Reclaiming Aesthetics in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Fiction

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Wanzheng Michelle Wang, M. A.

Graduate Program in English

The Ohio State University

2015

Dissertation Committee:

Brian McHale, Advisor

David Herman

James Phelan

Jon Erickson

Copyright by

Wanzheng Michelle Wang

2015

Abstract

An apparent rift exists between the anti-aesthetic emphasis in postmodern and contemporary literary theory, on the one hand, and readerly appreciations of and engagements with the aesthetic, on the other. This tension between anti-aesthetic critical paradigms and aesthetic experiences of fiction is the central problem I examine in my dissertation. By putting philosophical, aesthetical, narrative, and literary traditions in conversation with each other, I propose a new framework for understanding aesthetic impulses at work in twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction by revising Immanuel Kant's and Friedrich Schiller's heuristic tools and categories—which I argue remain pertinent to understanding twentieth and twenty-first century fiction. Drawing on these and other contributions to aesthetic theory, I suggest that post-war fiction is dominantly concerned with the harmonies, engagements, and tensions between what I term the form-drive, the moral-drive, and the sense-drive, in relation to readerly roles and responses.

Part I includes two chapters devoted to play, which I characterize as the dominant aesthetic energy that characterizes *postmodernist fiction* (McHale). My analysis of Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) relates to readers' inhabitation and orientation of the playful, complex ontological worlds of

postmodern fiction. I use the tension/conflict between the form- and sense-drives to characterize the aesthetic category of play, and suggest that Marie-Laure Ryan's possible-worlds theory provides a useful critical apparatus for explicating how the form-drive functions as a system of ordering in readers' navigations of these ontologically-complex fictional worlds. Part II deals with the ways in which twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction has reinvigorated traditional aesthetic categories. In chapter three, I use Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1939-40/1967) and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985) to demonstrate two different instances of the sublime. Chapter four deals with texts that engage the aesthetic category of the beautiful in very different ways: Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992) deals with a more traditional conception of beauty as the harmony of the form- and sense-drives (as conceived by Kant and Schiller); by contrast, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) complicates this classical understanding of beauty by foregrounding the harmony *and* tension between the form- and moral-drives.

Although the three modes do not exhaust the diverse aesthetic energies that characterize post-war literature in English, they can be viewed as junctures that offer us an alternative trajectory for thinking about forms of literary practice during the period in question. If contemporary aesthetic theorists are correct in positing that our experiences of art are ultimately meant to give us a changed sense of the world (Danto) or help us build more well-adapted neurocognitive systems to "revis[e] behavior in an unstable world" (Spolsky), I suggest that exploring the interactions between what James Phelan calls textual and readerly dynamics in the manner I propose here yields fruitful insight

into writers’ and readers’ expectations of what literature has to offer to a post-war world devastated by unrelenting violence.

Dedication

致　　老爸老媽

養育之恩　無以回報

Acknowledgments

To my committee, Professors Brian McHale, David Herman, James Phelan, and Jon Erickson, thank you all for your huge support in every way: for your astute advice, your nurturing patience, your generosity as teachers and mentors, and so much more. I am continually inspired by your brilliance and kindness.

To Daddy, Mummy, Samuel, Melissa, and Melinda, for your unfailing love.

To 東, whose presence at the end put a perfect finish to the long journey.

To Sally and Bryan Sansbury, Esther Gottlieb, Frederick Aldama, Theresa Rojas, Hyesu Park, Leila Ben-Nasr, Erin Wagner, Andrew Richmond, Wanlin Li, Brandon Manning, Christopher Gonzalez, Erin Bahl, Kathleen Griffin, Kathryn Jenks, Bee Kim, friends from Jim's potluck group (especially those who generously drove me to/from meetings, including Lizzie Nixon, Brian McAllister, Matt Poland, Yonina Hoffman, Paul McCormick, and Anne Langendorfer), and the ministry of the Newman Center (particularly Fr. Vinny and Fr. Chuck)—all of your friendships and infinite kindness made Ohio my home.

To Godma and family, Weirong Lin, Angelin Awyong, Mastura Manap, Vanessa Neubronner, friends and extended family, thanks for every prayer, thought, and message—they meant so much to me.

To friends, colleagues, and mentors from NTU (both past and present), most especially Neil and Su Murphy, Daniel Jernigan, Jeremy Fernando, Michelle Chiang, and many others, thanks for all your support in every way.

Thanks be to God—I'm finally here.

Vita

2010 – 2015 .... The Ohio State University, Department of English, Ph.D program
Ph.D candidate, Graduate Teaching Associate, and Graduate Fellow

2008 – 2010 .... Nanyang Technological University, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Division of English, M.A. program

2004 – 2008 .... Nanyang Technological University, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Division of Communication Research, B.Comm. program and Minor in English Literature

Publications

1. W. Michelle Wang. "「這又不是演戲」'We're not playacting here': Self-reflexivity in the Taiwanese Idol-Drama." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 44.3 (Fall 2014).

2. W. Michelle Wang. "Encountering Formal Beauty: An Aesthetic Reading of Saramago's *All the Names*." *On Reading; Fictionality, Form, and Friendship*. Ed. Jeremy Fernando. New York: Atropos Press, 2012.

3. W. Michelle Wang. "Formal Structures of Literary Beauty in Daniel Alarcón's Short Fiction." *Exploring the Critical Issues of Beauty*. Ed. Gabrielle Simpson. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2012. 183-193.

4. W. Michelle Wang. "Lightness of Touch: Subtracting Weight from the Narrative Structure of *At Swim-Two-Birds*." *Flann O'Brien: Centenary Essays*. Spec. issue of *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31 (Fall 2011): 134-147.

5. Mark Cenite, Wanzheng Michelle Wang, Pei Won Chong, and Shimin Germaine Chan. "More than just free content: File sharing and the use of peer-to-peer networks." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 33.3 (2009): 206-221.

Fields of Study

Major Field: English

Post-1945 Literature in English

Specializations:

Aesthetic Theory

Narrative Theory

List of Figures

Figure 1. Possible-worlds model of *At Swim-Two-Birds* 40

Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Dedication v

Acknowledgments vi

Vita ix

List of Figures x

Introduction 1

Part I: An Aesthetics of Play 15

Chapter One Possible Worlds of Play in *At Swim-Two-Birds* 16

Chapter Two Text-as-World/Text-as-Game: Interpreting *Lanark*'s TAW 61

Part II: Reframing the Sublime and the Beautiful 99

Chapter Three An Aesthetics of the Literary Sublime 100

Chapter Four An Aesthetics of Muted Beauty 159

Coda 223

Notes 229

Works Cited 274

Introduction

In a press release announcing the finalists for the Man Booker International Prize 2015, the judging committee's chair, Professor Marina Warner, notes that "[t]he novel today is in fine form: as a field of inquiry, a tribunal of history*, a map of the heart*, a probe of the psyche, a stimulus to thought, *a well of pleasure* and a laboratory of language" (emphasis added). Last year, the Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to French novelist Patrick Modiano for his evocation of "*the art of* memory" and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction to Donna Tartt for her "*beautifully written* coming-of-age novel with *exquisitely drawn* characters [. . .], a book that stimulates the mind and touches the heart" (emphases added). What these prestigious literary prizes share in common in their articulation of fiction's value is an emphasis on literature *as art*—that is, on the artful treatment or virtuosity with which novelists handle various aspects of writing, with a particular focus on the writing's aesthetic and affective qualities, amongst other merits.

Yet an insistently anti-aesthetic emphasis undergirds much of twentieth-century art and philosophy, and literary and critical theory. From its inception, modernist arts by (now-canonical) figures such as Pablo Picasso and James Joyce were "received as being variously ugly, dissonant, obscure, scandalous, immoral, subversive, and generally 'antisocial'" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 4). Neal Benezra and Arthur Danto point to

Marcel Duchamp's readymades as a critical force "in fostering the widespread reaction against beauty" and this "anti-aesthetic exploration [continued] well into the 1920s" with the Dadaists (Benezra, Viso, and Danto 20). "Early in the century," Galen A. Johnson notes, "the irrelevance of beauty had become an established current of the twentieth-century art world" (*Retrieval* 9). As Alexander Nehamas puts it, "Mistrustful of passion, the twentieth century gradually came to doubt beauty itself. The contrast between helping the suffering and painting them, between fighting for them and writing about them, became starker and deeper. Wary of the ability of art to transmute the greatest horrors into objects of beauty, philosophy disavowed" beauty (*Promise* 3). This hostility towards beauty, aesthetic modes of inquiry more generally, continued well past the mid-twentieth century; "[b]eauty had disappeared not only from the advanced art of the 1960s, but from the advanced philosophy of art" as well, rarely coming up "in art periodicals from the 1960s on without a deconstructionist snicker" (Danto, *Abuse* 25). By the 1970s and 80s, "the art world became almost wholly consumed by the idea of the anti-aesthetic," with postmodern art "deliberately undermin[ing] such principles as value, order, meaning, control, and identity" (Gilbert-Rolfe, *Deconstruction* 13; Hutcheon, *Poetics* 13).

This anti-aesthetic emphasis in art and philosophy likewise extends to literary and critical theory of the same period—with the notable exception of New Critics' focus on poetry in the 1940s and 50s; hence postmodernist theorists like Hal Foster and Jean-François Lyotard observe that the move from the modern to the postmodern in literature and literary study has led to a dismantling of grand narratives, including the grand narrative of beauty (Kelly, "New Criticism"; Lyotard, *Postmodern* xxiv; 37).[1] The

postmodern period, Fredric Jameson notes, "has generally grown skeptical about deep phenomenological experience"—what he terms "the waning of affect in postmodern culture" (*Postmodernism* 134-35; 10-11).[2] Literary criticism of the period stresses "the heterogeneity and profound discontinuities of the work of art" through the use of strategies such as "contradiction, discontinuity, randomness, excess, short circuit," as well as "juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition, and misattribution" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 31; McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* 7; 45). An apparent rift thus exists between the anti-aesthetic emphasis in philosophical, postmodernist, and contemporary literary theory, on the one hand, and readerly appreciations of and engagements with the aesthetic, on the other. This tension between anti-aesthetic critical paradigms and aesthetic experiences of fiction is the central problem I examine in this study.

Rex Butler observes that "the last thing one could imagine saying about art after the reign of postmodernism, [is] that it could actually be about beauty"; yet it was this very prediction Dave Hickey offered for the decade to come, at an art conference in 1988 (*Deconstruction* 7). Hickey's "strange" pronouncement that beauty "had returned after the intervening period of what came to be known as anti-aesthetics" (7) eventually materialized in the field of contemporary aesthetics with a resurgence of publications such as Hickey's own *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (1993), Gilbert-Rolfe's *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime* (1999), Elaine Scarry's *On Beauty and Being Just* (1999), Neal Benezra and Olga M. Viso's *Regarding Beauty*, Richard Shusterman's *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty* (2000), Danto's *Abuse of Beauty* (2003), Denis Donoghue's *Speaking of Beauty* (2003), Umberto Eco's *History of Beauty*

(2004), Johnson's *The Retrieval of the Beautiful* (2010), Nehamas's *The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (2010), and others.[3]

Furthermore, aesthetics and beauty have found a new and perhaps not unexpected home in the interrelated fields of neuroaesthetics and evolutionary psychology: John Tooby and Leda Cosmides's work pertaining to "an evolutionary theory of aesthetics, fiction and the arts" (2005; 2012), Semir Zeki's *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain: Love, Creativity, and the Quest for Human Happiness* (2008), Denis Dutton's *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution* (2008), and V. S. Ramachandran's *The Tell-Tale Brain: A Neuroscientist's Quest for What Makes Us Human* (2011), among other recent publications, all point to a lively, revived interest in aesthetics, beauty, and the pleasures of fiction in the twenty-first century.

In this study, I put philosophical, aesthetic, narrative, and literary traditions in conversation with each other in order to propose a framework for understanding aesthetic impulses at work in post-world war fiction. My project integrates twentieth-century American pragmatist aesthetics with eighteenth-century German aesthetics by drawing on John Dewey's and Richard Shusterman's pragmatist stance on *aesthetic experience* in conjunction with heuristic categories inherited from Immanuel Kant and Frederick Schiller—which I argue remain pertinent to understanding twentieth and twenty-first century fiction. While Kantian aesthetics treats "aesthetic experience as a special form of the cognition of truth," "Deweyan aesthetics is interested not in truth for truth's sake but in achieving richer and more satisfying experience" by privileging "dynamic aesthetic experience over the fixed material object" ("18th Century German Aesthetics";

Shusterman, *Pragmatist* 18; 25). In this sense, Deweyan aesthetics is aligned with Adorno's notion that "'works of art exist only in *actu*,' in lived dynamic experience" (26). The "more radical consequence of this experiential standard" is that "our aesthetic concepts, including the concept of art itself, are but instruments which need to be challenged and revised when they fail to provide the best experience" (18). On this view, aesthetic theorizations of literary works and other forms of practice viewed as art remain ongoing and dynamic rather than dead and outdated. I revise the tools of Kant, Schiller, and other classical and modern aestheticians, whilst accounting for the Deweyan notion of the experiential by incorporating frameworks such as rhetorical narrative theory. This synthesis is particularly pertinent in the study of postmodern and contemporary fiction, given post-war authors' penchant for foregrounding active readerly roles/tasks—an issue I further explicate in the individual chapters.[4]

My theoretical framework begins with an inquiry into Schiller's definition of beauty, which he adapts and modifies from Kant's proposal that the beautiful is characterized by the harmony of the faculties of the *understanding* and the *imagination* (Kant, *Aesthetics*, "Critique" 137; 145; 155). In line with Kant, Schiller proposes in "Letter XIII," "Letter XV," and "On the Tragic Art" of his aesthetical and philosophical essays that the beautiful is "the common object" of both "the formal impulsion"/"formal instinct"/"intelligence" (what Kant calls the *understanding*) and the "sensuous impulsion"/"sensuous instincts"/"imagination" (which Kant terms the *imagination*). However, in his essay "On the Sublime," Schiller goes a step further to suggest, several times within that essay, that "in the presence of beauty [. . .], the sensuous instincts are in

harmony with the laws of reason." William F. Wertz, Jr. thus rightly points out that for Schiller, the formal drive is characterized by humankind's impulse "to impose a conceptual *and* moral order upon the sensuous world"—i.e. what Kant calls the *understanding* and *(practical) reason* respectively (Wertz, Jr., "Reader's" 84; emphasis added).

However, the conceptual and the moral can be considered as two distinct systems of ordering. Kant himself differentiated between form and the moral, noting that "the feeling for the beautiful" ("which ought properly to be a question merely of the form") "is specifically different from the moral feeling" (Kant, *Aesthetics*, "Critique" 145; 137; 145). The persistent and complex interrelationship between aesthetics and ethics is rooted in early Greek tradition, whereby most ancient writers and thinkers "were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality" of works of art "from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content": "[w]hen Plato discusses beauty," for instance, he is" also speaking of "moral goodness" (Kristeller, *Aesthetics* 4-7). Even amongst the ancients, however, some philosophers implicitly distinguished between several different types of beauty. Plato's student "Aristotle refers to *beauty (kalos)* in terms of goodness, as found in ethical action" in his writings on *Rhetoric*, but also "refers to beauty *(kalos*) in an aesthetic fashion: [. . .] not associated with goodness, but with the perfection of a thing" in *Metaphysics* (Pontynen, *For* 59).

The rigorous distinctions between goodness/ethical/moral beauty and aesthetic beauty only began to properly emerge at the end of the seventeenth and start of the eighteenth century. Though philosophers such as the Third Earl of Shaftesbury (primarily

influenced by Plato, Plotinus, and Cicero) "did not make a clear distinction between artistic and moral beauty," others such as his pupil Francis Hutcheson "distinguish[ed] between the moral sense and the sense of beauty"—a distinction subsequent adopted by David Hume and Kant, paving "the way for separation between ethics and aesthetics" (Kristeller, *Aesthetics* 11). The recurrence of philosophers' and writers' emphasis on the moral impulse, however, suggests its importance and relevance to aesthetics, even if it is no longer viewed as necessarily connected with art.[5] Contemporary aesthetics thus recognizes "a plurality of aesthetic values, of which the ethical values of artworks are but a single kind" (Gaut, *Aesthetics*, "Ethical" 589).

In setting up my revised system for understanding aesthetic impulses at work in post-world war fiction, I retain Kant's intellectual rigor in keeping form (alternatively termed the conceptual, understanding, or intelligence) discrete from the moral (reason), whilst retaining the latter category given its significance for twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction. My revision and re-synthesis of Kant and Schiller in this manner also allows for a more rigorous distinction between the beautiful and the sublime—major aesthetic concepts which have become increasingly conflated, thereby diminishing their theoretical efficacy—without necessarily situating them in oppositional binaries.[6] In my revised framework, I make heuristic use of Kant's and Schiller's aesthetic frameworks, and propose that post-world war fiction is dominantly concerned with the harmonies, engagements, and tensions between what I term the form-drive, the moral-drive, and the sense-drive, in relation to readerly roles/responses.

The *sense-drive* is concerned with what Kant and Schiller have variously termed the "sensuous impulsion," "sensuous instincts," or the "imagination."[7] Since "the interest of imagination [. . . .] is to emancipate itself from all laws, and to play its part freely," Schiller notes that "the sensuous impulsion desires change" (*Aesthetical*, "The Pathetic"; "Letter XIII"). Fueled by liberatory tendencies, "[i]magination, by its tyranny, ventures to destroy the order of the world"—what we might identify with Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of Dionysiac excess (Schiller, *Aesthetical*, "Letter VI"; Nietzsche, "Birth" 225; 229-230).[8] The sense-drive has taken on renewed importance in light of literary postmodernism, given that the historical period we have been and are living through following the post-war period "has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self-questioning and culturally pluralistic. Contemporary fiction clearly reflects this dissatisfaction with, and breakdown of, traditional values" (Waugh, *Metafiction* 6). The onset of postmodernism has foregrounded the notion that "[r]eality is continuous, multiple, simultaneous, complex, abundant, and partly invisible. The *imagination* alone can fathom this because [it . . .] is not limited by the world of sense experience" (Winterson, "What" 185; emphasis added).

The form-drive and the moral-drive, as systems of ordering, are similar by virtue of their concerns with "unity" or "conformity" (Dole, *Aesthetical*)—though in significantly different ways. The form-drive is concerned with unity, conformity, and order vis-à-vis "form-giving" characteristics such as "shape," "grouping," "visual repetition or rhythm," "symmetry," the structure of textual worlds, and so on (Dole, *Aesthetical*; Aldama and Hogan, *Conversations* 116-18; Ramachandran, *Brain* 199;

233).[9] It is important to note that form itself is subject to historical influences, particularly in tandem with the artistic practices of its specific historical moment. David Shapiro, for instance, points out that modern art, especially Cubism, was first charged with "formlessness," then "criticized later from another point of view as excessively concerned with form": "the unstable, the fused, the scattered, the broken, in composition [. . .] may belong to a whole in which we can discern regularities if we are disposed to them by another aesthetic" (Beckley and Shapiro, *Uncontrollable* 6).

The moral-drive is concerned with those same issues of "unity" and "conformity" vis-à-vis the vision (or even prescription) of humankind's shared moral or ethical standards of beliefs and behaviors (Dole, *Aesthetical*). In making this statement, I do not mean that all human beings share identical ethical and/or moral judgments and standards; rather, I consider the moral in connection with John Rawls's notion of fairness as a "symmetry of everyone's relations to each other" (Rawls, *Theory* 12; Scarry 93) and suggest that the moral-drive is always working towards a greater congruence, unity, or conformity in a constructive shared vision of how we are to live and act, especially with and towards others. Drawing on works by Donald E. Brown, Stephen Pinker, Joseph Carroll, and Tooby and Cosmides, amongst others, Dutton identifies a list "of innate, universal features and capabilities of the human mind," including "an intuitive economics" involving "an associated sense of fairness and reciprocity" and "a sense of justice, including obligations, rights, revenge, and what is deserved" (*Art Instinct* 44).

Berys Gaut notes that "literature can yield insights into moral reality of a depth and precision that no other cultural form is well placed to match" (*Aesthetics*, "Ethical"

594). Drawing on the work of Martha Nussbaum, Gaut notes that "'texts which display to us the complexity, the indeterminacy, the sheer *difficulty* of moral choice'" warrant considerations of "aesthetic merit" (594). James Phelan's rhetorical narrative model, which explores readers' ethical judgments of texts in relation to their aesthetic and narrative judgments, considers questions such as: "what are we asked to value in these stories, how do these judgments come about, and how do we respond to being invited to take on these values and make these judgments?" (*Living* ix). The faculty for moral reasoning thus frees the understanding "from the unavoidable limitation of possible experience" (Dole, *Aesthetical*).

In this study of the aesthetics of twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction, I deal with texts from a variety of cultural and national traditions—novels by Irish, Scottish, British, and American novelists. Despite the rich heterogeneity, I identify three dominant aesthetic modes most pertinent to post-war fiction: an aesthetics of play, an aesthetics of the literary sublime, and an aesthetics of muted beauty. Though the pleasure we derive from (literary) art is common to all three modes, each engenders aesthetic pleasure of a different sort in its engagement with various drives; such distinctions are productive because different aesthetic designs foreground varying readerly tasks. Thus, in differentiating among kinds of textual designs, I hope to honor the phenomenology of reading and to defend the value of aesthetic experiences that I and other readers have derived from reading postmodern and contemporary fiction. Briefly, play has to do with the tension/conflict between the form- and sense-drives; the sublime is related to the tension/conflict between the sense- and moral-drives; while beauty is characterized by the

form-drive in complex harmonies with the sense- and/or moral-drives. I offer a historical trajectory of each aesthetic movement and explicate aspects associated with each drive more fully in the chapters that follow.

Part I includes two chapters devoted to play, which I characterize as the dominant aesthetic energy that characterizes "postmodernist fiction"—Brian McHale's term for twentieth-century texts dominated by ontological rather than epistemological concerns (*Postmodernist Fiction* xii; 9-10). My two chosen texts, Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939) and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (1981), are representative instances of early and later postmodernist fiction. Since I adopt McHale's definition of postmodern fiction—as a concern with texts whose "poetics [are] dominated by ontological issues" pertaining to questions such as, "Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?" "What happens when different kinds of worlds are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?" (1; 10)—my interest in Part I relates to readers' inhabitation and orientation of the playful, complex ontological worlds of postmodern fiction. I use the tension/conflict between the form- and sense-drives to characterize the aesthetic category of play, whereby the reader's primary task involves (temporarily) countering the Dionysiac excess or sensuous impulsions of the texts by foregrounding the form-drive. I suggest that the possible-worlds theory provides a useful, critical apparatus for explicating how the form-drive functions as a system of ordering in readers' navigations of these ontologically-complex fictional worlds.

Part II, chapters three and four, deals with the ways in which postmodern and contemporary fiction have reinvigorated other traditional aesthetic categories. In chapter three, I use Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1939-40/1967) and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985) to demonstrate two different instances of the sublime, whilst simultaneously using the example of O'Brien to show that authors are not necessarily committed to single aesthetic projects and that the most versatile post-war writers are likely to challenge and engage readers in multiple different ways. Chapter four deals with texts that engage with the aesthetic category of the beautiful in very different ways: Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992) deals with a more traditional conception of beauty as the harmony of the form- and sense-drives, as conceived by Kant and Schiller, while Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) complicates this classical understanding of beauty by foregrounding the harmony *and* tension between the form- and moral-drives.

In the coda, I return to the relationships among the three aesthetic categories and suggest how they can be viewed as junctures that offer an alternative trajectory for thinking about forms of literary practice during the period in question. Danto has suggested that the elision of beauty in the twentieth century was symptomatic of a more profound aesthetic dearth at stake: the word "beauty was proxy for something that had almost disappeared from most of one's encounters with art, namely enjoyment and pleasure" (*Abuse* 8). My project suggests that an aesthetic view on the literary arts perhaps offers a different trajectory than the one Danto detects with the fine arts of the same era. Dutton notes that as "thinkers from Aristotle to the evolutionary psychologists

have suggested, there is a human instinct to produce and enjoy artistic experiences"—what he terms the *art instinct* (47). By considering the interactions between the sense-, form-, and moral-drives, I elucidate how this art instinct can structure readers' engagements with postmodern and contemporary fiction.

