941]. *Lachen und Weinen: Eine Untersuchung der Grenzen menschlichen Verhaltens.* In *Ausdruck und menschliche Natur.* Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Pliny the Elder. 1938-93. *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, W.H.S. Jones. 10 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pickstock, Catherine. 2013. *Repetition and Identity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pieper, Josef. 1954. *The End of Time: A Meditation on the Philosophy of History*, trans. Michael Bullock. London: Faber and Faber.
————. 1957. *The Silence of St. Thomas: Three Essays*, trans. John Murray and Daniel O'Connor. New York: Pantheon Books.

Pihlström, Sami. 2017. 'Comparing Three Twentieth-Century Philosophical Antitheodicies'. *Humanities* 6 (4), 98. https://doi.org/10.3390/h6040098.

Pippin, Robert. 1999. *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pinkerton, Steven. 2017. *Blasphemous Modernism: The 20th-Century Word Made Flesh*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ponsot, Marie. 1991. 'A Reader's *Ryder*'. In *Silence and Power*: *A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Pope, Alexander. 2006. *The Major Works,* ed. Pat Rogers. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Porete, Marguerite. 1993. *The Mirror of Simple Souls*, trans. Ellen Babinsky. New York: Paulist Press.
———. 1927. *The Mirror of Simple Souls, by an Unknown French Mystic of the Thirteenth Century: Translated into English by M.N.*, ed. Clare Kirchberger. New York: Benziger Brothers.

Potter, Rachel. 2019. '*Nightwood*'s Humans'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 61-74. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Pound, Ezra. 1913. 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste'. *Poetry* 1, no. 6 (March): 200-206.

Prosser, Jay. 1998. *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Proust, Marcel. 1973. *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs.* Paris: Gallimard.
———. 2003. *In Search of Lost Time, Volume 1: The Way by Swann's*. London: Penguin Press.
———. 1990. *Le Temps retrouvé*, ed. Pierre-Louis Rey, Pierre-Edmond Robert, Jacques Robichez, and Brian G. Rogers. Paris: Gallimard.
———. 1934. *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff. 4 vols. New York: Random House.

Rabelais, François. 1892. *Five books of the lives, heroic deeds and sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty and Peter Anthony Motteux. Illustrated by Louis Chalon. London: Bullen.
———. 1945. *Gargantua and Pantagruel,* trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter Anthony Motteux. Illustrated by R. A. Brandt. London: J. Westhouse.
———. 2006. *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, ed. and trans. M.A. Screech. London: Penguin Press.
———. 1921. *The lives, heroic deeds & sayings of Gargantua & his son Pantagruel,* trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter Le Motteux. London: Chatto & Windus.
———. 1973. *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Guy Demerson. Paris: Seuil.

Radden, Jennifer, ed. 2002. *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie. 1988. 'The Limits of Discourse Structure: The Hysteric and the Analyst'. *Prose Studies* 11 (3): 61-83.

Rascoe, Burton. 1923. 'The Books of Christmas Time'. *Vanity Fair*, December 1923.

Raschke, Carl. 2014. 'Subjectification, Salvation, and the Real in Luther and Lacan'. In *Theology after Lacan: The Passion for the Real*, ed. Creston Davis, Marcus Pound, and Clayton Crockett, 58-70. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Reik, Theodor. 1929. *Lust und Leid im Witz: Sechs Psychoanalytische Studien.* Wien, Leipzig, and Zürich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag.

Renard, Jules. 1965. *Journal, 1887-1910*, ed. Léon Guichard and Gilbert Sigaux. Paris: Gallimard.

Rickels, Laurence A. 2011. *Aberrations of Mourning*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1974. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin et al. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
———. 1977. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage. New Haven: Yale University Press.
———. 2009. *La Symbolique du mal*. In *Philosophie de la volonté: 2. Finitude et Culpabilité*, 205-577. Paris: Éditions Points.
———. 2004. *Le mal: Un défi à la philosophie et à la théologie.* Genève: Labor et Fides.
———. 1985. *Time and Narrative*, *Volume 2*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rilke, Rainer Maria. 2016 [1910]. *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. Robert Vilain. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rimbaud, Arthur. 2005. *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, Joanne Maguire. 2001. *Nobility and Annihilation in Marguerite Porete's Mirror of Simple Souls.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Rorty, Richard. 1989. *Contingency, Solidarity, and Irony*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Roudinesco, Elizabeth. 1990. *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985,* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rupprecht, Caroline. 2006. *Subject to Delusions: Narcissism, Modernism, Gender*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Rushworth, Jennifer. 2016. *Discourses of Mourning in Dante, Petrarch, and Proust.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sacerdoti, Giorgio. 1992. *Irony through Psychoanalysis*, trans. Geraldine Ludbrook. London: Karnac Books.

Said, Edward. 2004. *Freud and the Non-European*. London: Verso.