Clive Bell notes that the "starting-point for all systems of aesthetics must be the *personal experience*" of an aesthetic emotion—a notion shared by many other philosophers including Kant, George Santayana, Nehamas, Noël Carroll, and so on (Bell, *Aesthetics*, "Art" 262; emphases added). "A good critic may be able to make me see in a picture that had left me cold things that I had overlooked, till at last, receiving the aesthetic emotion, I recognise it as a work of art," but s/he can only "affect my aesthetic theories only by affecting my aesthetic experience" (Bell, *Aesthetics*, "Art" 262-263; Santayana, *Sense* §10; Carroll, *Philosophy* 158; Nehamas, *Promise* 78-79). Given the inevitable subjective dimension that underpins most, if not all, aesthetic analyses—particularly in the present study, where readerly roles and responses are a dominant feature of my proposed model—when I refer generically to the reader's response, I use the term as a heuristic construct for the real or flesh-and-blood reader's likely response, modeled after my personal experience of the text. I do, however, contend that these responses are not so idiosyncratic as to be mine alone; in general, my aesthetic responses tend to be in line with at least some critics' general attitudes towards the chosen texts, even if we have chosen to highlight different aspects of the novels. In most cases, I refer specifically to the narrative or authorial audience (a conceptual distinction I articulate in chapter one), or refer to critics' readings and reviews of texts, to highlight our shared

aesthetic judgments—which, after all, have an implied social dimension to them and the implicit hope or expectation that others too might share these judgments (Nehamas, *Promise* 79-84).[10]

Christopher Beach observes,

> Despite his much-quoted statement that it is no longer possible to write poetry after Auschwitz—no longer possible to engage in the same *kind* of aesthetic activity as before the war—Adorno believed that a continuing examination of all forms of cultural production, including the aesthetic dimension, was not only possible in the post-war environment, but more necessary than ever" (*Beauty* 107).

If contemporary aesthetic theorists are correct in positing that our experiences of art are ultimately meant to give us a changed sense of the world (Danto) or help us build more well-adapted neurocognitive systems to "revis[e] behavior in an unstable world" (Spolsky 180-81), I suggest that exploring the interactions between what Phelan calls textual and readerly dynamics—synthesizing Kantian and Deweyan approaches to aesthetics in the manner I propose here—yields fruitful insight into writers' and readers' expectations of what art/fiction has to offer to a post-war world that has been and continues to be devastated by unrelenting violence.

PART I: AN AESTHETICS OF PLAY

Chapter One Possible Worlds of Play in *At Swim-Two-Birds*

"Civilization arises and unfolds in and as play."

(John Huizinga, Homo Ludens*)*[11]

"We think of the spirit of play," Marie-Laure Ryan writes, "as typical of postmodern narratives: wasn't it Derrida, one of the patron saints of the movement, [. . .] who advocated decentered structures where elements constantly exchange their place with other members of the system, like children playing musical chairs?" ("Narrative, Games, and Play" 355). To be moved by the strength of Mr. Darcy's regard for Elizabeth Bennett, to be repulsed by the Officer's enchantment with the penal colony's elaborate execution apparatus, to be heartbroken at Briony's admission that "Robbie Turner died of septicemia at Bray Dunes on 1 June 1940 [and] Cecilia was killed in September of the same year" (McEwan, *Atonement* 350)—all of this is part of the play called for, and enabled, by the process of reading fiction. "We pretend to inhabit fictional worlds" like Austen's, Kafka's, and McEwan's and become emotionally invested in their characters' fates and outcomes, and in so doing, become part of what Peter Rabinowitz—and, following him, James Phelan—call the *narrative audience*, "the role readers take on when they enter the narrative world and adopt its assumptions, including a belief in the reality of the characters and events" (Pavel, *FW* 86; Phelan, "Rhetorical" 503; Rabinowitz, "Truth" 121-41). Huizinga, whose *Homo Ludens* (*Man the Player*) has been

integral in influencing existing play theories, identifies this element of "pretense" (1) as critical to defining play.

In addition to the play-as-pretense mode of fiction, which involves treating the text as a fictional, mimetic world, twentieth-century postmodern fiction also foregrounds a different type of play, inviting readers to a more self-reflexive and interactive mode of gameplay. By examining both modes of gameplay in Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two Birds* (1939) and Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981), I explore readerly tasks prompted by the textual designs of such postmodern novels.

Since play involves readers' inhabitation of fictional worlds, it is necessary to understand how readers relate to and orientate themselves in these worlds, particularly in the complex, multiple, and ontologically unstable worlds that postmodern novelists gamely hold out to readers. I use possible-worlds theory as a way of understanding how readers play along in postmodern fiction, specifically in the way we make sense of the chaotic worlds in *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *Lanark*, given the difficulties readers and critics typically face in navigating their fictional landscapes. I begin by reviewing aspects of play theory that are especially resonant with aesthetic projects being undertaken in postmodern literary fiction and discuss the critical value of play. I focus on what Huizinga calls play's "profoundly aesthetic quality," particularly its potential for creating order (*HL* 2; 10), and explicate its relation to what Friedrich Schiller calls "the formal instinct" in his essays on the aesthetic ("Letter XII" 35). By putting these frameworks in conversation with each other, I show how using possible-worlds theory to characterize

features of these fictional landscapes lends some semblance of order to the chaotic worlds of *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *Lanark*.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theorizing Play

Dutton notes that "[p]retend play predictably occurs among children of all cultures at around eighteen months to two years—about the time that they begin to talk and engage socially" (*Art Instinct* 108). Evolutionary psychologists note that there is evidence to suggest that "humans have evolved specialized cognitive machinery that allows us to enter and participate in imagined worlds" during processes of "pretend play and fiction-making"—what Tooby and Cosmides term *decoupled cognition*, whereby we draw on subtle cognitive "mechanisms to decouple the play world from the real world" (Tooby and Cosmides, "Does" 9; *Handbook* 62; Dutton, *Art Instinct* 105-8). We tap upon this capacity for pretend play when we read fiction.

Huizinga observes that play is characterized by voluntary freedom: "never imposed by physical necessity or moral duty," it is "an interlude in our daily lives" that "can be deferred or suspended at any time" (*HL* 8-9). This "quality of freedom" resonates with what Kant postulates as critical to aesthetic judgment—the "feeling of freedom in the play of our cognitive faculties"—and it is perhaps for this reason that Huizinga detects deep affinities between play and aesthetic qualities, a point to which I return (*HL* 7; 2; 10; Kant, "Critique" 150). "Play has its own Time and Space" and is "rule-guided"

(Bohman-Kalaja 14; *HL* 9-10). While play begins and ends in its own time and space, its effects may continue to resonate long after play-time has ended; this is certainly one aim of many postmodern fictional texts, which work to unfetter the sharp delineation between the perceived absolute, privileged position of what Ryan calls authors' and readers' actual world (AW) in relation to the possible worlds (PWs) of fiction. Huizinga notes that play is further marked by "tension," a quality which Roger Caillois likewise identifies and further develops in *Les Jeux et les hommes* (*Man, Play, and Games*): "Rules are inseparable from play [. . . .]. But a basic freedom is central to play in order to stimulate distraction and fantasy" (Huizinga 3; 10; Caillois 27). Play is therefore characterized by the tension between these two contradictory though simultaneous impulses.

What's critical to play—which is likewise the main difficulty scholars have had with pinning it down within a theoretical framework—is that, like the aesthetic, play is "intensely pleasurable" (Brown, *Play* 56; Huizinga, *HL* 1; Kant, "Critique" 131; Ryan, "Narrative, Games, and Play" 354). Its central emotional quality, "the experience of fun and enjoyment," resists analysis and logical interpretation (*HL* 1; 3). While contemporary neuroscience has equipped us with more tools to explain the value of play as "a profound biological process," it remains difficult to define "the *fun* of playing"; yet "it is precisely this fun-element that characterizes the essence of play" (Brown 56; Huizinga, *HL* 2-3).

Huizinga, Detweiler, and Brown variously note that "[a]ll art is 'play' in its creation of other symbolic worlds; 'fiction is primarily an elaborate way of pretending, and pretending is a fundamental element of play and games'" (Detweiler; qtd. in Waugh, *Metafiction* 34; Brown 11; Huizinga ix). When it comes to fiction-reading, especially

readers' efforts to negotiate the complex worlds of postmodern fiction, I suggest that play's element of *pretending*, and readers' abilities to slide between positions of pretense and non-pretense, accounts for an important aspect of the pleasure we experience when we are able to (find ways to) navigate their kaleidoscopic landscapes; it's part of the fun that Huizinga, Huimicke, LeBlanc, Zubek and others posit as being critical to play. Like many other sorts of game-play, however, such fun can be a lot of work!

Huizinga's characterization has been crucial in shaping the way other scholars have engaged with and adapted his definition for their various projects.[12] His thoughts on play, now more than a half century old, have aged surprisingly well; consider medical doctor and clinical psychiatrist Stuart Brown's (2010) definition of play: it is apparently purposeless ("done for its own sake"), "voluntary," inherently attractive ("psychological arousal"), unfolds in its own time (enjoys "freedom from time"), and "[i]n imaginative play, we can even be a different *self*" (*Play* 17). Like Huizinga, Brown notes that its affective dimensions are crucial to any understanding of play: "what years of academic and clinical research has taught me about the power of play" is that it is most obviously "intensely pleasurable"; "there is no way to really understand play without also remembering the feeling of play" (4; 20).

Brown concurs with Huizinga that play is the basis of "what we think of as civilization" and vital to the essence of life (*Play* 11; *HL* ix).

> Neuroscientists, developmental biologists, psychologists, social scientists, and researchers from every point of the scientific compass now know that play is a profound biological process. [. . . .] In higher animals, it fosters

> empathy and makes possible complex social groups. [. . . .] We are built to play and built through play. When we play, we are engaged in the purest expression of our humanity, the truest expression of our individuality. (5)

It is for these reasons that Brown likewise sees play as “the basis of all art” (11). I concur with Brown’s and Huizinga’s contention that play underlies all art, though I will add that play takes on varying degrees of dominance depending on the particular kind of artistic practice, its specific genre, and even the particular aims of the individual work of art. As compared to the novels discussed in Part II, I suggest play is the dominant aesthetic mode in the postmodern fictions discussed in chapters one and two, and further posit that the complex worlds offered in *At Swim* and *Lanark* are explicit invitations for the reader to play along. Bohman-Kalaja identifies what she calls “play-texts” in the work of O’Brien (including *At Swim*), Georges Perec, and Samuel Beckett, whereby these novels “allow themselves to be played again and again” by “adopting game structures” (38). Marjorie Perloff recognizes similar energies at work in the OuLiPo project, calling the OuLiPo device “game-playing,” and specifically in the work of Perec, who himself saw “writing as practice, as work, as play” (140).

John Byers, who studies the evolution of animal play behavior, found that the extent to which human beings engage in play “is correlated to the development of the brain’s frontal cortex” (which relates to cognitive processing) and “tied to the rate and size of growth of the cerebellum” (which is “responsible for key cognitive functions such as attention [and] language processing”); in short, “[p]lay activity is actually helping to sculpt the brain” (Brown 33-35). Brown draws on the work of Nobel laureate and neural

scientist Gerald Edelman, who "describes how our perpetual experiences are coded within the brain in scattered 'maps,' each of which is a complex network of interconnected neurons. [. . . .] The vitality of these maps depends on the active and incessant orchestration of countless details. It seems likely that this orchestration happens most fully through play" (35-36). When we play, it seems, "the brain is making sense of itself through simulation and testing," and "play's most valuable benefit" for humans may be in creating such simulations through "storytelling, art," and other sorts of play activity (35).

It is important to note that such *benefits* of play are distinct from our *motivations* for playing. But even if play can be seen as a "profound biological process," this perspective is not at odds with an account of play that emphasizes voluntary freedom. It is certainly possible that implicit recognitions of play's advantages may (sub)consciously lead to a "continuation desire"; Brown, however, attributes the desire to continue playing to "the pleasure of the experience" (5; 17). The freedom to play (or to refuse to do so) is most evident in the figure of the "spoil-sport": "the cheat and the hypocrite have always had an easier time of it than the spoil-sports" because "the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world [. . .]. He robs play of its *illusion*" (Huizinga, *HL* 11-12; Bohman-Kalaja 40-41). "Bending rules and pushing through limits," as the cheats do, "aren't the dark side of play—they are the essence of play" and "should happen within the realm of play" (Brown, *Play* 193). The postmodern novelists were only too happy to comply through

their dazzling arrays of kaleidoscopic worlds that bent rules and continue to challenge readers, pushing our cognitive abilities to their limits.

Game theorists have proposed a variety of models for studying play categories: Robin Humicke, Marc LeBlanc and Robert Zubek's MDA framework (Mechanics → Dynamics → Aesthetics) attempts to account for how a game's rules and system work to foster the "fun" element in games, while Brian Sutton-Smith strives to capture play's diversity of forms and experiences using his nine categories of "play phenomena" (LeBlanc 440-41; Sutton-Smith 299-301).[13] Caillois's model, however, is the most productive for describing the nature of gameplay in postmodern fiction, particularly for my purpose of foregrounding the affective disorientation that readers sometimes experience when encountering these chaotic textual worlds. Caillois identifies four types of games: "*agôn*" (foregrounding the competitive dimension of games), "*alea*" (highlighting the role of chance), "*mimicry*" (emphasizing the dimension of pretense, which I associate with the shifts between positions of narrative/authorial audience), and "*ilinx*"—derived from the Greek words for *whirlpool* and *vertigo* (14-26).[14] (I focus only on *mimicry* and *ilinx* here, given their relevance to O'Brien's and Gray's textual designs.)

Ryan identifies Caillois's category of *ilinx* with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of "the carnivalesque: chaotic structures, creative anarchy, parody, absurdity, heteroglossia," "the transgression of ontological boundaries," "the treatment of identity as a plural, changeable image—in short, the destabilization of all structures" (*VR* 186). Caillois himself defines *ilinx* as games which are "based on the pursuit of vertigo and which consist of an attempt to *momentarily* destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind

of *voluptuous panic* upon an otherwise lucid mind. [. . . .] The *disturbance* that provokes vertigo is commonly *sought for its own sake*" (23; emphases added). Examples of physical games that come readily to mind include roller-coaster rides or bungee jumping. Within the realm of fiction-reading, Ryan observes that "[m]ore than any other category in Caillois's typology, *ilinx* expresses the aesthetics, sensibility, and conception of language of the postmodern age" (*VR* 186). Caillois's concept of *ilinx* is invaluable to my study not only because of its relevance for postmodern aesthetics and sensibilities, but, more importantly, because it emphasizes the affective dimensions of vertigo: the sensation of "voluptuous panic" in the chaotic yet simultaneously pleasurable disorientation that many readers tend to experience in our encounters with postmodern textual worlds.

I suggest that such cognitive disorientation spurs the form-drive or "formal instinct" into action, as readers attempt to comprehend the text by imposing some form of (artificial and/or temporary) "global coherence" in order to restore stability of perception (Schiller, *Aesthetical* "Letter XII" 35-37; Ryan, *VR* 223). While classical aesthetics dominantly locates such harmonizing tendencies in the artifact's formal design—as a product of the artist's efforts—postmodern literature modifies or redefines our understanding of contemporary aesthetics by displacing the latent energies of coherence, order and harmony from the artifact/artist to the reader/perceiver/participant/player. This shift in or shared onus of formal coherence resonates with Roland Barthes's notion of the "writerly," which likewise promotes the "active and playful participation of the reader in the act of writing" (Ryan, *VR* 195-96). Order and coherence are no longer readily-

perceptible characteristics of the artifact but are (partially) relocated to readers' consciousness. Postmodern fiction's playful textual designs thus foreground the formal aesthetic impulse via readers' attempts to manage the complexities of its disorienting worlds.

While the "jarring fragmentation and incoherencies" of postmodern play-worlds have their own "stimulating aesthetic (and cognitive) effect," the "human need to perceive and experience satisfying unities in the disordered flux of experience" also "motivates our interest in art" (Shusterman 75-77). Caillois notes that *ilinx* is characterized by the pleasurable, *momentary* destruction of stable perceptions—which implies that coherence-restoring cognitive processes complement the disorienting effects of play. In the following section, I show how the possible-worlds approach to narrative fiction can be used as a tool to capture these tensions between the liberatory excesses of the sense-drive and the recuperative processes of the form-drive set in play by postmodern texts.

Possible-Worlds Theory

Like Brown and Huizinga, I am convinced that the spirit of play is inherent to all artistic endeavors, in varying degrees. Specifically, I am interested in the sort of play involved in delineating textual possible worlds, especially in postmodern fiction's textual universes, where worlds tend to be multiple, complex, even kaleidoscopic in nature. I adopt Marie-Laure Ryan's possible-worlds theory as an apparatus for describing and interpreting the worlds of *At Swim* and *Lanark*. *At Swim*'s juxtaposition of multiple

worlds turns the reading process into an arduous mind-game, foregrounding the task of discerning each world's rules of composition in order to mentally (re)constitute their incomplete shapes and interrelationships; *Lanark,* on the other hand, is filled with ambiguous spaces that have been variously interpreted by Gray's critics, such that readers tend to *approximate* the textual world by interpreting events in ways that maximize the text's interpretive power (Phelan, "Implausibilities" 165; 179; 183; Shen, "Unreliability"; Rader 37). Possible-worlds theory thus provides a model of how readers participate in postmodern fiction's gameplay, in our co-construction of these textual universes as we read.

In Ryan's account, possible-worlds theory designates *reality* as a universe that is "the sum of the imaginable," which has the "actual world" at the center of its system "and the satellites as merely possible worlds"—hereafter abbreviated as AW and its PWs respectively ("Possible" 446). Theorists like David Lewis and Nicholas Rescher have further debated and finessed the concept, but for my purpose, the AW simply refers to the world we live in, inhabited by real authors and real readers, including the late Brian O'Nolan (better known by his pseudonym, Flann O'Brien), Alasdair Gray, and readers of *At Swim* and *Lanark*.[15] All other worlds are "the product of a mental activity, such as dreaming, imagining, foretelling, promising, or storytelling"; Umberto Eco, in fact, "describes the narrative text as a 'machine for producing PWs'" (446; 448). These satellite worlds are termed "alternate possible worlds" (APWs) or "non-actual PWs" (Ryan, "Possible" 447).

As Ryan explains, "There is only one *actually* actual world [AW], but there is an infinity of potentially *pretended* actual worlds" (*PW* 24). "[T]he fictional text gives imaginative existence to worlds, objects, and states of affairs by simply describing them," thereby establishing "a new actual world which imposes its laws on the reader and determines its own horizons of possibilities" ("Possible" 447). This pretended actual world is known as the "textual actual world"—hereafter abbreviated as TAW. "Fiction is characterized by the open gesture of recentering," through which readers "become *in make-believe* temporary members of the recentered system"—i.e. part of the narrative audience—"shifting their attention from AW to TAW" (*PW* 26; emphasis added). In relation to the AW, the actual worlds of fictional texts are "from an absolute point of view an APW," or alternate possible world, such that TAW=APW (*PW* 24). The possible-worlds model thus incorporates consideration of the reader's position (AW) in relation to the textual universe (TAW and its TAPWs [textual alternate possible worlds]). Readers minimize such distance "between the textual universe and our own system of reality" by a default reliance on "the principle of minimal departure" (*PW* 51): we modify our mental impressions of textual worlds, based initially (by default) on our own experience of lived reality, when the text cues us to do so.

The principle of minimal departure states that "when readers construct fictional worlds, they fill in the gaps in the text by assuming the similarity of the fictional world to their own experiential reality. This model can only be overruled by the text itself" ("Possible" 447).[16] Experiential reality refers not only to readers' own first-hand knowledge and experience of the AW, but also includes various forms of textual

knowledge (fictional or otherwise) that we use as “frame[s] of reference” in the AW, “from which we draw information in building our representation of reality” (*PW* 54). Jane Austen, for instance, is widely regarded as a novelist who accurately depicts late-18th- and early-19th-century England and English gentry, but she is also *responsible* for building that representation of reality—for creating and shaping our mental images of her historical moment. Thus, depending on each individual’s experience, world knowledge, and what Jonathan Culler calls “literary competence” (101), readers’ sense of what departs from experiential reality will vary.

Scholars who dispute aspects of the minimal departure principle include Lubomír Doležel, who argues that the principle’s assumption of “ontologically complete” fictional worlds is problematic because “incompleteness [is] the distinctive feature of fictional existence. He argues that by filling the gaps, readers would reduce the ontological diversity found in fictional worlds to a uniform structure” (Ryan, “Possible” 447). The other objection comes from Thomas Pavel, who suggests that when “confronted with radical oddities,” readers are likely instead to anticipate “‘maximal departure’ from the real world” (Alber, “Impossible” 82; Pavel, *FW* 93; Ryan, *PW* 57). Ryan in turn argues that “every text is placed under the authority of the principle of minimal departure, but that it is textually feasible to challenge this authority by either frustrating or subverting the principle” (*PW* 57). In particular instances, it may be the case that “[t]he point of the text is to call to mind the principle of minimal departure—only to block its operation” (*PW* 58). Such instances, Ryan explains, include readers’ encounters with “radical strangeness” (as in Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky”) or with very sparse information (as

in Franz Kafka's *The Trial*), where "we lack any model to complete the picture" or when the principle is blocked "through the creation of impossible objects, inconsistent geographies, and radically incomplete beings" (*PW* 57; "Possible" 449).

To address these challenges—Doležel's contention that incompleteness is distinctive of fictional worlds and attests to their ontological diversity and Pavel's suggestion that readers are likely to anticipate maximal departure when confronted with radical oddities (Ryan, "Possible " 447; Pavel, *FW* 87-88)—I propose two revisions to the possible-worlds model, both designed to accommodate the sorts of ontological difficulties presented by texts such as *At Swim* and *Lanark*. First, I propose three factors that mediate accessibility relations and thus help readers determine the shape and nature of these postmodern textual worlds. Second, I suggest that when readers are faced with ambiguous (and therefore multiple) ways of regarding the configuration of particular textual worlds, they tend to approximate the TAW and its satellite worlds in ways that "enhance the reading experience," thereby maximizing the work's interpretive power (Phelan, "Implausibilities" 175; Shen, "Unreliability"; Rader 37). I use these analytic frameworks to help explain the functional purpose of some of postmodern fiction's difficulties, in terms of their effects on the experience of reading/participatory gameplay, and to explore possible strategies that readers intuit or undertake in coping with the challenges posed by the texts.

Modifications to Ryan's Approach

Ryan proposes that nine orders of "accessibility relations from AW [are] involved in the construction of TAW" (*PW* 32). Simply put, accessibility relations are qualities we use to determine the relevance of assuming that principles operating in the AW will continue to operate in the TAW. When we compare the TAW's similarities or differences from the AW, the criteria of comparison, in "decreasing order of stringency," include: (1) "identity of properties," (2) "identity of inventory," (3) "compatibility of inventory," (4) "chronological compatibility," (5) "physical compatibility," (6) "taxonomic compatibility," (7) "logical compatibility," (8) "analytical compatibility," and (9) "linguistic compatibility" (*PW* 32-33). In the context of the principle of minimal departure, when readers turn their attention from the AW to the TAW, we use these accessibility relations as the bases for determining when we must depart from the AW, and how far.

Ryan outlines two domains of accessibility relations: *intrauniverse relations* articulate the relationships linking the TAW to its own textual alternate possible worlds (TAPWs), which then "determine the internal configuration of the textual universe"; *transuniverse relations* articulate the relationship between the AW and the TAW, which helps readers "determine the resemblance between the textual system and our own system of reality" (*PW* 32). "[T]ransuniverse relations [thus] function as the airline through which participants in the *fictional game* reach the world at the center of the textual universe" (*PW* 32; emphasis added). Notions of *game*, *play*, and *pretense* are therefore

integral to our—both authors' and readers'—projections and co-constructions of textual possible worlds.

In my revision to Ryan's model, I propose that three types of textual cues are crucial to shaping readers' sense of (postmodern) textual worlds, particularly in relation to our beliefs and/or knowledge about the distance/proximity of the AW from the TAW in our role as members of the authorial audience and, correspondingly, of the TAW from its TAPWs in our role as members of the narrative audience. I use my analysis of *At Swim* to suggest that three types of textual cues mediate accessibility relations:

(1) At which point or how far into the narrative do departures take place?

(2) How frequently do we encounter departures?

(3) What is the qualitative nature of these departures?

I use the word *departures* in reference to the categories of accessibility relations, such as deviations from "logical compatibility" (for instance, sexual relations and procreation are possible between an author and his character: Orlick Trellis is begotten in *At Swim* after Dermot Trellis assaults his own fictional creation, Sheila Lamont), or deviations from "physical compatibility" relating to natural laws (for example, the Good Fairy, who is pure spirit and incorporeal, can be crowded out by other material objects when he sits in the Pooka's pocket and he is also able to play poker with the other characters). The qualitative nature of departures relates to the perceived degree of estrangement: the lower its position on Ryan's list of accessibility relations, the more readers are likely to regard such deviations as radical.

Determining whether the principle of minimal or maximal departure is likely to be in play depends on accessibility relations. In the case of the former, readers determine how similar or different the textual world is from our AW based on the position, frequency, and nature of its deviations from the AW, assuming minimal departure until the text presents cues to the contrary. In the case of the latter, discerning accessibility relations in textual worlds that employ maximal departure gives readers a "foothold" in that world, however slippery and tentative. To use the terms of rhetorical narrative theory, discerning accessibility relations becomes the reader's basis for presumed shared knowledge with the *implied author*, who essentially serves as the authoritative "source of the beliefs, norms, and purposes" (Nünning 239) of the TAW and its alternate satellite and sub-worlds. The *authorial audience* in turn comprises of the "ideal reader who understands the implied author's communication," while the *narrative audience* refers to "the role readers take on when they enter the narrative world and adopt its assumptions, including a belief in the reality of the characters and events" (Phelan, "Rhetorical" 503). I suggest that part of the pleasure readers derive from the dimension of make-believe in literary gameplay lies in our ability to slide between these positions of immersive pretense (narrative audience) and non-pretense (authorial audience).

The principle of maximal departure likely kicks into play the more frequently readers encounter departures and the lower the position of such departures on Ryan's list of accessibility relations (i.e. in relation to its qualitative nature). Furthermore, indeterminacy or "undecidable relations"—such as "[w]hen epistemic access to these facts is denied" (Ryan, *PW* 39)—is also likely to facilitate the principle of maximal

departure. Correspondingly, the fewer or the less radical the nature of the departures, or the more implicit authors are about departures—such that readers likely fail to observe such departures occurring—the more likely readers will assume minimal departure; like Ryan, I suggest that in the absence of contrary cues, readers do tend to default to the principle of minimal departure.

In general, I posit that the later a departure takes place in the text, the more likely the reader has already assumed a principle of minimal departure. However, if an extremely radical departure takes place late(r) in the novel, readers may be inclined to switch from a minimal to a maximal departure framework. In such cases, however, we are also likely to feel disgruntled at the sudden late change in the game, perceiving authors to be "cheaters" or lousy "gamemasters," whose poor aesthetic constructions have diminished the pleasurable play we derive from the text's fictional worlds—unless they are able to justify such sudden transitions in the interest of upping the level of gameplay difficulty in ways that correspondingly heighten the pleasure or satisfaction readers/players can derive from such game changers. As I demonstrate in the next chapter, Gray effectively utilizes such departure switching in *Lanark* to enhance the cognitive pleasure readers may derive from apprehending its global coherence, as the text cues us to alternately swing between the frameworks of maximal and minimal departure from section to section.

My use of possible-worlds theory serves my purpose of elucidating the shape and nature of the range of tangled textual worlds in *At Swim* and *Lanark*, which are not given but gradually uncovered during the process of play/reading. I suggest that disentangling

and making (some) cognitive sense of these worlds in order to cope with the ontological challenges they pose is part of the gameplay O'Brien and Gray invite readers to participate in. My adoption of the possible-worlds and other narratological models is thus subsumed under my larger project of explaining the aesthetics of play that characterizes much of postmodern fiction.

Robert Detweiler suggests that the rich and complex dimensions of our "emergent play culture [. . .] demands the critic who will function as *magister ludi*"—master of the game (62). However, postmodernism's spirit of plurality, including pluralistic interpretation, decries the notion of a singular or absolute *magister ludi*. This is especially so in texts characterized by a great deal of ambiguity; critics of *Lanark*, for instance, find it difficult even to agree on the characterization of the textual actual world, of whether events belong to the fabric of the TAW or to its satellite PWs. I suggest that readers and critics are responsible for co-constructing such postmodern textual worlds and posit that, in general, most readers do hope to discern the larger thematic or stylistic project at stake, even as they enjoy the gameplay. My project is specifically concerned with the aesthetics or stylistic and affective purposes of textual world co-construction—an issue particularly pertinent to postmodern fiction's complex ontological universes.

Kendall Walton assimilates "fiction to a game of make-believe," whereby "we participate in fictional happenings by projecting a fictional ego who attends the imaginary events [in the TAW] as a kind of nonvoting member," i.e. by becoming part of the narrative audience (Ryan, *PW* 23; Pavel, *FW* 85). Since play is inextricably linked to pretense (hence my use of concepts of *narrative audience* and *authorial audience* to

denote positions of pretense and non-pretense respectively), deciding how to inhabit and navigate these textual worlds become key readerly game-tasks in postmodern narrative fiction. Having sent what Walton calls "our fictional egos" out to inhabit these worlds for a time, readers may come to hope that playing in or with these textual worlds help will somehow enrich their lives. As Pavel eloquently puts it, "Schiller's hopes for a betterment of humanity through aesthetic education, were [. . .] based on the presumption that after their return from travel in the realms of art, fictional egos would effectively melt back into the actual egos, sharing with them their fictional growth" (*FW* 85). Being transformed by the experience of engaging with fictional narratives is likewise Richard Gerrig's point in his model of "transportation," as outlined in *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*.

Though critics like Suzanne Keen caution against making overreaching claims for fiction's efficacy in transforming behavior—given that "scant evidence" exists for making active connections between reading and real-world altruistic action—Keen nonetheless points affirmatively to fiction's "*potential*" for such transformations (*Empathy* 4; 146-47; emphasis added). My revisions to Ryan's model ultimately work to incorporate this dimension of the fictional ego's potentially transformational experience: first, by positing the reader as co-constructor of textual worlds engaged in literary gameplay—vis-à-vis rhetorical narrative theory's concepts of narrative and authorial audience—and second, by showing how textual cues such as position, frequency, and the qualitative nature of departures mediate the sorts of accessibility relations described in the possible-worlds framework.

Readerly Reconstructions of Textual Worlds in *At Swim-Two-Birds*

Reviewing Earlier Critical Approaches

Though the "Irish comic tradition" has been well-established since "approximately the ninth century down to the present day" (Mercier, *Irish* vii), its associated quality of play is a distinct historical and aesthetic project of twentieth-century postmodern fiction—a project in which O'Brien was perhaps a little too far ahead of the curve. The first edition of *At Swim* (1939) "sold only 244 copies before Longmans' London warehouse was destroyed" during World War II, following which O'Brien's first novel "sank into obscurity for over twenty years" (Murphy and Hopper 10). However, this also meant that *At Swim* was a perfect fit with the moment of its re-issue and the new edition met with "critical acclaim" in 1960 (O'Brien, *Complete Novels* xxx), as experimental postmodern writing was gaining momentum in Europe and the United States.

Brian McHale theorizes that unlike modernist fiction, which is preoccupied with epistemological issues, "the dominant of postmodernist fiction is *ontological*" (*Postmodernist Fiction* 10; 1). Therefore questions such as "What is a world? What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?" "How is a projected world structured?" are concerns brought to the fore in postmodern fiction (*Postmodernist Fiction* 10). The frequently problematic structures of worlds are a central readerly concern in postmodern texts such as *At Swim* and *Lanark*. Discerning the very

shape of such worlds becomes a key readerly game-task, especially when there is so much ambiguity or uncertainty surrounding attempts to map out these worlds.

Consider the amount of critical effort that has been expended in attempts to offer a comprehensible structure of *At Swim*. Thomas Shea observes, "From the beginning, we assume that [the characters] Finn, Furriskey, and The Pooka exist adjacent to one another [. . .]. Not until the fifth autobiographical reminiscence do we find that Finn has been 'demoted' a level, serving as a character of Dermot Trellis who is himself a character of the undergraduate. Once we think we have it settled, however, our quandary begins anew" (58). David Herman describes *At Swim-Two-Birds* as a "baroquely hypodiegetic narrative":

> First, we have the frame involving the Evil Pooka, Fergus MacPhellimey, and the Good Fairy, struggling for mastery over the soul of a third-order fictional being and sub-subnarrator, Orlick Trellis. [. . . .] Second, there is the frame surrounding John Furriskey [. . . .]. The third opening broaches on the frame centering on Finn MacCool, [. . . .] the outermost frame inhabited by the initial narrator – that slothful student at University College, Dublin, who bears an uncanny resemblance to his own narrative progeny, Dermot Trellis ("Toward" 136-139).

However, Herman points out that readers also have to deal with characters like Orlick Trellis, whose "diegetically unstable status" allows him to "metaleptically migrate to a frame positioned somewhere between O'Brien's narrator and Dermot Trellis" (139). Shea notes that "critics often struggle to impose thematic shape onto *At Swim*" (74), and the

very tentativeness of the chosen vocabulary—"struggle," "somewhere between," and "quandary"—evinces the difficulties critics have had navigating the text's ontological challenges.

Anne Clissmann, Rüdiger Imhof, and William Gass (who wrote the introduction to the 1998 Dalkey Archive edition of *At Swim*) are generally in agreement that the novel "has the form of a classic frame tale" (Gass ix). Though narrative framing typically delineates narrative levels by highlighting the embeddedness of the narrating act (e.g. extradiegetic, intradiegetic, metadiegetic and so on), these critics delineate narrative levels in *At Swim* by considering the embeddedness of the books that appear in the novel or its *mise en abyme* structure: O'Brien's book (B1) comprises of the homodiegetic student-narrator's book (B2), which in turn contains Dermot Trellis's book (B3), which in turn frames Dermot's son, Orlick Trellis's book (B4). Gass points out that the four books "are not hermetically sealed from one another," but like "salvage from the sea, flotsam from this or that wrecked narrative washes up on foreign shores" (ix).

Though this four-book model is widely used, Bohman-Kalaja points out that it has "one fundamental drawback": readers tend to accept Dermot "Trellis as a narrator because they are told to, but his book on sin occupies virtually no textual space. [. . . .] Trellis's unsuccessful narrative attempts reveal a flaw" in the existing critical schema, since he "never succeeds in creating any manuscript at all" (51; 76). Bohman-Kalaja rightly observes that we never read a word of Dermot's manuscript. In fact, most of B3's events occur when Dermot is drugged and asleep, and hence could have no possible knowledge of them. Furthermore, even within this four-book structure, Imhof points out

that it is "possible to establish yet another level," depending on what readers do with "the tale about Finn MacCool, who in turn tells the romance about Mad King Sweeny": while some critics regard it as part of B3, others "regard the Finn part as a 'book' in its own right" (168). Using the four-book structure to delineate narrative levels thus presents some significant interpretive challenges.

My adaptation of the possible-worlds approach makes it possible to untangle some of these navigational nightmares. Whereas Bohman-Kalaja uses Caillois's categories of *alea*, *agôn*, *mimicry*, and *ilinx* to create a schema of gameplay modes that distinguishes narrative levels by "the games that are played on that level" instead of relying on storylines, characters, or narrators (52-53), I employ game theory to very different ends. My use of possible-worlds theory relies precisely on textual cues about storylines and characters to answer McHale's questions about "What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?" In so doing, I try to employ a critical approach that offers an apparatus for aiding readerly comprehension of the *fabula*.[17] Possible-worlds theory thus serves as a useful model for approaching postmodern fiction's kaleidoscopic textual worlds, giving us a sense of how readers might possibly handle *At Swim*'s ontological challenges, by situating reader-character relations in delineations of transuniverse (AW-TAW) and intrauniverse (TAW-TAPWs) accessibility relations.

I first lay out the shape and structure of the textual universe that emerges when I bring my revised model of possible-worlds theory into dialogue with *At Swim*. I focus on readerly treatments of the TAW and TAPWs, and explain how my three factors

mediating accessibility relations bear on minimal or maximal departures in each world. I then shift my attention from the transuniverse to the intrauniverse domain of relations, pointing to key events or moments in *At Swim* that "determine the internal configuration of the textual universe" (Ryan, *PW* 32) by delineating the TAPW from its alternate sub-worlds and by elucidating their interrelationships. In so doing, I hope to more clearly explicate the imaginative range of O'Brien's tangled textual worlds in *At Swim* and to explain the functional purposes of some of these interpretive difficulties, which are part of the challenge O'Brien invites his readers to participate in through the aesthetics of play that characterizes *At Swim*'s overarching textual design.

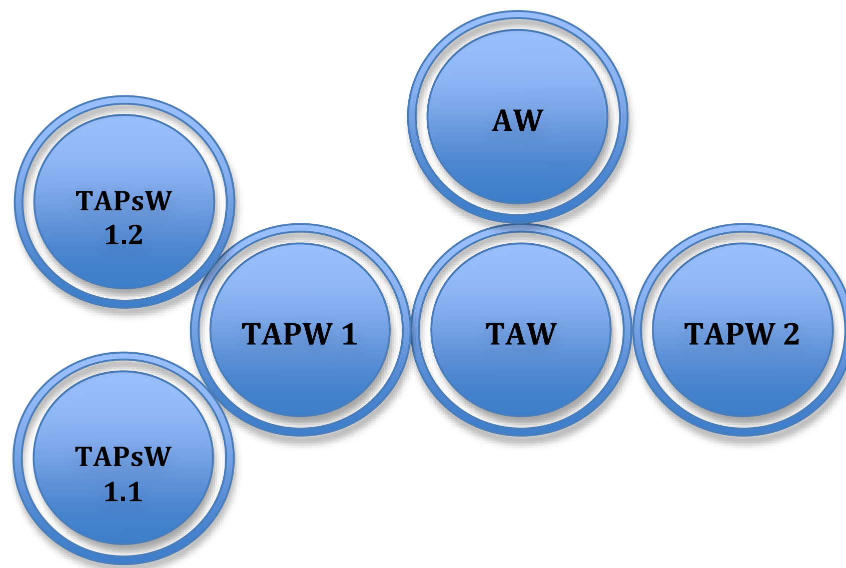

Figure 1. Possible-worlds model of *At Swim-Two-Birds*

With reference to figure 1, AW refers to the *actual world* inhabited by flesh-and-blood authors and readers. TAW refers to the *textual actual world* inhabited by the student-narrator and his family and friends. TAPW 1 refers to the dominant *textual alternate possible world* inhabited by Dermot Trellis and his friends, as well as his created and hired characters. TAPsW 1.1 refers to a *textual alternate possible subworld* characterized by Finn MacCool's imaginings, inhabited by Conán and companions. TAPsW 1.2 refers to a second *textual alternate possible subworld* characterized by the events that occur in Orlick Trellis's manuscript. TAPW 2 refers to a minor *textual alternate possible world* as characterized by the events of William Falconer's epic poem, "The Shipwreck." In the following sections, I explain how the possible-worlds approach allows readers to provisionally establish formal order in *At Swim*'s complex, tangled textual universe, in order to discern the novel's thematic and aesthetic significance.

Transuniverse Relations: Readerly Treatment of the TAW and TAPW

Readers take on two different roles when engaging with narrative fiction. On the one hand, as members of the narrative audience, our key readerly game-task as imaginary participants is related to understanding intrauniverse relations in order to maneuver the textual universe. On the other hand, as members of the authorial audience who observe the entire communicative situation, transuniverse concerns such as making sense of the text's ontological challenges in the larger context of postmodern fiction dominate at least part of our readerly task. As previously explained, *transuniverse relations* articulate the relationship between the AW and the TAW, which helps readers "determine the

resemblance between the textual system and our own system of reality" (Ryan, *PW* 32). I show how *At Swim*'s textual worlds are constituted—focusing on moments which cue fictional recentering (from the TAW to the TAPW, for example) and instances whereby the characteristics of a particular world are modified in significant ways (that create ambiguity in the textual worlds' interrelationships, for example)—and explain how a possible-worlds approach allows us to account for some of *At Swim*'s difficulties in terms of their effects on the reading experience.

The AW (actual world) is inhabited by real authors and real readers. While the flesh-and-blood author Brian O'Nolan belongs to the AW, we can consider his literary alter-ego and pseudonym, Flann O'Brien, to be the implied author of *At Swim*'s textual universe. Through the process of fictional recentering, we shift our attention from the AW to the TAW (and all its possible satellite and sub worlds, more generally). Inhabitants of the TAW include the homodiegetic student-narrator and his circle of family and friends: his frequently irate uncle (and his uncle's associates, Mr. Connors, Mr. Fogarty, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Hickey, etc.), his friend Brinsley and their fellow university-mates (Byrne, Cryan, Kerrigan, etc.), his drinking buddy Kelly, his gambling associate Verney Wright, and so on.

Critics who use the four-book structure tend to agree on the relative diegetic stability of this world. Part of the reason for this agreement is that throughout *At Swim*, recentering from its alternate possible worlds back to the TAW is signposted by the "*biographical reminiscence*" headings. Many segments of *At Swim* begin with italicized headnotes such as "*Biographical reminiscence, part* [. . .]," "*Mail from V. Wright* [. . .],"

or "*Extract from my typescript* [. . .]," which signal that the narration is about to change gears as the student-narrator goes from describing events taking place around him to his reading a letter or to parts of his book manuscript (*ASTB* 8-9). However, not every shift in context is consistently signaled by the use of such headings,[18] nor does every heading signal a contextual shift[19]—which is part of the disorienting confusion readers are likely to experience, and with increasing intensity when *At Swim* is populated by more and more characters and sub worlds. Though readers appear to be able to rely on these headnotes for shifts in contexts, like other O'Brien devices (such as the chapter heading on the very first page; no other chapters appear in the rest of the novel), the headnotes sometimes turn out to be one of O'Brien's illusionistic tricks: playful red herrings that contribute to *At Swim*'s comic appeal.

In general, however, the ten "*Biographical reminiscence*" headings signal that the narration is transiting back from the novel's alternate/satellite/sub worlds into the TAW inhabited by the student-narrator and his family and friends. This world contains few departures from the AW, none of which is radical, such that readers can quite easily believe that this is a university student who did plausibly live in Dublin, Ireland, of the AW at some point, without any great leaps of imagination. The reader is thus cued to approach the TAW using the principle of minimal departure. It is when we leave this TAW that worlds start to become muddied.

Textual alternate possible worlds (TAPWs) are generated when the reader is cued to recenter from the TAW to an APW, which include products of "mental activity, such as dreaming, imagining, foretelling, [. . .] or storytelling" (Ryan, "Possible" 446). On the

opening page, readers are told that the Pooka, Furriskey and MacCool are part of the same "good book" that has "three openings entirely dissimilar and inter-related only in the prescience of the author" (*ASTB* 5). However, because there do not seem to be evident accessibility relations linking the three openings, notwithstanding the explicit directive, the reader is likely to initially treat these as three separate narratives requiring fictional recenterings to three different alternate or satellite worlds (TAPWs) embedded within the TAW inhabited by the homodiegetic student-narrator.

In relation to the qualitative nature of departures, Jan Alber notes that "the logically impossible is even stranger and more disconcerting than the physically impossible, and we have to engage in even more extensive cognitive processing to make sense of it" ("Storyworlds" 79-80). Ryan too ranks textual worlds' logical compatibility with the AW as being relatively more important than physical compatibility in determining degrees of radical deviation. It is just such departures from logical compatibility, readers learn, that characterize TAPW 1. Dermot Trellis, a product of the TAW student-narrator's story and hence of TAPW 1, buys

> a ream of ruled foolscap and is starting on his story. He is compelling all his characters to live with him in the Red Swan Hotel so that he can keep an eye on them [. . . .]. Trellis has absolute control over his minions but this control is abandoned when he falls asleep. Consequently he must make sure that they are all in bed before he locks up and goes to bed himself (*ASTB* 31).

Readers are consequently directed to approach TAPW 1 using the principle of maximal departure, since we are explicitly cued early on to make a radical break with our sense of the AW. Furthermore, the comic purposes of such radical departures—of a dictatorial author sharing the same physical space as his characters—prompts readers to take a playful attitude towards TAPW 1.

Such logical incompatibilities characterizing TAPW 1 (in relation to the AW and TAW) are also frequently foregrounded: Dermot, for instance, takes things one step further and sexually assaults his fictional creation Sheila, who later gives birth to a son Orlick Trellis (*ASTB* 58; 142-43). Continually foregrounding such radical deviations, Orlick Trellis too, like John Furriskey, is born into TAPW 1 as a fully grown man rather than a baby, through the process of "aestho-autogamy" (*ASTB* 36-37; 142-43). While there are genre conventions that allow for the reality of beings such as devils and fairies (such as the textual worlds of fairytales or fantasy), there are none that allow for bizarre features such as the nature of Orlick's conception and birth, for instance, which are ad hoc features of *At Swim*'s TAW. Readers are thus likely to consider such frequent and continual departures in TAPW 1 as a radical break with AW experience and to approach this perplexing world using the principle of maximal departure. To compound the challenges readers face in cognitively processing TAPW 1, inhabitants of TAPW 1 are not fully fleshed out early in the narrative discourse: consider the Good Fairy, who only enters *At Swim* only midway through the novel. Part of the reader's game-task is to figure out who belongs (and how) to which world—an issue I take up more fully in the following section on intrauniverse relations.

The effect of creating a TAW that is very similar to readers' sense of AW reality to buffer the AW and TAPW 1 is that it prevents us from simplistically reading (or, worse still, dismissing) *At Swim* as pure fantasy. Juxtaposing these worlds that operate on different principles within the same textual universe—the TAW on the minimal departure principle and TAPW 1 on the maximal departure principle—turns the reader's attention to issues of metafictionality, foregrounding questions about authorship and fictionality. By juxtaposing two textual worlds that operate on different principles, the strange and wonderful texture of TAPW 1 is preserved alongside overt confrontations about the nature of fiction-writing raised in the TAW. Patricia Waugh remarks on "the tremendous importance of the serious possibilities of 'play'" in postmodern metafiction when she explains that metafictional novels "usually set up an internally consistent 'play' world" that "functions through the *problematization rather than the destruction* of the concept of 'reality'" (*Metafiction* 28ff.; 40-41; emphasis added). The TAW thus functions as *At Swim*'s tenuous anchor to AW reality, creating an alternative to (rather than replacement or substitution of) reality. In so doing, O'Brien is able to effectively problematize the concept of reality—rather than replace/substitute/destroy it—and foreground ontological readerly game-tasks, as readers are forced to continually engage with our own AW sense of reality even as we are kept busy in the shuffle of fictional recentering between the TAW's alternate and satellite sub worlds. O'Brien further problematizes the very idea of a fictional "center" by displacing its centrality altogether; most of *At Swim*'s action, so to speak, occurs not in the TAW, but in TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2, such that readers are likely to feel more invested in the outcomes of characters populating these APWs that

operate on the principle of maximal departure (as compared to characters in the mimetic TAW with whom we are more marginally engaged).

One of the key interpretive difficulties presented in the aesthetics of play that characterizes *At Swim*'s textual design is determining if and when fictional recentering is supposed to be taking place: whether we, as readers, are supposed to be making the jump to a different satellite world. These challenges arise as a result of homogenous signposts—the italicized headnotes—delineating first-order (TAW-TAPW 1) and second-order (TAPW 1 and its sub worlds) intrauniverse relations. These interpretive difficulties are further compounded by the stylistic incongruities that characterize the same world (e.g. TAPW 1), and the stylistic continuities that characterize different worlds (e.g. TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2). The possible-worlds approach thus becomes an especially useful "cheat sheet" for navigating the disorienting, tangled play-worlds of *At Swim*. As I sought to determine the internal configuration of *At Swim*'s textual universe, my own experience of attempting to untangle TAPW 1 from its textual alternate possible sub worlds (TAPsW) was an arduous yet pleasurable process, akin to other sorts of challenging and frequently frustrating modes of gameplay, where fun likewise entails plenty of hard work that eventually turned out to be a rewarding and cognitively satisfying experience.

Intrauniverse Relations: Delineating TAPW and its alternate sub worlds (TAPsW)

To elucidate the aesthetics of play that characterizes *At Swim*'s textual design, I now turn my attention to explicating intrauniverse relations, whereby the key literary

game-task relates to delineating TAPW 1 from its sub worlds, an interpretive challenge that arises from O'Brien's playful use of naming functions, as he employs both "homonymy (a proper name borne by two different characters)" and "identity across possible worlds" (what Nicholas Rescher, David Lewis, Eco, Ryan, and others call "transworld identity") to perpetuate further readerly confusion (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 231; *PW* 52; Eco, *Role* 230; Mackie and Jago, "Transworld Identity").[20] Readers have to deal with the porosity of *At Swim*'s worlds given the inclusions of Irish folklore (such as the Finn MacCool mythology and Sweeny legend, which would technically form their own TAWs to the reader's AW), yet O'Brien transfigures it in significant ways and subsumes it to TAPW 1. By grasping the novel's complex internal configurations, readers gain a clearer sense of the brilliant construction underlying *At Swim*'s textual universe instead of simply treating it as a chaotic mishmash.

The expansive TAPW 1 is at least partly modeled on AW Ireland, where some place-names explicitly correspond to AW locations in Dublin: readers are told the Red Swan Hotel is located in "Lower Leeson Street" and Shanahan reminiscences about "Dublin in the old days" (*ASTB* 22; 49). Inhabitants of TAPW 1 include author figures (Dermot Trellis, William Tracy, Henderson, and an unnamed Belgian author),[21] created characters (Trellis creates Furriskey, Peggy, Sheila Lamont, and the Pooka Fergus MacPhellimey; Tracy creates Shanahan, Slug, Shorty, and the Red Indians—some of whom Trellis borrows or hires; Henderson creates Red Kiersay), "hired" characters (Antony Lamont of unknown origin and Finn MacCool from Irish mythology),[22] at least one begotten character (Orlick Trellis), other familiar figures from Irish folk and fairy

lore (the Good Fairy and Sweeny), various characters mentioned in press excerpts (Detective-Officer Snodgrass, Superintendent Clohessy from Tipp, and Judge Lamphall), and Teresa of the Red Swan Hotel.

The eclectic configuration of characters that constitute TAPW 1 presents a "rag-bag" combination of "incongruous styles," as characters' dialogues emphasize O'Brien's "recurrent theme" of the "disparity between the plain man and self-professed cultural elite" (Taaffe, *Ireland* 40; 48-49). MacCool, for instance, is vested with an erudite style of elocution, reciting lays and short ballads in his expositions of various Celtic mythologies (*ASTB* 9-16), while Shanahan continually interrupts MacCool's narrations, complaining that the old Irish lays fail to account for "the man in the street" like himself (69-71; 72; 75-77; 82). Shanahan speaks in a distinctly informal and colloquial fashion ("bloody blather," "bloody lot of them," and "waiting around for bloody nothing," being some of his choice phrases), and openly expresses his admiration of the working man's poet Jem Casey, calling him "a poet of the people" (70-71).