Saint-Amour, Paul K. 2018. 'Weak Theory, Weak Modernism'. *Modernism/modernity* 25 (3): 437-59.

Sanchez-Párdo, Esther. 2003. *Cultures of the Death Drive: Melanie Klein and Modernist Melancholia.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Sands, Kathleen. 2008. 'Tragedy, Theology, and Feminism in the Time After Time'. In *Rethinking Tragedy*, ed. Rita Felski, 82-103. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Santner, Eric L. 2011. *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sanyal, Debarati. 2006. *The Violence of Modernity: Baudelaire, Irony, and the Politics of Form*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schaldach, Karlheinz. 2006. *Die antiken Sonnenuhren Griechenlands: Festland und Peloponnes.* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Harri Deutsch.

Schenkar, Joan. 2001. *Truly Wilde: The Unsettling Story Of Dolly Wilde, Oscar's Niece*. New York: Basic Books.

Schleiner, Winfried. 1991. *Melancholy, Genius, and Utopia in the Renaissance*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Schloesser, Stephen. 2000. 'Maritain on Music: His Debt to Cocteau'. In *Beauty, Art, and the Polis*, ed. Alice Ramos, 176-89. Washington, D.C.: American Maritain Association Publications.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. 2010. *The Essential Schopenhauer: Key Selections from* The World as Will and Representation *and Other Writings*, ed. Wolfgang Schirmacher. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Schults, F. LeRon. 2014. *Iconoclastic Theology: Gilles Deleuze and the Secretion of Atheism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Scott, Bonnie Kime. 1995. *Refiguring Modernism: Postmodern Feminist Readings of Woolf, West, and Barnes*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Scott, James B. 1976. *Djuna Barnes*. Boston: Twayne Publishers.

Screech, Michael A. 2015. *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Segal, Erich. 2001. *The Death of Comedy*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Segal, Naomi. 2014. 'Touching and not Touching'. In *A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature, and Culture,* ed. Laura Marcus and Ankhi Mukherjee, 410-24. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Seidel, Michael. 1979. *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Setz, Cathryn. 2019. '"Trees of Heaven": Djuna Barnes's Late Metaphysical Verse'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 130-46. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Shakespeare, William. 2008. *The Complete Sonnets and Poems: The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. Colin Burrow. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 1997. *King Lear (Arden Shakespeare Third Series)*, ed. R. A. Foakes. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Shapiro, Gary. 2017. 'Nietzsche and Anaximander: The Innocence of Becoming, or Life Without a Mortgage', *Nietzsche and the Philosophers,* ed. Mark T. Conard, 86-103. New York: Routledge.

Shepherdson, Charles. 2000. *Vital Signs: Nature, Culture, Psychoanalysis.* London and New York: Routledge.

Shirer, William L. 1962 [1960]. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publishing.

Shirilan, Stephanie. 2016. *Robert Burton and the Transformative Powers of Melancholy*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Silverman, Kaja. 1996. *The Threshold of the Visible World*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Smith, Paul J. 2014. 'Rereading Dürer's Representations of the Fall of Man'. In *Zoology in Early Modern Culture: Intersections of Science, Theology, Philology, and Political and Religious Education*, ed. Karl A. E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith, 301-28. Leiden: Brill.

Soler. Colette. 2016. *Lacanian Affects: The Function of Affect in Lacan's Work*, trans. Bruce Fink. London and New York: Routledge.
———. 2006. *What Lacan Said about Women: A Psychoanalytic Study*, trans. John Holland. New York: Other Press.

Sontag, Susan. 1966a. 'Notes on "Camp". In *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 275-92. New York: Penguin Press.
———. 1966b. 'Psychoanalysis and Norman O. Brown's *Life Against Death*'. In *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*, 256-62. New York: Penguin Press.

Steiner, George. 1963 [1961]. *The Death of Tragedy.* New York: Hill & Wang.

———. 2008. '"Tragedy," Reconsidered'. In *Rethinking Tragedy*, ed. Rita Felski, 29-44. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Stevenson, Sheryl. 1991. 'Writing the Grotesque Body: Djuna Barnes' Carnival Parody'. In *Silence and Power*: *A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*, ed. Mary Lynn Broe. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Stonebridge, Lyndsey. 1998. *The Destructive Element: British Psychoanalysis and Modernism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Stratton, Matthew. 2014. *The Politics of Irony in American Modernism*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Stromberg, Kyra. 1989. *Leben und Werk einer Extravagaten.* Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach.

Švrljuga, Željka. 2011. *Hysteria and Melancholy as Literary Style in the Works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, Zelda Fitzgerald, and Djuna Barnes.* Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Targoff, Ramie. 2008. *John Donne: Body and Soul*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
———. 2014. *Posthumous Love: Eros and the Afterlife in Renaissance England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Taubes, Jacob. 2010. *From Cult to Culture: Fragments Toward a Critique of Historical Reason*, ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Amir Engel. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
———. 2009. *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. David Ratmoko. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Taylor, Charles. 1989. *Sources of the Self: the Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Taylor, Jeremy. 1853 [1650]. *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living.* Oxford: J.H. Parker.
———. 1930 [1650]. *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living.* London: Longmans, Green & Co.