Published in 1939, *At Swim* was composed during a period of volatile political and cultural change, as an increasingly independent Ireland moved from the formation of the Irish Free State in 1922 to the establishment of its own Constitution in 1937. Taaffe observes that O'Brien reacted against "all forms of literary pomposity" that arose as a result of such changing Irish cultural politics and that the conflict between the incongruous miscellany of styles reflects O'Brien's "irritation" with Ireland's intellectual environment of his time: "disdainful of modernism's elitism, he was also nevertheless

ambivalent in his attitude to the populism extolled by Gaelic Revivalists and other cultural nationalists" (*Ireland* 31; 40; 34; 27-28; 3).

O'Brien's response was finally to playfully parody all of these attitudes, mercilessly poking fun at them both in his novels and in "Cruiskeen Lawn," his newspaper column in *The Irish Times*. This diverse rag-bag of characters and styles is dominantly situated in TAPW 1, which is twice-removed from the AW O'Brien was irreverently responding to, in a textual world characterized by the principle of maximal departure. O'Brien's playful irreverence is emphasized by his decision to situate his parody of literary pomposity mainly in a textual world characterized by frequent and radical departures from AW reality, populated by characters who rebel against prescriptions of behavior at all costs. It is thus possible to read O'Brien's decision to situate these characters and their corresponding voices—a parody of the inherent conflict that characterized Ireland's intellectual environment at the time—in a textual world twice-removed from the AW as the author's playful way of implying how far removed such polemical attitudes were to the fruitful development of a rich, independent Irish intellectual culture.

Characteristics of TAPW 1 include creators and their created characters' ability to co-inhabit this world. Characters exist in the same ontological world as their authors, since readers are explicitly told early on that Dermot Trellis "compel[s] all his characters to live with him in the Red Swan Hotel" (*ASTB* 31). TAPW 1 contains multiple authors who each create characters, and though the latter have to take orders from their creators (readers learn that Finn and Shanahan "would not dare to defy" Dermot when he is awake

[58]), these characters have at least partially autonomous existences, when their author is asleep for instance, since they are able to engage in activities that were not written by their creators. Dermot Trellis's characters go so far as to drug him, so as to be able to lead their own lives; for example, Furriskey marries Peggy (whom he was supposed to assault) without Dermot's knowledge and lives with her in Dolphin's Barn (also a location that corresponds to AW Dublin), and "for twenty hours out of twenty-four," they "enjoy almost uninterrupted marital bliss" (*ASTB* 57; 148).

Furthermore, relatively early on, about a quarter of the way into *At Swim*, readers are explicitly told and frequently reminded that TAPW 1 is a world in which characters are aware of their own roles as characters. Shanahan, for instance, "who had appeared in many of the well-known tales of Mr Tracy," tells his companions that Tracy usually sends for him to give him his orders but, on one occasion, he was soundly chastised by Tracy when he arrived for orders upon receiving a false message (which Furriskey or Lamont then guesses was likely to have originated from another author, Henderson [*ASTB* 49-50]). Though the source of their knowledge is indeterminate, characters also understand how their world functions: Peggy, for instance, explains to Furriskey "that Trellis's powers are suspended when he falls asleep," which is how they eventually devise their marriage behind Trellis's back (*ASTB* 58). As the character Jem Casey aptly observes, "This is a very queer place certainly" (*ASTB* 117).

TAPW 1 continues to be fleshed out a long way into the narrative. The proper introduction to the Pooka and Good Fairy midway through *At Swim* significantly modifies readers' existing mental model of TAPW 1, which has thus far largely been

confined to the Red Swan Hotel and its inhabitants. However, it is not absolutely certain immediately that the Pooka and Good Fairy belong to the same textual world as Trellis and company, until the Good Fairy brings up Sheila Lamont several pages later (*ASTB* 101; 109). It is also the Pooka's discourse that ultimately implies most strongly that the MacCool mythology belongs to TAPW 1 rather than an alternate satellite or sub world.

As previously mentioned, even within the conventional four-book structure many O'Brien critics favor, Imhof points out that there are disputes concerning whether the tale about Finn MacCool is "part of the Trellis book" or "a 'book' in its own right," given the absence of parodic elements in Finn's relation of the Sweeny romance (168). As Herman observes, O'Brien employs purposeful "register-switching" and "register-mixing" that make it difficult to rely solely on stylistic delineations to order narrative structure in *At Swim* ("Toward" 144). Such gestures are part of the fun *and* frustration readers experience as we attempt to make sense of O'Brien's playful worlds. However, using the possible-worlds model based on mediated accessibility relations suggests that the MacCool and Sweeny mythologies belong to the fabric of TAPW 1 rather than its sub worlds.

It is explicitly put to readers from the beginning that "Finn MacCool was a legendary hero of old Ireland [. . . .] of superb physique and development," who was subsequently "hired by Trellis on account of [his] venerable appearance and experience, to act as [Peggy's] father" (*ASTB* 5; 57). Finn, however, turns out to be an abusive cad of an adoptive father, since Peggy's "virtue has already been assailed" by him a quarter way into *At Swim* (*ASTB* 57). Some critics are inclined to delineate two different Finns in *At*

Swim: the early Finn being the legendary Irish giant who relates his legend to Conán and others, versus the later Finn introduced as the cad-like adoptive father. However, I suggest that we are dealing with the same Finn in both cases (excepting the judge cum jury member "F. MacCool," who indeed belongs to a different textual world [*ASTB* 193]). Compounding the confusion is the fact that the Finn mythology exists in the AW, and by the minimal departure principle we take it to exist in the TAW as well, leading readers to wonder if "the Finn part" should indeed be "a 'book' in its own right," possibly warranting a new TAPW of its own, like the events and inhabitants of Falconer's "The Shipwreck."[23]

To determine what type of satellite world a set of events and characters belong to, whether it should be considered a TAPW or TAPsW—which is part of the interpretive gameplay *At Swim*'s tortuous textual design invites readers to participate in—depends on which world the object belongs to and/or which character the mental activity belongs to. For instance, the student-narrator reads a book containing an argument about Falconer's poem in the TAW, and thus I define the poem's events and characters as belonging to a TAPW. The mental worlds/activities of characters who belong to a TAPW are in turn considered a TAPsW: Finn, for instance, belongs to TAPW 1, but his imaginings belong to TAPsW 1.1.

Two specific moments in *At Swim* warrant Finn's inclusion in TAPW 1. First, like other characters in TAPW 1, even the so-called *early* Finn recognizes his own role and existence as a character and explicitly remarks on his own fictionality (*ASTB* 15).[24] The interrelationship between the three initial separate openings is complete when the Pooka

enters the narrative proper midway through *At Swim* and readers identify him as belonging to TAPW 1 when he meets up with its other inhabitants (including Sweeny whom they rescue from the trees) and settles down to a poker game at the Red Swan Hotel whilst awaiting Orlick Trellis's birth (109; 123-24; 136). It is during the poker game that the Pooka relates how he "played a small part" in the tale of Granya and (yes, another) Dermot "a long time ago," when the couple "strayed into [his] cave" as they were fleeing from Finn's pursuit of their treachery (138-39; 142). We are explicitly told that this Dermot had "ran away with Granya, the woman of Finn MacCool" (139).

Dermot and Granya are the Anglicized forms of the Celtic names "Diarmuid" and "Gráinne"—Irish mythological figures whose story form a crucial tale in the Fenian Cycle of Celtic mythology ("Fenian Cycle"). The Fenian Cycle is a series of verse and prose narratives which center on Finn MacCool, and "The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Gráinne" is one of its most well-known tales. Granya rejects her bethrothal to the aged Finn and elopes with Dermot, one of Finn's warriors ("Fenian Cycle"). In *At Swim*, the Pooka relates having met Dermot and Granya during their time on the run. Readers are thus cued to treat the Finn narrative as events that happened at an earlier time in TAPW 1—and perhaps nothing could be more fitting than to render what is mythological in the AW as historical in TAPW 1. When the mythological in the AW is made historical in TAPW 1, readers are correspondingly prompted to consider the potentially fictitious dimensions of historical accounts rendered in our own AW, which sometimes can be more truthfully called myths than history. Such moments serve not to deny that particular events did certainly happen in the AW past, as Waugh explains, but to foreground the

difficulties of comprehensively rendering accurate accounts of those events, i.e. that which we call "history." To simply treat the Finn narrative as a separate TAPW would be to miss such nuances.

At Swim does, however, feature at least two sub worlds that are satellites of TAPW 1: TAPsW 1.1 refers to Finn MacCool's imaginings while TAPsW 1.2 refers to the events inscribed in Orlick's manuscript. While I am convinced that Finn's relation of mythological narratives (first his own and later Sweeny's) belong to the "historical fabric" of TAPW 1, so to speak, I suggest that Conán, Diarmuid Donn (from the Dermot-Granya story), Caolcrodha, Liagan Luaimneach O Luachair Dheaghaidh, and Gearr mac Aonchearda, who prompt Finn to relate his story at the beginning of *At Swim*, are inhabitants of TAPsW 1.1, which I identify as part of Finn MacCool's mind (*ASTB* 9-16). These characters are also part of the Fenian Cycle of Celtic mythology in the AW. Conán, who initially instigates Finn to tell these stories, is later revealed as "hidden Conán," when Finn begins to relate Sweeny's story (*ASTB* 12; 60).

We encounter Conán once more when Furriskey, Lamont, Shanahan, and MacCool are together in a room after Dermot Trellis has fallen asleep: "Relate, said hidden Conán, the tale of the Feasting of Dún na nGedh. Finn *in his mind* was nestling with his people" (*ASTB* 60; emphasis added). In this case, characters' interactions or lack thereof help readers to distinguish between worlds. Even though Conán's remarks are interspersed with Furriskey's, Lamont's, and Shanahan's comments, Conán remains ontologically distinct from TAPW 1 and likely exists only in Finn's mind since the other three characters do not react or respond to Conán's remarks. I thus suggest that the

interactions between Finn and Conán (and likely their other contemporaries mentioned earlier) exist in Finn's mind, or TAPsW 1.1, though the stories he tells are part of his memory and belong to the historical fabric of TAPW 1. The shift between worlds here is relatively covert and only infrequently encountered since it happens only twice, making it easy for the reader to misread these moments as belonging to TAPW 1. O'Brien's textual worlds thus constantly threaten to collapse or blend into each other if readers' attention lapse even momentarily. Readers have to constantly shift gears as we traverse between worlds in order to make sense of the chaotic, game-like structures that characterize *At Swim*'s textual universe. Using possible-worlds theory to delineate such diegetic-ontological shifts suggests how readers to gain a tentative interpretive foothold in O'Brien's complex, disorienting layering of worlds.

Orlick Trellis, Furriskey, Lamont, and Shanahan are members of TAPW 1 who begin to fantasize about the vengeance they would like to wreak on Dermot Trellis, and Orlick becomes responsible for inscribing these imaginings in his manuscript, the events of which make up TAPsW 1.2. Inhabitants of TAPsW 1.2 include Shanahan the philosopher, Justice Lamont, JP Furriskey, other jury/judge/witness members (Slug, Shorty, Sweeny, Casey, and Kiersay), the Pooka, an extremely Sweeny-like Dermot Trellis, some characters identifiable from the Sweeny legend (Moling and an unnamed cleric we presume to be Ronan), as well as a short-horn cow granted the gift of speech in order to take the witness stand (whom the Sweeny-like Dermot Trellis insists on calling Whitefoot, much to its vehement objection).[25] Orlick is significantly *not* an inhabitant of TAPsW 1.2. Fictional recentering takes place once more as readers are required to shift

into a new narrative audience position, and we do so with much glee and tickled amusement as the sub worlds grow increasingly bizzare and more and more playful.

With the exception of said cow, there is explicit, deliberate overlap in the taxonomy of character names between TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2. However, readers learn that TAPsW 1.2 departs from "taxonomic compatibility" with TAPW 1, since the taxonomic accessibility relation is only established when "both worlds contain the same species and the species are characterized by the same properties" (Ryan, *PW* 33). TAPW 1 Shanahan, for instance, is originally a cowboy living a "dissolute if colourful life," while TAPsW 1.2 Shanahan is an "eminent philosopher" who converses in Latin and engages in other sorts of arbitrary erudition (*ASTB* 50; 148; 184; 187). However, TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2 do share at least one other characteristic: in both worlds, characters are aware of themselves as creations, as we learn that TAPsW 1.2 Shanahan took "advantage of the occasion to pay a spontaneous tribute to the eminence of Mr O. Trellis *in the author world*" (*ASTB* 207; emphasis added).

The definitive moment that delineates this sequence as part of a satellite or sub world rather than a proper part of TAPW 1 is when Orlick introduces the characters Shanahan, Furriskey, and Lamont into TAPsW 1.2.

> [T]he figure of a man coming towards them from the secrecy of the old oaks. With a start of pleasure, the Pooka saw that it was none other than Mr Paul Shanahan, the eminent philosopher, wit and raconteur.
>
> Shanahan at this point inserted a brown tobacco finger in the texture of the story and in this manner caused a lacuna in the palimpsest.

> Wait a minute, he said. Just a minute now. Not so fast. What's that you said, Sir?
>
> Orlick smiled. (*ASTB* 184)

The fact that Shanahan is able to cause a lacuna, that is, a missing portion, in the palimpsest by way of physically placing his finger on Orlick's manuscript in TAPW 1 is a key moment that establishes the distinctness of that world from its sub world. While there is a missing portion or gap in TAPsW 1.2, this gap does not exist in the texture of TAPW 1 because the cause or reason for this gap—i.e. Shanahan's uneasiness with being written into the sub world—can be accounted for in TAPW 1; this specific gap exists only in TAPsW 1.2.

Readers learned early on that creators co-exist in TAPW 1 with their creations and that the latter are subject to the orders of these writers even though they belong to the same ontological world (see pp. 50-51 of this MS). Writing and being thus exist on the same plane in TAPW 1, since characters have to obey what is written of them despite their partial autonomy. If Orlick's act of writing is an extension of TAPW 1, then Shanahan should have been displaced and walking in the woods towards the Pooka as Orlick writes it into being. The fact that he does not and is able to physically intervene in Orlick's act of writing again suggests two separate, distinct worlds. O'Brien's choice of the word "palimpsest" here suggests that TAPW 1 Shanahan's finger has partially obscured what Orlick has written, causing the "lacuna" in TAPsW 1.2.

By juxtaposing TAPsW 1.2 with TAPW 1, O'Brien also introduces the vague suspicion that characters in TAPW 1 are likewise able to correspondingly modify their

creators' fates through the act of writing—though any lasting effects seem to vanish with the character's disappearance. The strongest suggestion of this pattern comes in the section, "*Conclusion of the Book, penultimate*": while TAPsW 1.2 Dermot Trellis is on trial for his life, Teresa finds "to her surprise" in TAPW 1 that Dermot Trellis's room was empty—an unusual occurrence in itself since we learn early on that he is generally an indolent character who rarely leaves his bed and spends most of *At Swim* in a drugged coma (*ASTB* 214). It is only when, by "a curious coincidence," she accidentally burns "the pages which made and sustained the existence of Furriskey and his true friends" in TAPW 1 that "just at that moment, Teresa heard a knock at the hall-door away below," and it turns out to be Dermot Trellis (215). Though TAPsW 1.2 Dermot Trellis suffers a brutal attack—extracts from Orlick's manuscript inform readers that "many of the bones requisite for maintaining an upright position were in halves and consequently unable to discharge their functions"—such violence in TAPsW 1.2 does not seem to translate to any (lasting?) physical damage on TAPW 1 Dermot once the pages sustaining Furriskey and company are burnt (194). TAPW 1 Dermot does, however, seem to carry physical traces of TAPsW 1.2 Dermot's time in the woods with the Pooka, going by the "dead leaves attached to the soles of his poor feet" and his being attired in a "night-shirt," since he was unceremoniously yanked out of bed and sent on his travails when Orlick's narrative began (182; 215; 163).

The "curious coincidence" of TAPW 1 Dermot's appearance immediately after Teresa burns the pages strongly suggests that the relations between TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2 have been deliberately muddied and conflated; however, its certainty remains what

Ryan calls an “undecidable relation” (*PW* 39). I suspect O’Brien quite deliberately leaves the intrauniverse relation between TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2 indeterminate, in order to exacerbate readers’ sense of vertigo by inflicting the kind of “voluptuous panic” that Caillois associates with the *ilinx* category of play. Readers’ provisional mental parsing of TAPWs from their sub worlds is part of the interpretive gameplay facilitated by *At Swim*’s deliberately circuitous textual design. Such undecidable relations also reinforce the notion that in worlds operating on the maximal departure principle, readers’ knowledge of that world is almost wholly circumscribed by available textual cues: as Orlick remarks when Shanahan, Furriskey, and Lamont decide it is time to hang Dermot once and for all, “I only hope that nothing will happen to us. I don’t think the like of this has been done before, you know” (207). Leaving this intrauniverse accessibility relation between TAPW 1 and TAPsW 1.2 indeterminate leaves room for readers’ playful imaginations to fill these gaps as we will, reinforcing the fluid shapes of worlds operating according to the principle of maximal departure.

In the next chapter, I continue to address the aesthetics of play using a possible-worlds framework, but I also extend the discussion and use rhetorical narrative theory to explain readers’ roles in navigating *Lanark*’s playful TAW and how we deal with ambiguous interpretations of Alasdair Gray’s textual world(s). I return to *At Swim* after discussing *Lanark*, so as to be able to comment on the broader relationships between postmodern fiction and an aesthetics of play.

Chapter Two Text-as-World/Text-as-Game: Interpreting *Lanark*'s TAW

"I want Lanark *to be read in one order*

but eventually thought of in another."

(Nastler, Alasdair Gray's Lanark*)*

Notwithstanding the confusion engendered by *At Swim*'s entangled satellite and sub worlds, critics and readers generally agree on the stability of the student-narrator's world, that is, the TAW encountered on the very first page, which loosely anchors the rest of the novel. In *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*, however, even the TAW is subject to indeterminacy. *Lanark*'s TAW may be characterized in multiple ways depending on readers' conceptions of the interrelations between the four books. *Lanark*'s table of contents informs readers that this *Life in Four Books* will begin with Book Three, followed by a Prologue, Book One, an Interlude, Book Two, and Book Four, which is in turn interrupted by an annotated Epilogue four chapters before the novel ends (*Lanark* v-vii).

"What no one could fail to notice," Stephen Bernstein remarks, is that this *Life in 4 Books* "is two lives in two books each. That the two lives are conjoined is the subtitle's point, leading most readers to look for the ways in which these lives might comment upon one another" (36). How we are to understand "the interrelationships of the Thaw and Lanark narratives" is the point on which "critics have been most divided" (36).

Bernstein's observation highlights two key interrelated difficulties Gray's critics and readers have to contend with: the jumbled order or chronological discontinuities of these "books" or this "life," which reads like the lives of two protagonists, one identified with the "realist" section (books one and two) and the other with its "fantastic" section (books three and four). Both these challenges are part of the numerous playful features characterizing Gray's text.

Lanark's sequential disruption is one of its most pronounced playful features. Paul Smethurst suggests that by disrupting narrative sequence, Gray's textual design "prevent[s] the sudden shift from realism into fantasy which would indeed divide the novel into two halves" (125). Though Gray first wrote book one more than a decade before book three (*Lanark* 572), I suggest that his choice of beginning with book three is a conscious artistic decision to avoid this "sudden shift from realism into fantasy," which might lead to readers' negative "aesthetic judgments" of *Lanark*'s textual design.[26] Once readers have adopted either a minimal or maximal departure approach, I suggest that sudden and late "game-changers" (that cue a switch from minimal to maximal departure, for instance) are likely to catch readers off-guard, causing disgruntlement and/or judgments of poor aesthetic construction—unless the author's global textual design convinces us that such game-changers are well-motivated by the novel's concerns or work to enhance readers' aesthetic experience of the text. Using book three to cue maximal departure from the beginning establishes *Lanark*'s context or frame as "fantastic" rather than "realistic," to borrow the terms used by a number of commentators on the novel; by contrast beginning with book one instead might create the impression of

unproductive game-changing and slice the novel in half. Gray then proceeds to use departure switching between books, sections, and chapters to convey the uneven texture and nature of *Lanark*'s TAW, a point I take up more fully in the next section.

Sequential disruption thus sets up readerly expectations in ways that defy linearity, to underscore the idea that existence is, after all, helical (*Lanark* 60). Disruption to discourse-sequence is not in and of itself an unusual device, since starting *in media res* and using analepsis is very common in fiction; to foreground the disruption so blatantly, however, is what is uncommon. The affective impact of the sequential disruption translates into a sense of a loss of balance: we can't quite evade the sense of starting with the wrong book, and the unease of beginning the journey wrong-footed is compounded by the ambiguity readers encounter in weaving the realistic and fantastic sections of the novel together.

One of *Lanark*'s "twin worlds" is a *Bildungsroman* about frustrated budding artist Duncan Thaw, set in books one and two of "realist Glasgow" (Bernstein 32; Hobsbaum 147; Duncan 44; Wickman 179). The *Bildungsroman* is in turn embedded within books three and four (including the prologue, interlude, and epilogue), which have variously been characterized as a "science fiction" or a "fantastic pilgrimage" undertaken by the eponymous protagonist Lanark, set in Unthank, the Institute, Provan, and their in-between zones (Hobsbaum 147; Duncan 44).[27] The unexplained connection between the two stories has posed substantial interpretive challenges, leading critics and readers to "take it upon themselves" to "overcome the problems of interrelating the two narratives," since the way we deal with *Lanark*'s twin structure is "basic for an understanding of the

novel" (Bernstein 36; Duncan 44; de Juan 286; Rhind 101; de Juan 21). The plurality of ways in which the TAW can be understood significantly affects the ways we engage with the text.

Again using possible-worlds theory as a theoretical lens, my analysis focuses on the affective impact of the aesthetics of play in *Lanark*. The readerly task(s) prompted by such play-oriented mechanics, I argue, ultimately spurs readers' formal impulse into action. Three playful features of *Lanark* include: one, Gray's play on transuniverse relations or the distance *and* proximity between the AW and TAW; two, characteristics of the Epilogue, which constitutes the most playful space in *Lanark*'s TAW; and three, indeterminacies between the text's "realistic" and "fantastic" sections, and how they complicate readers' sense of *Lanark*'s TAW. This final feature receives the most extensive treatment, as I examine five different ways Gray's critics have conceived of the relationship between *Lanark*'s two sections or four books and explore the implications of each hypothesis for understandings of the novel's global design. The readerly impulse to reduce indeterminacy vis-à-vis a working hypothesis is nonetheless consistent with postmodern texts exemplifying an aesthetics of play because it is precisely such tensions between the sense- and form-drives, between indeterminacy and interpretation, that propels play's dialectical energies.

Transuniverse relations: Play on the distance/proximity between AW and TAW

Lanark opens with book three, at the Elite Café in Unthank. While there appears to be some "identity of inventory" between readers' AW and the TAW—we learn that there is a café, a cinema, a social security office, and so on (3; 19)—the opening chapter contains multiple textual cues that signal readers should proceed from a maximal rather than minimal departure framework.[28] Lanark's extraordinary remark about "looking for daylight" in order to "measure time" and Sludden's disdainful emphasis on the question of "how do you spend your . . . *days*?" suggests chronological incompatibilities between the TAW and readers' AW experience of time (*Lanark* 4-5; Ryan, *PW* 32-33). Such insinuations about chronological disjunctures are reinforced in chapters two and three, when Rima shows cold disdain for Lanark's "sentimental[ity]" upon his use of the word *dawn* to refer to what she calls "the light in the sky" and when Lanark recalls "[m]y eye kept seeking a circular patch of paler paintwork on the wall behind the counter. A clock had been fixed there once and been removed, I felt sure, because people would not have borne such waiting had they been able to measure it" (11; 21). Chronological incompatibilities between the AW and TAW are emphasized early in the novel and repeatedly throughout books three and four.

Readers also suspect *taxonomic compatibility*[29] has been violated when we learn of Lanark's "dragonhide" relatively early on in chapter three and these suspicions are confirmed when it keeps growing over the next three chapters, eventually turning his

entire arm and hand into “an intensely dark green” limb with a “glossy cold hide” and “curving steel-blade claws” (*Lanark* 40-41).[30] Deviations in “*physical compatibility*” or “natural laws” (Ryan, *PW* 32) in the intercalendrical zone are especially radical. As Munro cautions Lanark, “[t]he light in this zone travels at different speeds, so all sizes and distances are deceptive. Even the gravity varies” (*Lanark* 374). Such unevenness likewise characterizes the relative deviations of each TAW location from the reader’s experiential AW, further aggravating our sense of disorientation.

In addition to these *chronological*, *taxonomic*, and *physical incompatibilities*, Gray’s novel is also characterized by other unnerving “instabilities.”[31] Lanark, for instance, has no idea who he is and why he is in this city: his first memory is of “a thumping sound” as he lands in a train carriage, arriving as a lone passenger on a goods train that runs along the “viaduct among the roofs of a city” (15-18; 20). Furthermore, early on in chapter two, Lanark and readers learn of recurrent disappearances which are typical of the TAW: the mother of three children living next door disappears when the lights go out, as did Lanark’s landlady’s previous tenant (13-14). Lanark himself later witnesses Gloopy’s terrifying disappearance in chapter four.[32]

> Gloopy stood grinning emptily in the doorway. [. . . .] He took a few steps nearer, walking as if his thighs were glued together, then fell forward onto the floor with a sodden slap. [. . .] his face was tilted so far back that it grinned blindly at the ceiling. Without moving his limbs, he suddenly slid an inch or two toward Lanark [. . .] and then the light went out. [. . . .] Lanark felt he was on the lip of a horrible pit. He grew dizzy and crouched

> to the floor, afraid to move his feet and terrified of falling down. He squatted in the darkness like this for a very long time. (32)

The terrifying nature of such disappearances and other instabilities, along with the *chronological* and *taxonomic incompatibilities* between the TAW and readers' AW, which are repeatedly emphasized early on in the narrative cue readers to adopt the principle of maximal departure in our approach to *Lanark*.

Since accessibility relations such as chronological or physical compatibility do not seem readily transferable from readers' AW to the TAW, the more information we accumulate about *Lanark*'s TAW, the less we seem to know about what might happen next—and the more we are immersed or engaged in further exploring its curiosities. Immersion in a textual world, Ryan explains, "can also be the result of a process that involves an element of struggle and discovery" (*Narrative as VR* 97) and this is perhaps nowhere more true than in the challenging, game-like labyrinths of postmodern fiction that work hard to impede readily comprehensible textual worlds in order to shape readers' experience of textual gameplay in specific ways.

Though critics differ widely in their readings of how and why the protagonist has been "split into two identities," to my knowledge, Duncan Thaw and Lanark have uniformly been understood as referring to a single entity, as suggested by Gray's subtitle for the novel (Bernstein 33). I likewise posit that Thaw and Lanark refer to a single fictional being and suggest that *Lanark*'s TAW spans all four books. The novel's TAW is characterized by several key locations: Glasgow (books one and two, and Prologue), the Institute (books three and four, Prologue, and Interlude), Unthank (books three and four),

and Provan (book four, including Epilogue). Interstices between these locations include, in chronological order: (1) Lanark's arrival to Unthank by train; (2) sliding down the gullet from a mouth that opens up in Unthank's necropolis into the subterranean Institute; (3) an intercalendrical zone (ground) connects the Institute (via Emergency Exit 3124) to locations such as Unthank, Imber, and New Cumbernauld by means of a misty, indeterminate time-space that joins up to a motorway with several intersections; (4) an intercalendrical zone (air) which Lanark passes through when leaving Unthank for the delegate meeting in Provan aboard the U-1 bird-machine; and (5) the bolthole under Monboddo's desk in Provan, which Lanark falls through in the U-1 back to Unthank.

Interstice one is perhaps the most crucial and problematic space-time since it serves as the connection between *Lanark*'s "realist" and "fantastic" sections (Craig, *Arts* 98; Falconer 187-89; Smethurst 125; de Juan 11; 158-61; 279). In my interpretation of the TAW, I focus on the "crossover" moment from the end of Thaw's life—when he presumably drowns at the end of book two, near a hotel most likely on Scotland's Isle of Arran, given the reference to King Edward's visit on "28th August, 1902" (353)—to the beginning of his afterlife on the train in book three. The voice from the "archives" at the end of book three informs us that Lanark "reached Unthank through water," which is Thaw's final memory, while Lanark's first memory is that of landing in the old railway compartment with a thump in chapter three (104; 16). I thus take this moment of transition from Glasgow to Unthank, from sea to train, as a simultaneous gesture of the transition from life to the afterlife.

Though Glasgow is only represented by the Oracle's *voice* as an extremely lengthy analepsis, I consider Glasgow to be contiguous to (rather than superimposed on) locations such as the Institute, Unthank, and Provan.[33] Based on my own experience of navigating the text and the implicit interpretive leap readers are invited to make in interstice one, I believe that interpreting these locations as part of the same, contiguous TAW more closely approximates readers' attempts to make sense of the novel's disorienting time-spaces than does assigning the locations to TAPWs or subworlds.

Unlike Unthank or the intercalendrical zones, *Lanark*'s Glasgow contains few departures from and is recognizably meant to represent AW Scotland circa. 1940s and 50s, with references to AW locations such as Riddrie, Alexandra Park, and Sauciehall Street (*Lanark* 217; Bernstein 36; Falconer 172). Shifts between locations in *Lanark* suggest the possibility of approaching distinct locations within the same TAW differently—in a process that I term *departure switching*. Departure switching tends to be relatively explicitly marked and dominantly occurs from section to section, book to book, or even chapter to chapter, through the use of chapter titles such as "Chapter 7: The Institute" or section titles such as the "Interlude" between books one and two, or through characters' direct speech, such as Munro's instructions about the intercalendrical zone and the Oracle's announcement at the end of book three that he is about to begin narrating Duncan Thaw's life in Glasgow, which spans the subsequent books one and two (*Lanark* v-vi; 104; 219). When dealing with TAW Glasgow—largely Gray's own autobiographical account of growing up in AW Glasgow—readers are cued to approach the text using the principle of minimal departure. When dealing with locations such as the

subterranean Institute, however, in which people's diseases can turn them into dragons and "existence is helical" (60-61), such that death is a process of "creating" people anew as they are flung "back into a second-class railway carriage" (219), readers are cued to approach the text using the principle of maximal departure.

The departure switching which occurs as a result of readers' varying sense of deviations between the AW and different locations in the TAW thus creates a radically uneven sense of the TAW, aggravating our sense of readerly disorientation. Made up of spaces characterized by different degrees of deviation from the AW, *Lanark*'s fragmented textual design may be understood as Gray's implicit metaphor for Scotland, a country which is "fragmented, cut to pieces by historical circumstances," with geographical "differences between Highland and Lowland, east and west coast," and linguistic differences in a "three way split between English, Scots and Gaelic" (Bold 2; de Juan 33-34; 39). Such fragmentation characterizes Scottish identity, which Cairns Craig defines as "the intersection of diverse but contiguous narratives" (Craig, *Out* 223; de Juan 39). The radically uneven texture of the TAW, created in part by the effects of departure switching, works to convey this particularly Scottish sense of discontinuity.

Despite the varying degrees of deviation between *Lanark*'s uneven TAW and AW Scotland, Paul Smethurst suggests that "[a]ll of [*Lanark*'s] chronotopes are constructed around the heterotopia of Glasgow, so the city is never reduced to a single point of view" (125). Most critics, for instance, observe that Unthank is a "futuristic," "dystopic" version of Glasgow (Falconer 172; 188-89; Wickman 179-80; Bernstein 18; Smethurst 120-21; 131; de Juan 157; 182; Duncan 43; Rhind 101-102).[34] Gray "transfigures the traditional

industries of Glasgow — steelmaking and shipbuilding — in [his] construction of the Unthank dystopia," which also form part of the debris Lanark and Rima find in the intercalendrical zone (de Juan 157; *Lanark* 380).[35] To borrow Ryan's metaphor of the jigsaw puzzle solver, the reader's task is in part to collect pieces of the jigsaw that look alike from both worlds (the AW and TAW) and piece together a sort of three-dimensional puzzle that thereby presents a sufficiently rich and complex (though by no means complete) perspective of Glasgow.

As was the case in *At Swim*, such world-mirroring in *Lanark* between the AW and TAW is being put to playful ends, disorienting readers by creating a fantastic alternative to rather than substitution of reality. Unlike *At Swim*, however, where the resemblances between AW Ireland and textual world Ireland (both in the TAW and TAPW 1) work both to problematize reality and to parody Ireland's intellectual environment at the time, Gray's analogue of AW Scotland in his uneven TAW works to different ends. World-mirroring between AW Scotland and TAW Scotland in *Lanark* is meant "to underline the ways in which postmodern capitalism may be understood as a contemporary, secular form of Hell" (Falconer 172). Alluding to *Lanark*'s moment of composition, Rachel Falconer observes that

> 1970s [AW] Glasgow was a victim of global capitalism and its consequences. The damage to the environment represented in the fantasy section of *Lanark* also reflects what was happening to Scottish natural resources at the time. The apocalyptic fires and floods that threaten to

> overwhelm Unthank at the end of *Lanark* are produced not by God but by irresponsible politicians and businessmen. (172-73)

Gray's aesthetics of play on transuniverse relations thus depends on both the proximity *and* distance between the AW and contiguous but uneven TAW: it is only through such play with similitude and variance that AW Scotland's socio-historical and socio-political concerns can be effectively brought to the fore through a hellish transfiguration of Glasgow.

Though the novel also contains textual alternate possible worlds (TAPWs), including Duncan Thaw's imaginings in books one and two (for example, pp. 157-159, 233-234, 288-289, etc.) and Lanark's dreams in books three and four (see pp. 512-517), these sub worlds generally do not feature heavily in my analysis for two reasons.[36] First, such intrauniverse relations (TAW-TAPW) tend to be relatively explicitly marked and are less functionally related to the aesthetics of play I am interested in exploring. Several notable exceptions—such as in chapters 29 and 30, where Thaw supposedly murders a girl—are instances of "undecidable relations," whereby it is impossible to determine whether events did actually occur in the TAW based on the ambiguous textual cues (Ryan, *PW* 39). Second, my emphasis on the TAW highlights variable ways of interpreting the shape of the TAW—and the way such variability bears on understandings of Gray's textual design and the overall significance of *Lanark*, a point I take up again below.

The Epilogue's Playful Inside Out Space

The playful nature of the dizzying 21-page Epilogue may be discerned in the very position it takes up in *Lanark*. Inserted four chapters before the novel ends, the Epilogue explains its own existence and construction, as the novel's posited author Nastler responds to Lanark's (and readers' implicit) observation, "'I thought epilogues came after the end.' 'Usually, but mine is too important to go there'" (483). Explaining it as a combination of an opportune moment that allows Nastler to "utter some fine sentiments which I could hardly trust to a mere character" and offering "comic distraction" at a sorely needed point in the narrative, the metafictional nature of the Epilogue makes it an 'inside out' space that works to account for the dynamics of the entire novel, from one of the most embedded 'geographical' locations within the textual world.

As part of the narrative audience, readers regard the "Epilogue room" as a chamber behind "a white panel without hinges or handle" in a four-storied building overlooking a stadium in Provan, which I posit is part of *Lanark*'s TAW (478; 474). With "no architectural similarity" to the rest of the building, the Epilogue room has a *mise-en-abyme* structure, whereby

> [t]he rest of the room was hidden by easels holding large paintings of the room. The pictures seemed brighter and cleaner than the reality and a tall beautiful girl with long blond hair reclined in them sometimes nude and sometimes clothed. The girl herself, more worried and untidy than her portraits, stood near the door wearing a paint-stained butcher's apron. (480)

Glyn White observes that page 479, which bears the single word EPILOGUE on an otherwise blank page, operates in "two distinct ways": "as a door" for Lanark and the narrative audience, and "as a title" (or section of the novel) for the authorial audience (57). This so-called *section*, however, is likewise problematized: while the "Prologue" and "Interlude" are distinct sections that buffer separate "books," the "Epilogue" is inserted two-thirds way into book four, such that it functions like an independent section but is by the same token a *non*-section that is integrally part of book four.

Like Dermot Trellis in *At Swim*—an explicitly acknowledged source of "plagiarism" in *Lanark*'s Index of Plagiarisms in the Epilogue—Nastler is likewise an author whose powers of creation enable him to co-exist with his creations (490; 481-82). Similarly, his creations (Lanark) are able to "have experiences" he remains ignorant of, though the reason here differs from *At Swim* in that Nastler has not written those parts of the book yet—an anomaly that is less troubling to readers than it might be, given the chronological discontinuities perpetuated throughout the novel, a point to which I return when I discuss *Lanark*'s uneven TAW.

As White and other critics observe, the Epilogue is full "of textual furniture which defies convention," such as "descriptive running headers" which add "a second active voice to the page" (58). In this same vein, the footnote annotations (presumably by Sidney Workman, as readers gather from the Table of Contents) adds a third voice, while the Index of Plagiarisms adds a fourth. It is difficult to tell if these voices overlap or are uttered by the same entity/narrator. White, for instance, takes his cue from the Contents page to suggest that the Epilogue is "'annotated by Sidney Workman'" but that "unlike

the footnotes, the headers do not belong to him" (58). This complex mix of voices, White suggests, is Gray's deliberate "method of satirising criticism" (58).

To add to such giddying confusion, White and Luis de Juan note that the Index of Plagiarisms includes entries about books that were *not* plagiarized (see "BURNS, ROBERT" and "EMERSON, RALPH WALDO"), entries that endlessly loop back unto each other (see "BLACK ANGUS," "MacNEACAIL, AONGHAS," and "NICHOLSON, ANGUS"), and entries that refer to non-existent chapters (White 59; de Juan 314-315; *Lanark* 486-99). Furthermore, what might be considered Gray's "Acknowledgements" page has been displaced from its typical position at the beginning of the novel and stuffed into footnote 13, on the final page before the Epilogue ends, with references to AW persons and entities, such as Tennessee's Kingsport Press and Stephanie Wolfe Murray (misspelled[?] as "Wolf Murray"), the owner of Scotland's Canongate Press which published Gray's novel (*Lanark* 499; xi).

The playful nature and texture of *Lanark*'s postmodern fictional world necessitates readers' active engagement with the text by kindling or eliciting our formal impulse to manage the vertiginous, sensuous impulsions of the text. By foregrounding readers' form-instinct—our impulse for order, coherence, and meaning—given the confusing disorientation of the text's *mise-en-abyme* structures, the confusion of voices, the proliferation of footnotes that are not really footnotes and sections that are *and* are not sections, the playful textual worlds of postmodern fiction like Gray's challenge readers to bring their "best game" to the table. The "mental gymnastics" readers engage in as we maneuver the game-like textual designs of postmodern fiction thus stretches our

imaginations and sharpens our "aesthetic perceptions" by honing "the agility and adaptability one gains in being *playful*" (Bohman-Kalaja 234). Using the possible-worlds model as my tool to demonstrate the cognitive challenges readers face when we encounter such playful fictional worlds, I suggest that postmodern fiction does not evacuate but rather modifies aesthetic experience in the twentieth century by honing such readerly dexterity.

Indeterminacy/Ambiguity as a Principle of Play

Lanark presents readers with specific interpretive difficulties since several constituent events—such as "whether Thaw [is] a murderer, whether he committed suicide or even whether he died at sea"—remain "ambiguous or inconclusive" (Falconer 189). Even the certitude of books one and two are subject to indeterminacy, since they are conveyed entirely through the Oracle's voice.[37] I believe Gray to be wholly committed to the value of such ambiguities or indeterminacies, but I also suggest that particular interpretations tend to be privileged over others as readers take up one position or another in the reading experience and that the process of reasoning out these different possible positions, of attempting multiple ways of piecing this massive helical jigsaw-puzzle together, is part of the cognitive pleasure we derive from reading *Lanark*. I explore five possible interpretations critics have proposed, taking up the implications of each hypothesis more fully in my next section. The differences underlying these five ways of understanding *Lanark*'s TAW tend to hinge on two factors: the way readers

interpret the relationship between Thaw and Lanark, and what we make of the Oracle's existence.

The first, and perhaps most contested, proposal treats only books one and two—the "realist" sections of the novel based in Glasgow—as the TAW, while books three and four are treated as Duncan's descent into madness, that is, as one or multiple TAPWs. Douglas Gifford (1987) is one of the earliest critics to propose this reading of *Lanark*, while both de Juan (2003) and Falconer (2005) explore this interpretation as one of multiple possible "branching" plots in *Lanark* (Falconer 188-89; de Juan 111).[38] To do so is to treat Lanark as a hallucinatory alter ego that Thaw imagines (perhaps during one of his asthmatic attacks) and, by implication, characters like the Oracle, the posited author from the Epilogue Nastler, and even Rima and his son Alexander, are merely figments of Thaw's tortured imagination. De Juan and Falconer also explore a second possible interpretation, which is a direct inversion of the first: taking only the "fantastic" section of books three and four as the TAW, the Oracle's narrative concerning Thaw in the Glasgow sections of the novel is treated as Lanark's fantasy in his desire for a past, whereby books one and two are treated as a TAPW (de Juan 117; 121; 123; 131; Falconer 188). In this case, though the Oracle exists, the nature of his utterance becomes radically indeterminate.

The third, fourth, and fifth interpretations take both the realist and fantastic sections of the novel as bases for constituting *Lanark*'s TAW, treating Thaw and Lanark as a single entity and accepting the Oracle's existence as a given. However, each interpretation configures the relations between books a little differently. The third

interpretation, proposed by Gavin Miller, posits that book four is also part of the Oracle's narration, specifically a prediction of events that have not yet come to pass (Miller 320), such that books three, one, and two constitute the TAW but book four remains a TAPW. Most critics, including Craig, Bernstein, Smethurst, Niall O'Gallagher, Ian Duncan, and myself, fall somewhere between a combination of interpretations four and five, which posit either that Thaw is Lanark's younger self who has passed from life in Glasgow to a sort of hellish afterlife in Unthank and beyond, representing "another level of existence," and/or that the disjunctures between the realist and fantastic sections represent a shift in perspective on micro and macro versions of the same reality (Craig, *Cencrastus* 20; Duncan 43, Bernstein 32; Smethurst 131; O'Gallagher 546; Falconer 188-89).

Critics have made very convincing arguments to champion the value of indeterminacy in *Lanark*, which is also largely in line with postmodernist aesthetic sensibilities that embrace such incertitude: "maintaining free play is superior to achieving meaning, as postmodern theory tells us" (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 183). Part of the value of ambiguity in *Lanark* lies in the work's open invitation to readers. As Gray explains in response to an interview question about how he harmonized "the artificially constructed life of the novel": "I felt no need to harmonize them. I yoked the bits together and expected the reader's interest to flow over all, as my imagination had done. [. . . .] The only thing that can unify it is the readers' enjoyment" (Gray and Axelrod 106). More crucially, however, is ambiguity's role in offering a rich and complex representation of Glasgow: Gray wants his readers to pick up on the resemblances between Glasgow and Unthank, but if their parallelisms are "taken too literally, it becomes restrictive and

limiting" (de Juan 158). The ambiguity between interpretations thus creates a "*triangulation* between perspectives" that "allow[s] for a complete mental experience of Glasgow unavailable at street level" (Rhind 103; Bernstein 49). That "*Lanark* is haunted by the possibility of a different way of seeing the universe" is entirely the point of the novel (Craig, *Arts* 103).

The Oracle is a pivotal character that perpetuates such ambiguity of interpretations. What readers make of the Oracle crucially impacts the way we understand *Lanark*'s textual world, especially given his comment at the end of book two: "I'm only able to tell the story as he saw it" (*Lanark* 350). Since the Oracle's comments are visually or typographically given as part of the narration, without quotation marks, this "he" could easily refer to either Thaw or Lanark, depending on how readers conceive of the TAW and their attitudes toward the Oracle's narratorial reliability. The revelation that books one and two have been wholly subjective in nature—knowledge that has thus far been withheld from readers for effectively most of the Glasgow narrative—comes somewhat as a surprise (de Juan 112), since readers are likely to assume some degree of objectivity in the Oracle's report of events for most of books one and two, given the extradiegetic position he/she/it occupies in Thaw's tale or non-participation in Thaw's life; even this aspect of the novel, however, cannot ultimately be counted upon.

What these indeterminacies imply for readerly experience of *Lanark* is the unshakeable sense that we *do* rely on a particular working interpretation of the TAW despite the immense value of ambiguity. "Despite the widely accepted view that a rich multiplicity is characteristic of literary meaning," it is difficult to fight the sense, as Ralph

Rader puts it, that "to have too many meanings is too much like having no meaning" (31). We embrace the value of uncertainty in postmodern fiction as part of the authorial audience, because we appreciate its functions in the global textual design or dynamics of *Lanark*'s or *At Swim*'s overall aesthetic project. But our role as authorial audience also encapsulates our identities as members of the narrative audience, encompassing readers' imaginative and "emotional participation," whereby the mode of experiencing fiction is "immersion"—experiencing the textual world as "an embodied mind" or self (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 94-95; 354-55).

Since joining the narrative audience depends crucially on responding to a particular interpretation of the textual world, the ambiguous multiplicity of ways to construct *Lanark*'s TAW translates into a plurality of narrative audience positions that can be undertaken. Given that readers cannot simultaneously inhabit more than one position as a member of the narrative audience without losing the affective sense of immersion—"because an observer cannot simultaneously occupy two different points in space" or "experience both dimensions at the same time" (*Narrative as VR* 199)—I posit that readers are inclined to adopt one of the multiple possible working interpretations, i.e. one narrative audience position, even as we remain cognizant of the other available options (and their functional value) from the position of the authorial audience.

In "play-texts" characterized by indeterminacy and ambiguity, such as *At Swim* and *Lanark*, "literary pleasure is [. . .] integral with the act of cognition" (Bohman-Kalaja 38; Rader 36). While I agree that most postmodern fiction is characterized by a spirit of Derridean free play that embraces "the impossibility of achieving a totalizing and

definitive apprehension of the literary text" (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 189-90), I propose that the form-impulse (for clarity, order, coherence) inclines readers toward a working interpretation that seems most compelling, since the formal impulsion seeks stability of perception in the face of the vertiginous impulses of postmodern fictional texts. The question becomes how each reader determines or decides upon the criterion for a compelling interpretation.

With *Lanark*, as critics have pointed out, it is not merely a matter of the hypothesis that "fits" most or all of the textual cues (though this is certainly important) since multiple interpretations are "critically defensible" (Falconer 188). Especially when the textual design promotes ambiguity, uncertainty, or indeterminacies more generally, I concur with rhetorical narrative theorists that readers tend to favor the interpretation that offers the greatest payoff and/or maximizes the work's interpretive power by approximating the textual world in ways that enhance our pleasure of the text.

Maximizing Interpretive and Affective Pleasure: "Story-over-Discourse Meta-Rule"[39]

Given the multiple critically defensible interpretations of *Lanark*'s textual world, I propose that the most compelling working interpretation or hypothesis is the one that enhances our interpretive and affective experience of the text. I use Phelan's "Story-over-Discourse Meta-Rule" to explain readerly engagement and to explicate ways by which readers decide on a particular interpretive hypothesis as their working model or understanding of the textual world ("Implausibilities" 175). The "Story-over-Discourse Meta-Rule" stipulates that "once fictional narratives establish their commitment to

providing readers that 'focal illusion of characters acting autonomously as if in the world of real experience,' readers privilege—and seek to preserve—their mimetic interests in those characters and that storyworld" (175). In short, readers become more invested in our position as members of the narrative audience when we experience the immersive pull of the textual world and react to fictional characters "as if they were embodied humans" (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 112).

Since Phelan's story-over-discourse meta-rule was formulated in relation to texts which foreground the mimetic, the meta-rule becomes significantly complicated by *Lanark*'s uneven textual world, which foregrounds different readerly treatments of or attitudes toward the text at different points in the narrative.[40] Ryan uses the metaphors of "text-as-world" (immersion) and "text-as-game" (interactivity) to characterize two distinct readerly attitudes toward the text: "the aesthetics of immersion" are concerned with readerly tasks such as imaginative and "emotional participation" in the textual world, while "the aesthetics of interactivity presents the text as a game, language as a plaything, and the reader as the player" (*Narrative as VR* 175; 16; 94-95). I suggest that readers are likely to invest more heavily in engagements that "enhance [our] reading experience" (Phelan, "Implausibilities" 169). In general, I posit that when readers' investment in the text's immersive dimensions reaps greater payoff—in terms of affective, mimetic and/or thematic interests—than our investment in the text's interactive dimensions, i.e. treating "text-as-world" rather than "text-as-game," our role as members of the narrative audience is foregrounded and the "story-over-discourse meta-rule" applies. Conversely, when readers' investment in the text's interactive dimensions reaps

greater payoff—in terms of affective, thematic, or synthetic interests—than our investment in the text's immersive dimension, our role as members of the authorial audience is foregrounded and the "story-over-discourse meta-rule" fails to apply.

The Glasgow section of books one and two, for instance, emphasizes *Lanark*'s "text-as-world" dimensions: via our immersive participation in Thaw's world as members of the narrative audience, readers are able to better appreciate the circumstances that led to his eventual suicide at the end of book two, having "witnessed" his process of struggle as an unsuccessful artist. Other sections such as the Epilogue emphasize *Lanark*'s "text-as-game" dimensions, requiring readers to distance ourselves from our role as members of the narrative audience—and the corresponding limitations of perspective, for example—in order to appreciate the playful exchange between Nastler and Lanark, which causes some distress to both parties but keeps the reader enormously tickled. Readers are likewise more invested in *At Swim*'s "text-as-game" dimensions as Dermot Trellis undergoes the fantastic torture his characters have devised for him, distancing ourselves from the position of the narrative audience, of treating Dermot as an embodied human.