Taylor, Julie. 2012. *Djuna Barnes and Affective Modernism.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
———. 2019. 'Making Contact: Affect, Queer Historiography, and "Our Djuna"'. In *Shattered Objects: Djuna Barnes's Modernism*, ed. Elizabeth Pender and Cathryn Setz, 193-206. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Taylor, Michael Alan, and Max Fink. 2006. *Melancholia: The Diagnosis, Pathophysiology, and Treatment of Depressive Illness*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tillich, Paul. 1952. *The Courage to Be*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
———. 1948. *The Protestant Era*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
———. 1951-63. *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tonning, Erik. 2014. *Modernism and Christianity*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tonning, Erik, Matthew Feldman, and David Addyman, ed. 2014. *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse.* Leiden: Brill.

Trevor, Douglas. 2004. *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Trubowitz, Lara. 2005. 'In Search of "The Jew" in Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*: Jewishness, Antisemitism, Structure, and Style'. *Modern Fiction Studies* 51, no. 2 (2005): 311-34.

Turgenev, Ivan. 2008 [1862]. *Fathers and Sons*, ed. and trans. Richard Freeborn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 2016 [1867]. *Smoke*, trans. Michael Pursglove. London: Alma Books.

Tynan, Aidan. 2016. 'The Apocalyptic Unconscious: Schizoanalysis as Political Theology'. In *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Religion*, ed. Jones and F. LeRon Schults, 95-116. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Ullyot, Jonathan. 2016. *The Medieval Presence in Modernist Literature: The Quest to Fail*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wall, John. 2005. *Moral Creativity: Paul Ricoeur and the Poetics of Possibility.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Wallenfang, Donald. 2017. *Dialectical Anatomy of the Eucharist: An Étude in Phenomenology.* Foreword by Jean-Luc Marion. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.

Walter, Christina. 2014. *Optical Impersonality: Sciences, Images, and Literary Modernism.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Warren, Diane. 2008. *Djuna Barnes' Consuming Fictions.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Weber, Samuel. 2015. 'Tragedy and Trauerspiel: Too Alike?'. In *Tragedy and the Idea of Modernity,* ed. Joshua Billings and Miriam Leonard, 88-114. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Weil, Simone. 1952. *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, trans. A.F. Wills. Preface by T.S. Eliot. London: Routledge.

White, Hayden. 2010a. 'Ideology and Counterideology in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*'. In *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature,*

*and Theory 1957-2007*, ed. Robert Doran, 247-54. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
———. 2010b. 'Northrop Frye's Place in Contemporary Cultural Studies'. In *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory 1957-2007*, ed. Robert Doran, 263-72. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

White, T.H., ed. 1954. *The Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Whitebook, Joel. 1996. *Perversion and Utopia: Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wilde, Alan. 1981. *Horizons of Assent: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic Imagination*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Wieland, Christina. 2015. *The Fascist State of Mind and the Manufacturing of Masculinity: A Psychoanalytic Approach*. London: Routledge.

Williams, Robert R. 2012. *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God: Studies in Hegel and Nietzsche.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Rowan. 2008. *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction.* London: Continuum.
———. 2017. *God With Us: The Meaning Of The Cross And Resurrection – Then And Now.* London: SPCK Publishing.
———. 1993. 'Macrina's Deathbed Revisited: Gregory of Nyssa on Mind and Passion'. In *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lionel Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel, 227-46. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
———. 2016. *The Tragic Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winnicott, D.W. 2005. *Playing and Reality.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Winning, Joanne. 2013. 'Dreams of a Lost Modernist: A Reevaluation of Thelma Wood'. *Modernist Cultures* 8(2): 288-322.

Wolfe, Judith. 2017. 'Eschatology'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, ed. Joel D.S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, Johannes Zachhuber. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 2013a. *Heidegger's Eschatology: Theological Horizons in Martin Heidegger's Early Work.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
———. 2013b. 'Messianism'. In *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought*, ed. Nicholas Adams et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Woolf, Virginia. 2006 [1927]. *To the Lighthouse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Worcester, John. 2009 [1875]. *Correspondences of the Bible: The Animals*. West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation Publishers.

Wordsworth, William. 2008. *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
-*Peter Bell* (1819), 91-128

Young, Julian. 1992. *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ziolkowski, Jan. 1985. *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: The Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual*. Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2009. 'The Fear of Four Words: A Modest Plea for the Hegelian Reading of Christianity'. In *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic?*, ed. Creston Davis, 24-109. London and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
———. 2013. *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism.* London: Verso Books.
———. 2003. *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity.* London and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
———. 2000. *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology.* London: Verso Books.