To demonstrate readers' and/or critics' implicit reliance on the "meta-rule of readerly engagement," I recast critics' existing interpretations of Gray's novel in terms of the PW approach I am using—interpretations that attempt to explicate what I call *Lanark*'s global indeterminacy by positing its TAW in particular ways—and explore the justifications for and implications of each interpretation. In so doing, I explain how my working interpretation (which is in line with that of many commentators) maximizes our

interpretive and affective pleasure and experience of the text, given its implications for *Lanark*'s larger aesthetic project and for affective readerly engagements.

Interpretation one posits books one and two as the TAW and books three and four as one or multiple TAPWs, such that the fantastic sections of the novel are interpreted as "Thaw's mental breakdown" during his multiple hospitalizations in the realist section of the text (Gifford 112; de Juan 111-12). The earliest proponent of this interpretation, Douglas Gifford implicitly affirms the value of *Lanark*'s interpretive ambiguities by acknowledging that this may not be "the only reading Gray intended" and further recognizes the interpretive limitations of his own hypothesis: "we can't just simply solve our reading problems by assuming that we're trapped in the distorting head of a poor hyper-sensitive student [. . . .] if the only viable way to read *Lanark* is to see it as happening inside the head of a disintegrating social failure, how can we trust the assessments of society that are implicit in that trapped account?" (111-13). Gifford is clearly aware of the difficulties with his interpretation, but maintains that it is "the *only consistent* way to read the novel" (111; emphasis added). His remarks reveal an impulse that I suggest many readers are likely to experience: it is precisely in the face of the novel's disorienting tendencies that we feel the urgent need to "'hold' the entire novel together in our mind" (113). The oscillating tensions between the sense- and form-drives lead readers to determine a working interpretation of the TAW, even as we recognize and enjoy the pleasurable effects of such ambiguity.

Despite its dystopic tendencies, Falconer rightly observes that "the novel as a whole is richly affirmative of ordinary virtues and pleasures: individual autonomy,

breathable air, the affection between a father and son, light and architectural grace," and more broadly, of "the transformative possibilities of the journey through Hell" (172). Interpretation one transforms the genuine possibility of redemption offered in the novel's conclusion into an extended hallucination, diminishing the value of *Lanark*'s affective, mimetic, and thematic ("text-as-world") dimensions, whilst failing to satisfactorily account for the functions/purposes of its synthetic ("text-as-game") dimensions. On the one hand, readers' experience as members of the narrative audience is significantly altered by this interpretation of the TAW, as the affective impact and pathos of our identification with Lanark's struggles as a fictional embodied being are reduced to Thaw's mad imaginings. On the other hand, the terrifying consequences of a capitalistic, "industrial, post-war world" governed by (cannibalistic) utilitarianism are elided, reducing hell to the confines of "Thaw's tormented psyche, whereas the whole point of the novel is that Hell is vast and we are in it" (Smith, "Hell" 117; Rhind 101-2).

Interpretation one is also likely to lead readers to negative aesthetic judgments of Gray's textual design, since synthetic elements such as the epilogue's complex mix of voices seem digressive (see p. 74 of this MS), adding unnecessary complexity without explicable justification or relation to the thematic concerns or affective registers of books one and two. This relatively impoverished reading goes against what Phelan calls "the logic of readerly response" ("Implausibilities" 169) and most readers are therefore unlikely to consider this a satisfactory interpretation.

The second interpretation posits an inverse hypothesis, whereby books three and four constitute the TAW, while books one and two are a TAPW that constitutes Lanark's

imaginary longings. This reading is supported by Lanark's frequent attempts "to recuperate his past" in moments of "deep personal crisis [and] emotional instability," "in the hope that it will restore to him a feeling of coherence, of wholeness, of contiguity" (de Juan 123). In chapter two after his neighbor's disappearance, Lanark attempts to reconstitute his limited memories by penning down events since his arrival in Unthank ("*The first thing I remember is*" [15]), making several false starts before we read his analeptic account of his initial arrival by train in chapter three. This attempt to reconstitute or reimagine the past occurs again in chapter 41, when Lanark wakes from his devastating dream in which his son Alexander disappears following their father-and-son bonding over a dead seagull.[41]

Interpretation two's treatment of the Glasgow sections as TAPW rather than TAW gains partial textual support from the novel's problematization of "Lanark's access to his own past by underlining the composition, the linguistic nature, of the Oracle's report: [. . .] the narrative he constructs *is not* the past, it simply *represents* the past" (de Juan 225). The problem is further aggravated by passages such as, "The oracle began speaking. His voice sounded so far inside the head that the story seemed less narrated than remembered. It was not delayed by eating, or going to the lavatory, or sleeping: at night Lanark dreamed what he could not hear and woke with no sense of interruption" (*Lanark* 117). Such textual evidence may thus "be interpreted as pointing towards a voyage into Lanark's unconscious" (de Juan 121), supporting the interpretation that Thaw simply exists as part of Lanark's imagination or ardent desire for a past.

Interpretation two is also partly motivated by Rima's objection: "In the first place that oracle was a woman, not a man. In the second place her story was about me. You were so bored that you fell asleep and obviously dreamed something else" (*Lanark* 357). The radical subjectivity of perspective presented in *Lanark* (almost exclusively focalized through Thaw/Lanark's mind) makes the exact nature of Lanark's past an undecidable relation. However, there seem to be distinct overlaps between Lanark's and Rima's versions of the Oracle's story: for one, they do seem to certainly have known each other in their lives prior to Unthank and were engaged in a troubled courtship that eventually ended in her marriage to someone else (*Lanark* 357). Though both characters implicitly endorse that life before Unthank, interpretation two leaves the exact nature of the events that constitute that life and whether it was indeed Glasgow indeterminate.

Perhaps more significantly, since Nastler validates the existence of the Glasgow books—"I worked poor Thaw to death, quite cold-bloodedly [. . . .], his death gave me a chance to shift him into a wider social context. You are Thaw with the neurotic imagination trimmed off and built into the furniture of the world you occupy" (493)—interpretation two also necessitates readers' treatment of the Epilogue as part of Lanark's hallucinations, when there seems to be little textual justification for doing so. If we take the world of books three and four to be the TAW, whereby the Epilogue is part of book four, the evidence to justify that the Epilogue constitutes only Lanark's imagination (and is thus a TAPW) seems a little thin, at best, considering that "the Red Girl" and the unnamed "morose" man Lanark meets in Provan, i.e. characters deemed to exist in the TAW, validate Nastler's existence (478). This is an instance where the "story-over-

discourse meta-rule" fails to apply since preserving its "text-as-world" dimensions—that is, the mimetic interest of treating Lanark as embodied being instead of as Nastler's creation—at the expense of its "text-as-game" dimensions contradicts *Lanark*'s own textual design.

Apart from the way it contradicts readerly logic, the main reason interpretation two ultimately remains unpersuasive to me has to do with Gray's purpose in creating "an epic" (492) to animate Glasgow, as the conversation between McAlpin and Thaw illustrates.

> "Glasgow is a magnificent city," said McAlpin. "Why do we hardly ever notice that?" "Because nobody imagines living here," said Thaw. [. . . .] "Then think of Florence, Paris, London, New York. Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger because he's already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films. But if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively. What is Glasgow to most of us? A house, the place we work, a football park or golf course, some pubs and connecting streets. That's all. [. . . .] when our imagination needs exercise we use these to visit London, Paris, Rome under the Caesars, the American West at the turn of the century, anywhere but here and now. Imaginatively Glasgow exists as a music-hall song and a few bad novels. That's all we've given to the world outside. It's all we've given to ourselves." (243)

The textual "reality" of an explicitly recognizable Glasgow *and* its purgatorial counterpart in all four books is thus meant to resonate with AW Glasgow; these resonances are imperative to Gray's artistic purpose and the global textual design of *Lanark*, in imaginatively illuminating and transfiguring existing literary representations of AW Glasgow, Scotland. I am thus inclined to regard both the realist and fantastic sections of *Lanark* as jointly constituting the TAW—their joint textual authenticity maximizes the interpretive pleasure we derive from Gray's text and is integral to exercising readers' imaginary inhabitations of Scotland.

Interpretations three, four, and five consider the realist and fantastic sections of the novel as bases for constituting *Lanark*'s TAW. However, interpretation three posits that book four is a TAPW to the TAW of the first three books, taking book four's events to be a prophesy the Oracle makes whilst Lanark and Rima are still in the Institute. Miller explains that the "narratorial voice of *Lanark* is explicitly the voice of an 'oracle'—it also narrates predictively. Unless we arbitrarily posit two narrators for *Lanark*, then we must recognise that the oracle continues to speak" ("Literary" 320). Miller contends that *Lanark* "ends not with the protagonist's rather lonely death, but with the ending addressed to Lanark, who is still in the Institute, and who is still in a position to forestall the events of the fourth book" (320)—an interpretation that captures the way the Oracle's "words could never be printed between quotation marks" (*Lanark* 104), thus giving rise to the ambiguity of whether his/her/its narration ends at the end of book two or book four (de Juan 246; 256).

While Miller's proposition opens up fascinating possibilities, his notion that *Lanark* has only one narrator (the Oracle) would also mean that the first eleven chapters of book three, prior to the Oracle's pleas of "Help, help, can nobody hear me? [. . . .] It said I am glad you called" are likewise part of his/her/its narration, when there is little textual evidence to support such a reading. Further, to read book four as prophesy once again loops back into problems I discussed with interpretation one: it reduces the significance of powerfully affective moments in book four, which depend on the momentum gained in the first three books. These include Lanark's experience of plenitude in the novel's conclusion, even as Unthank collapses around him in the possibility of a phoenix-like rebirth, and the excruciating "withdrawal of paradise" in his interaction with his son at the end of chapter 41, when Lanark's joyful epiphany that even when the "world has lapsed into black nothing, it will have made sense because Sandy once enjoyed it in the sunlight" is exposed as a cruel dream, leaving him with "a feeling of terrible loss" (Hobsbaum 147; *Lanark* 515; 519).[42]

Notwithstanding its postmodernist tendencies that work to expose Lanark's identity as fictional construction, the novel as a whole is invested in the reader's imaginative and emotional participation with its characters' inner struggles and challenges, in the immersive pull of its textual world, and our subsequent affective engagements as members of the narrative audience. As compared with *At Swim*, where the novel's "text-as-game" dimensions tend to be foregrounded, readers are more invested in *Lanark*'s "text-as-world" dimensions for much of the 573-page novel, even as we remain attentive to moments that transmogrify that experience in our playful

navigations of its uneven TAW. The "story-over-discourse meta-rule" applies at many points of Gray's novel as "readers privilege—and seek to preserve—[our] mimetic interests" in these characters and this storyworld (Phelan, "Implausibilities" 175). By positing the cumulative momentum of book four's events as prophetic rather than part of *Lanark*'s textual reality, interpretation three diminishes the powerful affective pleasure—and part of its corresponding mimetic and thematic significance—by rendering them all hypothetical, including Lanark's reunion with Sandy, his eventual realization that Rima did love him, and the equanimity with which he is prepared to face his/the end (*Lanark* 558-60).

The dominant critical readerly approach to understanding *Lanark*'s textual world tends to fall somewhere between interpretations four and five, which posit that Thaw is Lanark's younger self who has passed from life in Glasgow to a sort of hellish afterlife in Unthank and beyond, and/or that the disjunctures between the realist and fantastic sections represent a shift in perspective on micro and macro versions of the same reality (Craig, *Cencrastus* 20; Duncan 43, Bernstein 32; Smethurst 131; O'Gallagher 546; Falconer 188-89). If we take Munro's comment of existence being helical (60) as a working principle of *Lanark*, interpretations four and five can be considered complementary and/or non-mutually exclusive. My (and other critics') interpretation that all four books form what Pavel calls a "'dual' or 'layered' ontology" posits death as the implicit, ambiguous transition that splits the TAW into "sharply distinct domains obeying different laws," such that these domains are not TAPWs, "but complementary territories" within the TAW (Ryan, *PW* 40; Pavel 57-58). In elucidating the problems with the

previous interpretations, I hope to have shown how this dominant paradigm of understanding *Lanark*'s textual world is ultimately a more powerful interpretive hypothesis than the others outlined here.

As Bernstein points out, part of *Lanark*'s appeal lies in that its "representation of global politics, human relationships, and personal suffering are detailed and moving" (58), that is, in readers' affective, mimetic, and thematic engagements with "text-as-world." To return to Lanark's joyful moment of epiphany,

> [u]p the left-hand curve, silhouetted against the sky, a small human figure was quickly climbing. Lanark sighed with pleasure, halted and looked away into the blue. He said, "Thank you!" and for a moment glimpsed the ghost of a man scribbling in a bed littered with papers. Lanark smiled and said, "No, old Nastler, it isn't you I thank, but the cause of the ground which grew us all. [. . .] on the whole I have found your world bearable rather than good. But in spite of me and the sensible path, Sandy is reaching the summit all by himself in the sunlight [. . . .] I am so content that I don't care when contentment ends. I don't care what absurdity, failure, death I am moving toward." (*Lanark* 515)

"In that one moment," Craig observes, "the apparently endless repetitions in which Thaw and Lanark are caught up become redemptive, because the figure Lanark sees climbing the hill is both Thaw as a child and his own son" (*Arts* 106). Craig's remarks demonstrate the importance of regarding Glasgow, Unthank, the Institute, and Provan as all part of the fabric of the TAW: the point here is that these uneven domains of the same textual world

demonstrate "an escape leading only to repetition in another dimension of the very contradictions from which he[Lanark] sought release" (98)—including death, which is why it is crucial to regard the books set in Glasgow as part of the TAW. That death is not an alternative means of escape is very much the point; the purgatorial or hellish nature of Unthank, both in the metaphorical and literal sense, is crucial to Gray's global textual design. The modes of both "text-as-world" (immersion) *and* "text-as-game" (interactivity) are relevant to capturing our experience of reading *Lanark*.

Conclusion

As Patricia Waugh observes in *Metafiction*,

> "playfulness" within the novel is certainly not confined merely to literary form but is part of a broader development in culture which is registered acutely in all postmodernist art. [. . . .] In its awareness of the serious possibility of play, it in fact echoes some of the major concerns of twentieth-century thought: Piaget's work on the educational value of play; Wittgenstein's view of language as a set of games; the existential notion of reality as a game of being [and so on] (41-42).

Ryan notes that the dominant "text-as-world" metaphor of immersion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has given way to the "text-as-game" mode of interactivity in the twentieth, reflecting both a change in literary style *and* readerly treatments of or attitudes toward the text (*Narrative as VR* 175; 2-4). More than at any other period in literary

history, the exploration of the dynamics "between world aesthetics and game aesthetics" has perhaps been taken up most rigorously in postmodern literature (353). Some postmodern texts, like *At Swim*, dominantly emphasize the "text-as-game" metaphor, such that the readerly pleasure of the text is largely driven by the play with "informational chaos" (240) and its engagement of readers' cognitive capacities: a large part of the *fun* is the difficult process of giving form to or readers' co-construction of the textual world(s), which also depends on O'Brien's ability to have his readers enter into the shifting narrative audiences. Other postmodern narratives, like *Lanark*, work to emphasize both immersive and interactive dimensions, such that something would be lost were we to lose the sense of "text-as-world"; its playful invitation to readers also crucially entails our role as members of the narrative audience, specifically in our treatment of these characters as embodied beings, whose fates we become invested in over the course of the novel. As Gray himself puts it, "critics—however friendly—are so interested in what is sometimes called my *ludic* writing . . . that they forget half my writing is not like that" (Bernstein 28). To miss the immersive dimensions of *Lanark* is to miss a substantial and significant part of its broader significance.

To perpetrate "informational chaos" in the text-as-game mode, not only do authors employ "transworld identity," as in *At Swim*'s adoption of Sweeny and MacCool from Celtic mythology; what is more, identity confusion is further perpetuated and complicated by the use of "homonymy" and "synonymy" (Eco, *Role* 230; Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 231-32; *PW* 52; Mackie and Jago, "Transworld Identity"). *Homonymy* refers to "a proper name borne by two different characters," such as TAPW 1 Shanahan

the cowboy and TAPsW 1.2 Shanahan the philosopher, while *synonymy* refers to "a character bearing two different names," most evidently in the figures of Thaw and Lanark, the twin identities of *Lanark*'s protagonist (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 231-32). The initial frustration readers experience at the disorienting configurations of the textual worlds turns to pleasure when we begin to discern the novel's "textual architecture," by creating an "inventory of the basic furniture of the fictional world" and "the web of relations that forms its human and spatial geography" (236; 229).

As previously discussed, neural scientists' theories about how our brains integrate new information—about human beings' learning abilities—foregrounds issues of play: our perceptual experiences are "coded within the brain in scattered 'maps,'" complex networks of interconnected neurons, and the "vitality of these maps depends on the active and incessant orchestration of countless details" (Brown 35-36). Brown suggests that it "seems likely that this orchestration happens most fully through play," through our engagements in play activity such as storytelling or art, amongst others (35-36). The readerly onus of co-constructing or co-orchestrating *At Swim*'s and *Lanark*'s complex textual universes certainly seems to fit the bill.

One possible objection that may be raised against my use of possible-worlds theory to interpret *Lanark* and *At Swim* is that the approach too "cleanly" delineates worlds in ways that violate the fundamental purposeful entropy that animates Gray's and especially O'Brien's spirit of chaotic play. I do not at all deny that these postmodern authors intend for the textual universe to appear extremely chaotic, but I attempt to critically elucidate the texts in a way that best approximates the reading experience by

using textual cues that mediate accessibility relations and Phelan's "meta-rule of readerly engagement" to account for how readers deal with the chaos of the text.

I suggest that many postmodern fictional worlds are designed to *simulate* pandemonium, forcing the formal instinct to kick into play as readers attempt to dispel the feeling of vertigo and to restore stability of perception in order to apprehend the novels' larger concerns, such as questions about fictionality and authorship. Rather than defend the PW approach as a critical framework that offers an absolute or authoritative interpretation that "explains away" the text, I suggest that the model offers one way of accounting for how readers deal with postmodern fiction's textual mayhem. Furthermore, there are certain characteristics of both O'Brien's and especially Gray's textual universes that remain indeterminate or undecidable, as I pointed out in my analyses. Thus, I do not see my approach as one that violates postmodern fiction's purposeful chaos and ambiguity; the PW lens merely works as a tool to explicate some implicit readerly tasks we engage in when encountering such anarchic texts, in order to understand the larger concerns at stake in that work of postmodern fiction—such as issues of metafictionality and historiography in *At Swim* or the fragmentary sense of Scottish identity and literary tradition, and the imaginative transfiguration of Glasgow/Scotland in *Lanark* (see pp. 46; 71-72; 85 of this MS).

Gray explicitly makes form-giving part of the reader's play-task, explaining that only the flow of "readers' enjoyment" over *Lanark* "can unify" the novel's seemingly disparate sections (Gray and Axelrod 106). Through our participation in their puzzle- or game-like structures, postmodern texts partly shift the onus of creating narrative form

onto readers. At times, the textual disorientation is so extreme that it compels our formal impulse to (re)act, for us to be able to even proceed reading. In this way postmodern literature redefines aesthetic experience by bilocating the form-impulse, so to speak: both as part of the author's textual design and in his/her invitation for the reader to enjoy the difficult yet pleasurable task or process of co-constructing the textual world(s).

Postmodern fiction's playful textual designs lead to an enactment of the aesthetic formal impulse in the apprehending/perceiving subject by foregrounding multiplicity, ambiguity, disorientation, chaos, or the "free play" in general that characterizes postmodern fiction.[43] There is plenty of sensuous change that entertains, pleases, and tantalizes the reader's sense-drive or imagination in *At Swim* and *Lanark*; our form-instinct is thus forced to go into overdrive in an attempt to make sense of and redress the balance in order to achieve this concert of play. From the player/reader/critic's perspective, the form-drive—and attendant cognitive pleasure readers derive from successfully navigating postmodern fiction's complex textual worlds—comes to the fore in the aesthetics of (ontological) play, in the perceived order that belies *At Swim*'s and *Lanark*'s apparent chaos.

The sensuous impulsions of free play in postmodern fiction propels, motivates, and stimulates the form-drive, as "the formal instinct" strives to "bring harmony into the diversity of [such] manifestations" (Schiller, *Aesthetical* "Letter XII" 35-36). When the sensuous impulsion, which "requires that there should be change" (change being plentifully available in the free play of postmodern fiction) and the formal impulsion "act in concert—allow me to call it the instinct of play" ("Letter XIV" 38). Schiller further

notes that this "equilibrium" between the formal and sensuous impulsions "remains always an idea that reality can never completely reach. In reality, there will always remain a preponderance of one of these elements over the other, and the highest point to which experience can reach will consist in an oscillation between two principles" ("Letter XVI" 41). What the authors of postmodern fiction have done is to destabilize the text as the site of this aesthetic equilibrium and to shift part of the onus for formal impulsion onto readers, inviting us to participate in a more active and self-aware mode of reading.

PART II: REFRAMING THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL

Chapter Three An Aesthetics of the Literary Sublime

"Sublimity flashing forth at the right moment

scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt."

(Longinus, On the Sublime*)*

Following *At Swim-Two-Birds*' publication in 1939, Flann O'Brien began to work on a significantly different aesthetic project that same year. "By January 1940, the completed manuscript [eventually published under the title *The Third Policeman*] had embarked on a round of rejections from British and American publishers," much to O'Brien's dismay (Taaffe, *Ireland* 63). Unlike *At Swim*'s chaotic play of worlds, O'Brien explained, "there will be no question of the difficulty or 'fireworks' of the last book. The whole point of my plan will be the perfectly logical and matter-of-fact treatment of the most brain-staggering imponderables of the policemen" (*Third* vii). The present study, which offers an alternate strategy of framing twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary studies—i.e., a strategy that foregrounds questions of aesthetics and thus downplays issues of chronology, or date of publication, in favor of shared or contrasting aesthetic orientations—is partly motivated by a desire to reflect the period's diverse aesthetic ambitions, even within a single author's *oeuvre*. The "brain-staggering imponderables" characterizing the mode of the sublime constitutes the key topic for aesthetic inquiry in this chapter.

In my conceptualization of a distinctly (postmodern) literary sublime, I synthesize philosophies of the sublime inherited from generations of aesthetic tradition and explore their manifestations in twentieth and twenty-first century literature, in order to explain why the aesthetic mode of the sublime is so significant for postmodern and contemporary fiction, and how these works in turn complicate traditional understandings of the sublime. I work to develop the (single) aesthetic category of the literary sublime in a way that is nonetheless faithful "to the plurality, richness and complexity of the sublime," as readers are likely to experience it (Zuckert, *Antiquity* 65). To do so, I draw on the works of several key theorists of the sublime, including Longinus, Edmund Burke, Kant, Friedrich Schiller, G. W. F. Hegel, and Jean-François Lyotard, amongst others. Though Burke and others have suggested that, as compared with other aesthetic materials, words have "the privilege of engendering a limitlessness" (Lyotard, *Sublime* 66-67; 55; Shaw, *Sublime* 49; 52), discussions of philosophies of the sublime tend to focus on majestic natural phenomena or visual art rather than literary texts. I suggest that postmodernist literature, which plays vigorously with notions of infinitude, offers opportunities for exploring the concept of the sublime in the domain of verbal art. Like Schiller and Lyotard, my notion of a distinctly *literary* sublime extends the influential Kantian notion of the sublime as a response to nature into a means of thinking about art and literature (Costelloe, *Antiquity* 106; 119).

Though theorists as diverse as Joseph Addison, Burke, Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, and others each define the sublime in his own way, "they had in common an interest in the audience" (Adams, *Critical Theory* 76). The Burkean sublime's

“emphasis on the psychological effects of terror,” Philip Shaw explains, “proved decisive in shifting the discourse of the sublime away from the study of natural objects and towards the mind of the spectator” (*Sublime* 71). Both extending and simultaneously revising existing theories of sublime, I use a configuration of the sense- and moral-drives to account for how postmodern and contemporary literature facilitate affective dimensions of the sublime in the reading experience.

Although the novels discussed in this chapter present worlds that can be as disorientating as those discussed under the category of play in chapters one and two, I suggest that the dominant readerly task engendered by the affective experience of the sublime makes readers less concerned with attempting to navigate the textual worlds and more engaged with negotiating the conflicting affective states that characterize the mode of the sublime. The affective ambivalence that readers experience in the sublime gives rise to a significantly different sense of readerly participation: because of the affective “transitory anguish” we experience, Lyotard remarks, “the sublime emotion is not like play” (*Sublime* 67-68). Jacques Derrida proposes that the sublime “suspends play and elevates to seriousness” in its “essential relation to morality (*Sittlichkeit*), which presupposes also violence done to the senses. But the violence is here done by the imagination, not by reason” (“Parergon,” *Sublime* 43).[44] The violence done by the imagination or the sense-drive is a key issue I return to later in this chapter, in my analyses of O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman* and Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.

The earliest known treatise on the sublime derives from the Greek rhetorician Longinus, who lived sometime between the first and third century. Longinus “does not

define the sublime," Malcolm Heath notes, and in fact "goes out of his way to avoid a stable terminology," preferring "the illustrative example" as his expository device—which is likewise part of my own methodology—in order "to show that the standard technographic definition obscures distinctions crucial to the subject of the sublime" (*Antiquity* 12). As my epigraph from Longinus's *On the Sublime* (*Perì Hýpsous*) implies, the sublime is primarily "recognized by its effect" (12). Subsequent theories of the sublime by Burke, Kant, the Romantic and postmodern traditions have also furnished us with a firmer sense of the sublime, some locating it in the features of the (natural or artistic) object and others in the affective states such objects produce (7).

I begin with a brief, condensed history of the sublime, followed by an overview of key characteristics of the sublime with reference to each of these traditions and the associated affect (and effects) that philosophers, artists, poets, authors, and art and literary critics typically use to characterize the experience of the sublime. Like Kant and Schiller, I distinguish between two types of sublime—between the mathematical and the dynamical for Kant, and a sublime of knowledge and of force for Schiller—locating them in relation to degrees of conflict between the sense- and moral-drives rather than as binaries. Like Longinus, I revert to illustrative examples in *The Third Policeman* and *Blood Meridian* to concretize my conception of the (postmodern) literary sublime and ultimately use my analyses of these texts to suggest the sublime's integral relevance to the experience of reading twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction.

Theorizing the Sublime

A Brief History of the Artistic and Literary Sublime

The sublime's affiliations with the moral- and sense-drives can be traced to Longinus, who emphasizes the moral character of the speaker (one "whose spirit is generous and aspiring," and capable of "grandeur of thought") and "a certain disorder of language, imitating the agitation and commotion of the soul" (Lang, Introduction; Longinus, *Sublime* §8). Drawing on Homer, Demosthenes, and other examples from ancient Greek and Latin literatures, Longinus distinguishes between a "sudden and abrupt" mode and a "diffusive" mode of the sublime—a point I elucidate more fully later in this chapter (*Sublime* §12).[45]

Following Longinus, the sublime received its first extensive treatment as an explicitly literary phenomenon from the mid-eighteenth- to the early nineteenth-century. This included the British Romantic and Gothic traditions, which included figures such as Irish philosopher Edmund Burke and English poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; the German Romantic tradition, best exemplified by Caspar David Friedrich's landscape paintings; the American tradition of landscape painting, as represented by the work of Thomas Cole, Fredric Edwin Church, Fitz Hugh Lane, and others; as well as Kantian and Nietzschean philosophical traditions. The sublime's emergence "reflected a new cultural awareness of the profoundly limited nature of the self," which led artists, writers, and philosophers "to draw attention to intense experiences which lay beyond conscious control" (Morley, *Sublime* 14-15). By invoking

the concept of the *infinite*, the British Romantic sublime emphasized a "sublime of transcendence" (in turn indebted to Longinus) that was "finally subservient to the *moral sublime*" (Potkay, *Antiquity* 204-7). Robert Rosenblum suggests that for artists, writers, and philosophers of the period, "the Sublime provided a flexible semantic container for the murky new Romantic experiences of awe, terror, boundlessness and divinity that began to rupture the decorous confines of earlier aesthetic systems," by paralyzing "the spectator's traditional habits of seeing and thinking" (Rosenblum, *Sublime* 109; Adorno, *Aesthetics* 362).

Critical theorizations of the sublime tradition regained momentum in the early twentieth century through the works of poets such as W. B. Yeats,[46] and perhaps most substantially in Surrealist writing and iconography, which Klem James conceptualized "through the category of the Sublime" (Dickson and Romanets 22). James highlights the Surrealist "preoccupation with incongruity and contradiction," through their juxtapositions of "beauty and monstrosity" and "horror and delight" (22). Doreet Harten, on the other hand, identifies Russian painter Kasimir Malevich as the "founding father" of twentieth-century "art of the sublime," and Harten credits Malevich, along with Wassily Kandinsky, Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko, with developing the notion of the abstract sublime ("Creating," *Sublime* 73; Johnson, *Antiquity* 122).[47] In their discussions of the abstract sublime, critics such as Rosenblum and Renée van de Vall likewise discuss the importance of Newman's, Rothko's, Clyfford Still's, and Jackson Pollock's works, characterizing their paintings through terms such as "the

infinite," indeterminacy, ambiguity, and challenges to "the continuity and wholeness of spatial experience" (van de Vall, *Contemporary Sublime* 72-73).

Developments of artistic methods, Theodor Adorno argues, typically "correspond to social development" (*Aesthetics* 362). By replacing the "geometric vocabulary" of the Cubist tradition "with a new kind of space created by flattened, spreading expanses of light, colour and plane," these "masters of the Abstract Sublime" were responding not only to "formal needs," Rosenblum explains, but also to "emotional ones that, in the anxieties of the atomic age, suddenly seem to correspond with a Romantic tradition of the irrational and the awesome as well as with a Romantic vocabulary of boundless energies and limitless spaces" ("Abstract," *Sublime* 112). Fredric Jameson likewise suggests that it is "in terms of that enormous and threatening, yet only dimly perceivable, other reality of economic and social institutions that [. . .] the postmodern sublime can alone be adequately theorized" (80).

Jameson's notion of the "hysterical" "postmodern or technological sublime" emphasizes the "'derealizing' effect of postmodern representations," where the world threatens to become "a stereoscopic illusion" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 34; 37; 77; Redfield, *PMLA* 152). Philip Shaw posits "the postmodern sublime as an attempt to re-read a theoretical tradition, placing emphasis on its paradoxical, unfulfilled, or self-baffling emphases"; though "postmodernism retains the Romantic feeling for the vast and unlimited, it no longer seeks to temper this feeling through reference to a higher faculty," but emphasizes "the inability of art or reason to bring the vast and the unlimited to account" (*Sublime* 7-8; 115). Postmodernism "puts forward the unpresentable in

presentation itself" and thus always "searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable'" (Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition* 81; Shaw, *Sublime* 116). The "historical sublime" for the postmodernists, Amy Elias writes, "is the place where history cannot be fathomed at all, or is perceived as a sublime and decentered Absence, in all of its terrifying, chaotic and humbling incomprehensibility" (*Sublime* 56). Joseph Tabbi, for his part, locates this sense of the incomprehensible or unpresentable in Thomas Pynchon's novels, pointing not only to "the powerfully significant failure to signify [that] has always characterized the rhetoric of the sublime," but also the impulse to meaning-making "*between* systems and at the point where categories break down," in the "intersecting worlds, absent centers, and dissolving categories" of Pynchon's work (13-14).

The urgency with which artists, writers, and philosophers attempt to impart the sense of the unpresentable is in part conditioned by the traumas of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Interest in the sublime, Andrew Slade suggests, is "grounded in violent historical experience" ("*Antigone*" 87). "How, for example, should we speak of the terrors of recent history, of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Cambodia, Rwanda, and 9/11? How could these events be described as evidence of human progress, still less as objects of sublime delight?" (Shaw, *Sublime* 127). Paradoxically, these events can only be "'known' by refusing to phrase [them] in terms of a judgment of understanding; for what the Holocaust [and other horrors of the contemporary age] signifies is nothing less than the impossibility of such knowledge" (128). Artists such as Joseph Beuys, Anselm

Kiefer, Doris Salcedo, and others, have likewise "addressed the sublime's connection to traumatic historical events" (Morley, *Sublime* 13).

In addition to the traumatic historical conditions of the past century, Tabbi observes that "the sublime persists as a powerful emotive force in postmodern writing, especially in American works that regard reality as something newly mediated, predominantly by science and technology" (ix). Morley likewise points out that "to many thinkers of the early and mid twentieth century the conditions of daily life within modern technological society could seem one continuous and disturbingly uncanny or sublime experience, causing what the German writer Walter Benjamin termed a disorienting psychic condition of traumatic 'shock'" (*Sublime* 17). "The extreme space-time compressions produced by globalized communication technologies give rise to a perception of the everyday as fundamentally destabilizing and excessive," Morley explains, which characterizes the experience of the "*contemporary* sublime" (12). Painter and art critic Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe terms this "the techno-sublime" (*Contemporary Sublime* 135; *BCS* 80) and novelists such as Pynchon and William Gibson explicitly engage with this sense of the techno-sublime. In *The Third Policeman*, the nameless narrator's encounters with the policemen's contraptions—which turn sound into light and light into heat, magnify objects "to invisibility," and split not only a smell "into its sub- and inter-smells," but taste and touch/feel into their respective sub- and inter- states (110; 136; 139)—likewise facilitate the traumatic shock associated with the techno-sublime of hell and its eternity.

Characterizing the Postmodern Literary Sublime

In synthesizing traditions of the sublime, I explore both features/characteristics that philosophers, writers, and artists typically attribute to objects that inspire sublime experience and the affective states associated with these aspects of the sublime. I suggest that the main characteristic of the postmodern literary sublime concerns “the unresolvable tension between representation and [the] unrepresentable” (Hooker, *Contemporary Sublime* 48). Sianne Ngai notes, whether it is Tabbi’s postmodern sublime, Elias’s historical sublime, or “Jameson’s geopolitical or paranoid sublime,” in each case “the sublime refers to what is finally or properly unrepresentable” (22). Lyotard, Shaw, Elias, and David B. Johnson have all pointed to the importance of the unpresentable and the unrepresentable in their theories of the sublime (Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition* 81; *Sublime* 69; Shaw, *Sublime* 116; Elias, *Sublime* 56; Johnson, *Antiquity* 118-19). Shaw suggests, vis-à-vis Lyotard, that postmodernism is largely concerned with searching for new presentations “in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable” (*Sublime* 116). As compared to its affective dimensions, Kant emphasizes the cognitive dimension of the sublime, remarking that “true sublimity” does not reside in the object which occasions this state, but “only in the mind of the subject judging” (*Critical Theory* 393-94). I suggest that the irresolvable tension between representation and the unrepresentable manifests itself differently on the literary sublime spectrum.

A key idea that theorists of the sublime return to repeatedly is the notion of the “limitless” or “limitlessness” and “unboundedness” (Rosenblum, “Abstract,” *Sublime* 112; Crowther, *Contemporary Sublime* 7; Johnson, *Antiquity* 122). The Kantian sublime,

Hazard Adams explains, refers to what is both “formless and beyond cognition”: it “implies the boundless, that which is ‘absolutely great’” (*Critical Theory* 378). Newman’s use of indeterminacy in his paintings for instance, Gilbert-Rolfe remarks, is “clearly involved with the idea of limitlessness” and “the possibility of formlessness” (*BCS* 51). For Lyotard, verbal art has a greater potential for generating a sense of the sublime than other artistic media. Commenting on Burke, Lyotard writes, “words themselves have, over other aesthetic materials, the privilege of engendering a limitlessness” (*Sublime* 66-67; 55). Although at no point does Burke, an early proponent of the sublime, “concede the radical possibility that sublimity is an effect of language,” Shaw notes that Burke’s argument “seems constantly to be on the verge of declaring this possibility” (*Sublime* 49). Gilbert-Rolfe also points out that “Derrida [likewise] comes very close to equating the sublime with language because it is at once limited and limitless” (*BCS* 68).

Limitlessness is closely related to the notion of “the infinite”—most prominently in Kant’s “mathematical sublime”—and Richard Etlin is further convinced that the infinite “is not only a source of the sublime but possibly an inherent attribute” (Burke, *Aesthetics* 118; Kant, *Critical Theory* 394; van de Vall, *Contemporary Sublime* 72; Merritt, *Antiquity* 39; Etlin, *Antiquity* 233; 230). Though Kant was primarily concerned with natural “phenomena whose intuition brings with it the idea of its infinity” (394), postmodern and contemporary literature has put new spins on the notion of the infinite, especially in the works of authors such as Jorge Luis Borges (in *The Book of Sand*, for instance) and Gabriel García Márquez (in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*). The infinite is

also manifested in a multitude of ways in both *The Third Policeman* and *Blood Meridian*, as I will presently discuss in my analyses of these two texts.

Referring to early philosophers of the sublime like Longinus and the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Timothy Costelloe points out that early theories of the sublime emphasize "both the authorial intent to produce these effects through rhetorical technique and the immediate, untutored nature of the emotions aroused" (*Antiquity* 51). Thus not only are "features of the objects (such as magnitude, height, and elevation)" crucial to characterizing the sublime, but "the affective states (such as transcendence, awe, fear, and terror) they produce" also signal its presence (7; 2). Philosophers and theorists frequently refer to "transcendence," "an overabundance of stimulation," or the sense of "exceed[ing] what imaginative thought can grasp at once in a form" (Potkay, *Antiquity* 204-7; Shaw, *Sublime* 7; Weiskel, *Romantic* 105; Lyotard, *Sublime* 53-54). Lyotard in fact suggests that "there are no sublime objects but only sublime feelings" (*Sublime* 182). Philosophers however vary rather widely on what these "sublime feelings" might entail. Longinus, for instance, proposes that the sublime's effect is "transport": it throws a spell over us and is "irresistible" (*Critical Theory* 77). Unlike Burke, his Scottish contemporaries "Alexander Gerard, Lord Kames (Henry Home), Archibald Alison, and Dugald Stewart" suggest that "terror is not the definitive moment of the sublime"; instead, as indicated by its etymology, they emphasize "elevation" as the "central, defining characteristic of the sublime" (Zuckert, *Antiquity* 66).

Most philosophers, however, broadly agree that the sublime is characterized by *resistance* or *conflicting affective states*. Kant, Lyotard, and Derrida regard the feeling of

the sublime as an indirect pleasure produced by “a momentary checking of the vital powers and a consequent stronger outflow of them”—a “negative pleasure” that alternates between attraction and repulsion” (Kant, *Critical Theory* 391; Lyotard, *Sublime* 67; 109; Derrida, “Parergon,” *Sublime* 42; Merritt, *Antiquity* 40; Shaw, *Sublime* 7; Slade, *Lyotard* 85). In line with the Kantian sublime, Schiller likewise posits that the sublime produces pleasure “by a feeling at first of displeasure,” of “two contradictory perceptions in a single feeling” (Schiller 182-83; Ramazani, *PMLA* 164). Conflict is definitive of the sublime, which “has always been constituted by antinomies,” “incongruity and contradiction” (Potkay, *Antiquity* 208; Dickson and Romanets 22). “The ascendancy of the sublime” in the twentieth century, Adorno notes, “is one with art’s compulsion that fundamental contradictions not be covered up but fought through in themselves” (*Aesthetic Theory* 197).

Common to multiple definitions of the sublime “is a preoccupation with struggle”: Schiller emphasizes that “reason and the sensuous are not in harmony, and it is precisely this contradiction between the two which makes the charm of the sublime” (71). “For an object to be called sublime,” he adds, “it must be in opposition with our sensuousness” (133). For Kant, Schiller, Lyotard, and others who follow in the tradition of the Kantian sublime, “the struggle is between the evidence of the senses [. . .] and the supersensible power of reason,” in the conflict between “imagination and reason” (Shaw, *Sublime* 6; Kant, *Critical Theory* 393; Schiller 182; Lyotard, *Sublime* 109; 125; Prager 115). Though Lyotard, Derrida, and others have suggested that the sublime feeling ultimately lies with *reason* or the moral-drive,[48] I modify this position in my account of

the postmodern literary sublime by suggesting that the sublime is principally concerned with the sense-drive (*imagination*) in varying degrees of conflict with the moral-drive (*reason*).

The sublime has historically been dominantly related to the moral-drive. Longinus, for instance, considers the orator's moral character to be relevant to the sublime, while eighteenth century aesthetic theorists and philosophers associated the category with religious transcendence. When we look more closely at the terms in which the sublime is described, however, including qualities such as limitlessness and infinitude, it has more affinities with the sense- than the moral-drive. The moral-drive, as Schiller describes it and as I also posit in this study, is a system of ordering, whereas the sublime is explicitly concerned with rupturing notions of order, further aligning the sublime with the Dionysiac energies of the sense-drive (see p. 8 of this MS).

Synthesizing Two Types of Sublime

The distinction between two types of sublime can be traced to Longinus's early treatise, *On the Sublime*. He notes that an element of sublimity is "vehement and inspired passion" and posits two types of vehemence: the first in "speed, power and intensity" and "may be compared to a thunderbolt, or flash of lightning," while the second, "after the manner of a widespread conflagration, rolls on with all-devouring flames, [. . .] fed by an unceasing succession" (*Critical Theory* 76; 85; *Sublime* §12; see also the chapter epigraph). The sublime can thus be experienced momentarily in a given instant or as a successive buildup across the text.

Alexander Gerard's *Essay on Taste* (1759), Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* (1790), and Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794) also distinguish between two types of sublime; unlike Longinus, however, this distinction is a difference in kind rather than duration. Paul Guyer notes that Gerard's distinction between "the quantitative magnitude of natural objects" and "the qualitative magnitude of human moral dispositions" paved the way for Kant's distinction between the "mathematical" and "dynamical" sublime (*Antiquity* 104). Kant defines the *mathematical sublime* as the subject's failed "aesthetic estimation" of a natural object's "magnitude"—"a recognition of the [limited] power of our own theoretical reason," i.e. concerning sensible objects of possible experience (Merritt, *Antiquity* 39; 41-42; Kant, *Critique*, part I, §I, book II, sub-sections 25-27). The *dynamical sublime*, on the other hand, has to do with our response to the "power" or "*might* of nature that triggers a recognition of our own practical reason and will," i.e. a concern with "the moral law" and that which ought to be done (Merritt, *Antiquity* 39; 41-42; Guyer, *Antiquity* 104; Kant, *Critique*, part I, §I, book II, sub-section 28). Channeling Kant's discussion of the sublime from a response to nature into a response to art and literature, Schiller renames the mathematical and dynamical sublime, "the sublime of knowledge and the sublime of force" respectively (Schiller 133; Guyer, *Antiquity* 106).

Transposing and synthesizing these various traditions of the sublime, I characterize the two modes of the sublime in relation to increasing degrees of conflict between the sense-drive/*imagination* and the moral-drive/*reason*, as we move from the mathematical to the dynamical sublime. The sublime, Derrida writes, presupposes

violence done to the senses by the imagination ("Parergon," *Sublime* 43). Characteristics of the sublime such as the unresolvable tension between representation and the unpresentable/unrepresentable, limitlessness, and the infinite facilitate the imagination's assault on our senses. Using O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*, I show how the mathematical sublime emphasizes characteristics such as infinitude and the inadequacy of representation, with a minimal engagement of or conflict with the moral-drive, while my analysis of McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* demonstrates how the dynamical sublime is concerned with what Kant calls *practical reason*, especially in the readerly responsibilities that the text demands of us, in the maximal conflict between the sense- and moral-drives.

Sublimity of Knowledge: *The Third Policeman* and the Mathematical Sublime

O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* is an autodiegetic narrative that opens with the protagonist-narrator's admission of having murdered a man named Philip Mathers, as he recounts the details of his life that led him to the act, including his relationship with his accomplice John Divney and his obsession with a philosopher named de Selby—whose theories are a critical source of the sublime in the novel. When the narrator goes to retrieve Mathers's fortune from the latter's home in chapter two, he experiences some rather odd sensations which he struggles to verbalize and suddenly realizes that he is unable to remember his own name, even as he converses with the man he helped kill and bury three years ago. Stranger still are the conversations that follow about policemen with

"the gift of wind-watching," who issue annual gowns meant to be worn one over another till death (*Third* 32-35). The rest of the novel follows the account of the nameless narrator's bizarre encounters with the policemen in a world partly governed by de Selbian eccentricities (Hopper, *Portrait* 195; 220), concluding with the narrator's return to his and Divney's home. What the narrator believes to have been several days of strange encounter in a place just a few miles from his home turns out to be sixteen years and an otherworld apart, as the narrator and readers learn that he was killed by a bomb Divney planted when he entered Mathers's home in chapter two (*Third* 197). Unlike the reader, however, the moment of truth or realization for the narrator is immediately followed by a (re)lapse into amnesia as his mind goes "completely void" and he no longer recalls who he is, where he is going, and what his business is upon earth (197-198). The novel loops back to the moment when the narrator set out to look for the policemen, joined by Divney this time.

As in *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *Lanark*, the reader experiences the dizzying effects and affective and emotional disorientation related to the category of *ilinx* in *The Third Policeman*. This is partly achieved through the autodiegetic narration, as the "first-person narrator serves to make the reader identify with his fear and bewilderment as he undergoes his strange experience" (Clissmann 156). Unlike *At Swim*, however, the reader's problem here is not an attempt to orientate to the storyworld: the problem of orientation is seemingly resolved in the text's conclusion when we realize that this is (a version of) hell the nameless narrator is in and as O'Brien remarks, "[w]hen you are writing about the world of the dead—and the damned—where none of the rules and laws

(not even the Law of Gravity) holds good, there is any amount of scope for back-chat and funny cracks" (*Third* viii). However, understanding that this is hell only provides a frame for understanding *Third* without resolving or alleviating most of its difficulties, especially the cognitive and existential challenges it presents in moments that facilitate the experience of the mathematical sublime.

Third has variously been read through the lenses of "nonsense writing"—stretching "logic to its illogical ends" in ways that expose "the irrationality of rational thinking"—and as a uniquely Irish form of speculative writing—"a locus of collision between Ireland's rich fantasy tradition and the twentieth century's idiom of science and technology" (Taaffe, *Ireland* 69; Nolan, "Synthesis" 178). Val Nolan's reading of the novel as Irish speculative writing comes close to an interpretation of *Third* as an instance of the techno-sublime, whereby O'Brien's use of de Selby "to satirise not only the rampant, destructive pace of change and progress, but also a parochial Irish imagination," characterizes the era of *Third*'s composition in the aftermath of mass industrialization and World War I (178-79).

Critics such as Terence Dewsnap, Todd Comer, and Robin Thierry, however, have chosen to read *Third* through the lens of (Anglo-)Irish politics, focusing on themes such as dispossession, power and agency, and the cultural dynamics of post-independence Ireland. In addition to Ireland's sociopolitical and cultural dynamics, Carol Taaffe also frames O'Brien's work within international literary Modernism of its time and as a satirical response to the Irish literary scene of the 1930s, in response to the "draconian censorship legislation" of 1929 and the "populism extolled by Gaelic

Revivalists and other cultural nationalists" (*Ireland* 3). Keith Hopper has also read the novel as an allegorical "microcosm of the Irish Free State and the tragedy of Irish male attitudes to sexuality" (*Portrait* 84). Hopper detects "a certain Irish tradition of cruel humour" in O'Brien's use of the macabre and the grotesque, which gives "Irish comedy its raw cutting edge" (*Portrait* 62). Both Hopper and M. Keith Booker have analyzed *Third* using the lens of Menippean satire and carnivalesque ambivalence, while Mary O'Toole and Anthony Adams have chosen to interpret the novel through J. W. Dunne's theories of time and serialism, and Alfred Jarry's practice of pataphysics.

Third is best-known, however, as an exemplary instance of postmodernist fiction (McHale, *Postmodernist* 191-92; Murphy and Hopper 11; Hopper, *Portrait* 195; Robin, "Representation" 37; Baines, "Un-Understandable" 81). Hopper regards the novel as an extremely sophisticated example of the genre, in which typical postmodernist devices such as metalepsis "operate more organically" than mechanically and *Third* avoids foregrounding its "tricks" to such a degree that they fail to truly "alienate" the reader in the proper Brechtian sense (*Portrait* 136; Baines, "Un-Understandable" 81). The vibrant and diverse critical scholarship surrounding *Third* attests to the novel's protean nature and its enormous imaginative capacities—which, I argue, are inextricably linked to its use of the sublime.

Representation and the Unpresentable: Verbosity and the Inadequacy of Words

The tension between the failure of words to represent the narrator's experience and the excessive verbosity of the novel is a dominant, recurring feature. Consider the

narrator's arduous wordiness as he attempts to describe the size of Policeman MacCruiskeen's chests and tools: "He took a something from his pocket that was too small for me to see and started working with the tiny black thing on the table beside the bigger thing which was itself too small to be described" (*Third* 73). He likewise struggles to verbalize the sublime experience he undergoes whilst fumbling about in the dark for the cashbox in Mathers's home.

> *I cannot hope to describe* what it was but it had frightened me very long before I had understood it even slightly. It was *some change* which came upon me or upon the room, *indescribably subtle, yet momentous, ineffable*. It was as if the daylight had changed with unnatural suddenness, as if the temperature of the evening had altered greatly in an instant or as if the air had become twice as rare or twice as dense as it had been in the winking of an eye; perhaps all of these and other things happened together for all my senses were bewildered all at once and could give me no explanation. [. . . .] I heard a cough behind me, [which . . . .] seemed to bring with it some more awful alteration in everything, just as if it had held the universe stand-still for an instant, suspending the planets in their courses, halting the sun and holding in mid-air any falling thing the earth was pulling towards it. [. . . .] *It is hard to write of such a scene or to convey with known words the feelings* which came knocking at my numbed mind. [. . . .] *I will not try to tell of* the space of time which followed. (23-25; emphases added)

I provide this lengthy quotation to demonstrate the difficulty with which the narrator attempts to verbalize the experience of his unconscious passage from life into the afterlife, as readers later learn at the end of the novel. The narrator's extreme verbosity, however, seems to forestall feelings typically associated with the sublime (such as terror, elevation, awe, rapture, wonder) by re-directing the reader's attention to the inadequacy of his words. To paraphrase Hooker's critique of Caspar David Friedrich's paintings, O'Brien likewise represents a situation in which "we might experience the sublime *if we were there*": while it is possible to make claims about the text's ability to "represent situations which might evoke a feeling of the sublime," Hooker insists that it "cannot evoke in us the *experience* of the sublime" (*Contemporary Sublime* 47; emphases added). Thus, it is implied that though sublime experience is (theoretically) possible at the level of taking up position with the narrative audience, its affective dimensions ultimately elude the authorial audience.

I suggest that the sublime at work at the level of authorial audience is comparable to Longinus's second form of "vehemence," which functions as a successive build-up "after the manner of a widespread conflagration" rather than the instantaneity of a lightning bolt (*Critical Theory* 76; 85). On multiple occasions, the narrator uses excessive verbosity to (over)compensate for his inability to reconcile his extraordinary encounters with the inadequacy of his words: some other particularly striking instances include his difficulty of accounting for the "indescribable" objects that fall through the chute in Eternity, which cannot be described in any known color and lack "an essential property of all known objects" (*Third* 135),[49] and his terrifying experience of attempting to

discover the source of an inexplicable burning light that spans seven pages of discourse and ultimately turns out to be from Policeman Fox's barracks *inside the walls* of Mathers's house (175-82).[50] As Thomas Shea remarks, however, "the anxiety of words missing their mark is partially expiated by the thrill of following their flight" (131). Adapting what Hooker terms "sublimity as process" for my own purposes here, I suggest that an appreciation of the gradually increasing distance between positions of the narrative and authorial audience is part of the process that readers undergo in the affective move from initial displeasure to eventual pleasure that characterizes our sublime experience of *Third*'s infinite, dizzying storyworld.[51] In other words, as the narrative progresses, the initial close alignment of the two audience positions gives way to a radical separation between them, leading to the authorial audience standing with O'Brien and looking down in amusement upon the narrative audience's efforts to make logical sense of the deliberately illogical textual world.

Notwithstanding the narrator's admission to being a murderer in the opening line of the novel, Clissmann rightly observes that most readers are likely, at least initially, to identify with the narrator's fear and bewilderment from the position of the narrative audience, since the knowledge of his death and that the Parish is literally hell is withheld from both the narrator and readers alike till the novel's conclusion.[52] Sublimity as process here involves readers detaching ourselves from the narrator's (and our own) logic-driven, realist frames of seeing and knowing the world, to intuiting the increasing distance between the positions of narrative and authorial audience by enjoying the strength of O'Brien's imaginative textual world, which encourages readers to lose ourselves in the

infinitude of its estranged, topsy-turvy universe. The narrator's encounters in the Parish and Eternity seem to confound and bewilder precisely because, like the narrator, we as readers struggle to make sense of the textual world using real world cognitive frames of physics or philosophy—a method largely (playfully) prompted by O'Brien's own textual design, whereby characters like Sergeant Pluck espouse Atomic Theory (85-91) and Martin Finnucane reflects on the meaning(lessness) of life (47). Instead of cuing readers to approach *Third* using the principle of maximal departure from the outset, O'Brien "uses the type of illusion associated with realism, slowly stretch[ing] the reader's suspensions of disbelief as the situations grow more bizarre" (Baines, "Un-Understandable" 81). Once readers begin to detach ourselves from the narrator's bewildered sense of the world, *Third*'s excessive verbosity becomes uproariously funny (and dark), instead of tediously illogical.

The narrator's lengthy and verbose account of attempting to discover the source of light in Mathers's house towards the end of the novel, for instance, is both hilariously comic and "unspeakably" "diabolical," as readers envision the narrator keeping watch on the light from one side of it for an extended period, all the while quietly tiptoeing backwards and springing "in almost one bound" into the next room in no more than "one quarter of a second," only to find it just as dark and deserted, though the light continues to merrily stream forth, now apparently from the other room (177-78). The policemen and the narrator's conversations, in particular, are humorous, as O'Brien slowly stretches out the consequences of Sergeant Pluck's Atomic Theory, which includes the

implications of unorthodox fornications between Gilhaney's blackguard bicycle and the blameless lady teacher, and hungry bicycles too clever to be caught stealing food.

> "You do not mean to say that these bicycles *eat food*?"
>
> "They were never seen doing it, nobody ever caught them with a mouthful of steak. All I know is that the food disappears."
>
> "What!"
>
> "It is not the first time I have noticed crumbs at the front wheels of some of these gentlemen."
>
> "All this is a great blow to me," I said. (89)

The conflict or tension between the policemen's logic-defying, de Selbian frames of understanding, and the narrator's (and readers') realist frames and trappings of scientific knowledge and philosophy, facilitate our sublime experience of the text. As Clissmann remarks, the policemen and de Selby take a fact about atomic theory or "the speed of light and, leaving out of consideration other important aspects, carr[y] it to a conclusion which is completely illogical but which has all the trappings of logic and as much detail as is necessary to confuse the issue completely" (164). The transition from the position of narrative audience to authorial audience allows readers to pass from the initial unsettling displeasure of *Third*'s seemingly random, wordy illogicalities to the pleasurable enjoyment of its infinite, dizzying world, testifying to the strength of O'Brien's lively imagination.

Unlike texts that foreground an aesthetics of play, in texts that participate in the aesthetics of the sublime such transitions do not help readers orientate or make better

sense of the textual world (it remains mysterious, inexplicable, and sublime as ever); yet when we begin to enjoy the policemen's absurd theories in all the glory of their (pseudo-)logical trappings, an important renegotiation of affect takes place. The tension between excessive verbosity and the inadequacy of words, between representation and the unpresentable, facilitates the sublime experience of the infinite textual world that constitutes the hellish Parish and its Eternity. While the knowledge that the narrator has been dead all along at the end of the novel offers a rudimentary explanation for the defamiliarized textual world (since the afterlife is a mystery and thereby a wholly imaginative realm), it does *not* help readers make this affective transition from displeasure to enjoyment; knowledge of the narrator's death thus lends understanding without necessarily allowing for an affective turn-around.

The sooner we break with the narrator's (and our own) realist frames of knowing or acquiring knowledge about the world as we read *Third*—that is, moving from the position of narrative audience to authorial audience—the sooner we begin to *enjoy* the infinite, incomprehensible dimensions of its textual world. This affective turn-around or renegotiation of affect is the task O'Brien ultimately invites his readers to participate in, in line with one of *Third*'s main thematic messages: that the quest for absolute knowledge or understanding is impossible, futile, and/or destined to fail. Thierry Robin suggests that O'Brien's postmodern awareness of the limits of language is evident in "the hollowness of all attempts" at depicting reality in *Third*, "be [they] performed at a scientific, literary, social, historical or purely linguistic level" ("Representation" 33). Booker likewise observes that "O'Brien's central theme" of "the futile efforts of science and philosophy to

describe the world through epistemological inquiry" in *Third* is as much a comment on "the futility of all human endeavors in the modern world" as it is "a parody of such commentaries" (*Menippean* 6-7). The aesthetic project at stake in *Third* is significantly different to the one in *At Swim*, since the readerly task prompted by *At Swim*'s textual design of orientating the chaotic textual world—such as attempting to make sense of the way time passes in *Third* or other de Selbian laws governing hell and its eternity—is doomed to futility here.[53] What we *can* do, is choose to enjoy the mad ride that is the afterlife.

"Hell goes round and round": Gestures toward infinity, eternity, and beyond

The non-orientable surface of *Third*'s Möbius strip-like world loops around when the narrator learns the truth about his posthumous status on the novel's antepenultimate page, to the moment 150 pages earlier when he first encounters the policemen's barracks, ominously implying the interminable circularity of his futile quest. "Circularity is an effective way of representing the fear of eternity" in *Third*, where hell is presented as "an estranged and slightly surreal version of Ireland" (Flor 72; Taaffe, *Ireland* 78). Critics such as Taaffe, Robin, and Mark O'Connell have noted that hell is disturbingly and "recognisably Irish," with its "garrulous country policemen and its regular and somewhat featureless landscape," but "also a parody of Irishness, unchangingly dotted with lonely fields, bogs and turfcutters" (O'Connell, "Eternity" 234-35; Taaffe, *Ireland* 78; Robin, "Representation" 42). "That this afterworld differs so little from everyday life in Ireland" is disquieting, especially since the novel "implies that something approximating rural

Ireland is in itself sufficient punishment for all eternity" (Booker, *Menippean* 148; Taaffe, *Ireland* 82). Booker adds that the motif of failure that informs postmodern Irish writing, as in the work of O'Brien and Beckett, "goes beyond mere artistic mask or fashionable twentieth-century pessimism and speaks directly to political realities in Ireland, a country whose history is fundamentally informed by futility" (*Menippean* 13).

O'Brien's response to such futility, however, is far from pessimistic. His parody of rural Ireland, of scientific method and philosophical inquiry, and other things besides, illustrates what Clissmann calls a quintessentially "Irish humour which depends for its effect on a close connection between the sublime and the ridiculous" (164). "In a very strong sense the sublime does indeed verge on the ridiculous," Shaw suggests, in that it continually gestures toward the "infinite when all the time it is drawing us closer to our actual material limits: [. . .] the encounter with lack, an encounter that is painful, cruel, and some would say comic" (*Sublime* 10). Consider, for instance, MacCruiskeen's painstaking process with his nested chests:

> He took a something from his pocket that was too small for me to see and started working with the tiny black thing on the table beside the bigger thing which was itself too small to be described.
>
> At this point I became afraid. What he was doing was no longer wonderful but terrible. [. . . .] When I saw the table it was bare only for the twenty-nine chest articles but through the agency of the glass I was in a position to report that he had two more out beside the last ones, the smallest of all being nearly half a size smaller than ordinary invisibility. [.

. . .]

"Six years ago they began to get invisible [. . .]. Nobody has ever seen the last five I made because no glass is strong enough to make them big enough to be regarded truly as the smallest things ever made. Nobody can see me making them because my little tools are invisible into the same bargain. The one I am making now is nearly as small as nothing. [. . . .] The dear knows where it will stop and terminate." (*Third* 70-74)

Not content merely to devise a world that stretches our imaginations with its insistence on absurd precision—where objects can be "nearly half a size smaller than ordinary invisibility" and silence has degrees of loudness and softness—the "illusion of wonder" in this "progressively infinitesimal sequence of perfect chests is exploded, with a classic move of Flannian absurdity, in the comic scene where the tiniest (and microscopic) chest is knocked to the floor" (Adams, "Butter-Spades" 115).[54] Genuine alarm and amusement attend our reading of the text as MacCruiskeen's ominous rage hovers over the narrator and Gilhaney, who crawl "feebly about the floor, peering and feeling for something that could not be felt or seen and that was really too small to be lost at all" (*Third* 113). We cannot help but agree ironically with Joe, his soul:

This is amusing. You are going to be hung for murdering a man you did not murder and now you will be shot for not finding a tiny thing that probably does not exist at all and which in any event you did not lose.

I deserve it all, I answered, for not being here at all, to quote the words of the Sergeant. (113)

This juxtaposition of "the humdrum and the sublime" (Adams, "Butter-Spades" 116-17) works because O'Brien keeps pushing the inexplicable to new and further limitlessness by interminably drawing out the process of these pseudo-scientific ideas that began "not very far from actuality" (Clissmann 169). Just as Gilhaney's sly act of pretending he had found the chest that could not be seen, felt, and "was really too small to be lost at all," seems to put a tidy finish to the unfortunate incident—even as readers take secret relief in the implication that the policeman's imperceptible and intangible chest may be an instance of the emperor's nonexistent new clothes after all—MacCruiskeen gets the last word: "'But by a rare chance he *did* accidentally close his hand on the chest and it was the chest and nothing else that he replaced in due course on the table.' There was some silence here" (*Third* 113-14).

Kant's mathematical sublime, Crowther explains, references "a *vast* object [that] overwhelms our perceptual and imaginative capacities. [. . . .] Indeed, our very inability to wholly assimilate it at the sensory level, makes the fact that we can thus assimilate it in rational terms all the more vivid. We come to *feel* the scope and superiority of our rational being" (*Contemporary Sublime* 11). In adapting Kant's mathematical sublime as a postmodern literary and aesthetic trope, the vastness of the natural object may be transposed to that which evokes the cognitively expansive or that which cannot be readily called to the mind's eye. The prime motif in *Third* that facilitates such sublime experience is O'Brien's use of *mise-en-abyme* or images of "infinite regress": bodies within bodies,[55] eyes within eyes,[56] mirrors within mirrors,[57] chests within chests, houses

within houses, and so on (*Third* 24; 118; 65; 70-74; 118; 182; Hopper, *Portrait* 79; 100; 115; 213; 220-21; Booker, *Menippean* 16; O'Toole 225).

Hopper notes that "the stark implication of the motif of infinite regress" finally begins to dawn on the narrator by chapter eight: "Was I in turn merely a link in a vast sequence of imponderable beings, the world I knew merely the interior of the being whose inner voice I myself was? Who or what was the core and what monster in what world was the final uncontained colossus? God? Nothing?" (*Portrait* 115; *Third* 118). By refusing solace in the knowledge of "the scope and superiority of our rational being," the sublime experience facilitated by postmodern fiction denies readers the knowledge of transcendence espoused by the Romantics; only cognizance of the infinite, unknowable deferral of self remains finally available to readers.

This unknowable instability of self extends to the texture of *Third*'s storyworld, which I argue is underpinned by a distinctly Schopenhauerian understanding of reality, whereby the world (or afterworld), as the narrator experiences it, is "the mere appearance of an underlying reality, structured by the subjectively valid forms of space, time, and causality" (Guyer, *Antiquity* 112). As Hopper explains, infinity is "the prime nonsense procedure of the text" (*Portrait* 215) and the narrator's encounters throughout the novel gradually stretch and ultimately destroy his subjectively-held forms of knowing the world through parameters such as space, time, and causality, via O'Brien's use of the infinite: escapades in eternity, for instance, which "has no size at all" and can be reached by going through a countryside "where it was always five o'clock in the afternoon" (*Third* 133; 96). It is the narrator's failure to discern this disconnect between appearance—his (and

readers') subjective sense of how the world works—and the underlying reality that hell and its eternity will not conform to these parameters of knowledge, that is ultimately the narrator's undoing.

The moment he and the reader realize the truth about *Third*'s underlying reality—that the narrator has been dead all along and the sublime experiences are part of his odyssey in the afterworld—the narrator is once again condemned to forgetting.

> I was dead for sixteen years. [. . . .] I do not know whether I was surprised at what he said, or even whether I believed him. My mind became quite empty, light, and felt as if it were very white in colour. [. . . .] My feet carried my nerveless body unbidden onwards for mile upon mile of rough cheerless road. My mind was completely void. I did not recall who I was, where I was or what my business was upon earth. [. . . .] There was a bend in the road and when I came round it an extraordinary spectacle was presented to me. (197-98)

In line with what might be called the narrator's punishment of being denied structures of meaning, understanding, and knowledge throughout *Third*, this knowledge of his "underlying reality" in the antepenultimate page of the novel is likewise rescinded or wrested from the narrator, as his mind becomes light, empty, and eventually completely void, as he once again resumes his terrifying eternal, repetitive quest of futility.

Ramazani suggests that Nietzsche's "notion of eternal recurrence is a covert version of the mathematical sublime, though [Nietzsche] would never admit such a debt to Kant": for "both Nietzsche and Kant, the intuition arrives suddenly; it comes from the

failure to constellate reality into higher and higher aggregates; it is an intuition not subject to empirical tests; and it is a revelation of the infinite that is at once empowering and terrifying" (*PMLA* 168). This sublime revelation of the infinite offered to the reader ultimately remains unavailable to the narrator, who embodies twentieth-century philosopher Santayana's sobering maxim that "[t]hose who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." *Third*'s tendency to infinitum is manifest in the overall shape of the novel's composition: as O'Brien remarks, "Hell goes round and round. In shape it is circular and by nature it is interminable, repetitive and very nearly unbearable" (*Third* 200). Though the novel loops back unto itself as the narrator is once again terrified by the "extraordinary spectacle" that is the constabulary (198-99; 52-53), in a typical postmodern subversion of the mathematical sublime, O'Brien once again playfully refuses readers the security of transcendent knowledge, of understanding exactly how eternal recurrence will play out, by adding Divney to the mix on the journey this time around.

Furthermore, as with the half-twist necessary to creating a Möbius strip, just as the novel is about to loop back into repetition, O'Brien slyly throws another twist into the mix: as the narrator wanders blankly out of Divney's house, he goes round to the front "to get my bicycle. It was gone" (197; strictly speaking, it is Sergeant Pluck's bicycle, with which the narrator eloped). The narrator's mind then eventually goes void as he reembarks on the "rough cheerless road" back to the constabulary, with no sense of destination or purpose. He is joined by Divney and enters the barracks, where he is once again greeted by Sergeant Pluck's terrifying mantra in the very final line of the novel:

"'Is it about a bicycle?' he asked." Whilst the question foreshadows Sergeant Pluck's morbid obsession with bicycles when we first encounter it on page 54, the repeated question at the end of the novel may disconcert the reader since, unbeknownst to the narrator (whose brain is already void), a lost bicycle has indeed precipitated the journey. The bicycle thrown into the mix thus gives readers pause since we are suddenly less certain of how accurate our previous narrative judgments of Sergeant Pluck have been, for his repeated question in the final line of the novel now ambiguously implies a (previously absent) transcendent knowledge of the events. Unlike the narrator condemned to forgetting, readers have the framing knowledge this time around that this is some sort of afterlife, hell, or eternity that we are dealing with in the textual world, but much remains uncertain and eludes our complete understanding, as O'Brien implies it well should.

Minimal conflict between the sense-drive and moral-drive

Philosophers in line with the tradition of the Kantian sublime, including Schiller, Lyotard, and others, conceive of the sublime as a conflict between "imagination and reason" (that is, the sense-drive and moral-drive), suggesting that the supersensible faculty of *reason* defines the sublime (Shaw, *Sublime* 6; Kant, *Critical Theory* 393; Schiller 182; Lyotard, *Sublime* 58; 109; 125; Prager 115; Gilbert-Rolfe, *BCS* 63; Derrida, "Parergon," *Sublime* 43). As previously explained, my account of what I call the postmodern literary sublime revises the binaries of the mathematical and dynamical sublime, and situates them in relation to increasing degrees of conflict between the sense-

and moral-drives as we move from the mathematical to the dynamical sublime. Unlike novels like McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* or Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow*, texts such as *Third* or Jorge Luis Borges's *The Book of Sand* only minimally engage the reader's moral-drive and are far more invested in engaging readers' sense-drive.

"If the bulk of the action takes place in a hellish afterlife, or at least an intellectual purgatory," Adams observes, "then *The Third Policeman* presents a curiously confusing hell in which inventiveness and verbosity pose greater dangers than any corporal punishment" ("Butter-Spades" 106-107). Shea in fact goes so far as to remark, "I doubt that O'Brien is even mildly interested in moral themes of crime and punishment" (120). Pointing to the moment of Mathers's murder, for instance, Shea notes that what "in a realistic novel might be a gruesome scene is here a comic vehicle for verbal play. The nonsense of 'celery' and 'scullery' diverts us from any serious contemplation of the characters' sin. Some critics, however, consider the fifth commandment written in stone and insist on a parochial point of view" (120).[58] Furthermore, Hugh Kenner observes that "the great Irish writers" like O'Brien and Beckett have always been able to regard the "human dilemma as essentially an epistemological, not an ethical, comedy" (*Third* xi; Booker, *Menippean* 9). Even the Sisyphean eternal recurrence of the narrator's punishment remains, in typical postmodernist fashion, an ambivalent moral lesson, since the narrator certainly does not retain the knowledge that this is hell and that he (and later, Divney also) are reaping the evil fruits of their greed, whether of wealth or of knowledge.

I think part of *Third*'s sublime effect relies precisely on the reader's sense of the moral. Knowing that the narrator committed a heinous crime and is suffering the poetic

justice of his actions in the infinitude of hell and its eternity potentially allows readers to feel much less guilty at enjoying the dizzying ride that is the afterlife, as we take O'Brien up on his implicit invitation to make an affective turn-around from the displeasure of the narrative audience's disorientation to the diverting pleasure the authorial audience derives from O'Brien's lively imagination. Though I certainly do not go so far as Shea to suggest that O'Brien is uninterested in moral themes of crime and punishment in *Third*, I am largely of the view that O'Brien uses sublime experience here to engage readers' moral-drive much more minimally as compared to *Third*'s engagement of our sense-drive. I suggest in part that the cognitive load demanded by the mathematical sublime—the necessity of attempting to assimilate magnitude or infinitude at the sensory level—is likely to be less conducive to sustained conflicts between the *imagination* (sense-drive) and *reason* (moral drive). As we move from the mathematical to the dynamical literary sublime, however, qualities associated with it (such as the tension between representation and the unrepresentable, limitlessness, and infinitude) foreground conflicts between the sense- and moral-drives more and more dominantly. McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, I suggest, is an exemplary instance of this sort of conflict operating at maximal levels.

Sublimity of Force: *Blood Meridian* and the Dynamical Sublime

Most, if not all, of McCarthy's novels manifest an abiding "interest in the violence which accompanies the clash of cultures along geographical and cultural borders" (Jarrett, *Cormac* 66). This preoccupation with violence culminates in a savage

climax with the publication of his fifth novel *Blood Meridian* in 1985. A rewriting and partial fictionalization of the events along the Texas-Mexico border between El Paso and Chihuahua city around the mid-nineteenth century, *Blood Meridian* is populated by "historically verifiable characters, places, and events, *though few of these correspondences are immediately apparent to the novel's reader*" (Sepich, *Notes* 1; emphasis added).[59]

I begin by outlining the range of critical frames that have been used to analyze *Blood Meridian* thus far, situating the novel not only in relation to the historical moment it depicts, but also in relation to its own historical moment of composition. McCarthy's literary style also receives extensive critical scrutiny and critics like Barcley Owens, Steven Shaviro, and Rick Wallach have designated *Blood Meridian* as "sublime realism" or written in "sublime prose style" (Owens, *Cormac* 54; 7; Shaviro, "Very" 153; Josyph, *Adventures* 109). Ronja Vieth likewise refers to the "play on the sublime effects of attraction and repulsion" in her discussion of the sublime in relation to the American Gothic (47; 51-53)—a conflict I engage with more fully below. I intersperse these analyses with my own to explain how *Blood Meridian* warrants the aesthetic judgment of being sublime, using McCarthy's novel to explicate characteristics I consider definitive of the literary sublime. Unlike these critics, however, I suggest that *Blood Meridian* also *complicates* existing understandings of the sublime and I use my parameters of a postmodern literary sublime—specifically the limitlessness it engenders, the tension between representation and the unpresentable, and McCarthy's implicit invitation to

renegotiate affect—to discuss how the sense- and moral-drives are at maximal conflict in this most devastatingly violent yet sublime work of fiction.

Critical readings of Blood Meridian*: Historical and Stylistic Evaluations*

Blood Meridian's fidelity to the conditions of the time, place, and historical persons it depicts, such as John Joel Glanton, has invited many critical discussions of the novel's engagement with issues of the period in which it is set, including "distinctively American themes" of "frontier Gothic," American Exceptionalism, the American dream and manifest destiny, colonial/imperial expansion, and racial domination (Jarrett, *Cormac* 74-75; Vieth 47; Masters, "Witness" 25; Owens, *Cormac* 7; Evans, "Second" 81; Cant, *Cormac* 5; 157; Shaviro, "Very" 146; Bowers, "Reading" 8-9; 46; Campbell, "Liberty" 221; Parrish, *Civil* 93; Shaw, "Evil" 209).[60] *Blood Meridian*'s "ubiquitous violence" is most often understood "as a demythologizing of the American West," as a "revisionist western" or the "postmodern form of the historical romance" which "challenges and critiques the once-popular view of the West as a place of romance and honor" (Peebles, "Yuman" 231; Jarrett, *Cormac* 69; Frye, *Cambridge* 109; Snyder, "Disappearance" 127; Snyder and Snyder, "Modernism" 31; 34).

Even this "revisionist reading," however, is beset with difficulty, in that "savagery is independent of race" in *Blood Meridian* and massacres are committed by Native Americans, African Americans, Anglo Americans, and Mexicans alike (Cant, *Cormac* 159; Owens, *Cormac* 38-39; Evans, "True West"). Owens notes that, unlike the New Western Historians, McCarthy, in parallel with many anthropologists and biologists,

weighs the scalphunters' deeds "against the evolutionary history of violence" instead of racial superiority, shifting *Blood Meridian*'s focus to "man's innate capacity for genocide" (*Cormac* 38-39). The novel is both a narrative about a distinctly "American violence" *and* a universal narrative about humankind's enduring propensity for violence (Jarrett, *Cormac* 88; Bowers, "Reading" 26; Evans, "Second" 81-82; Bloom, *How* 255; Parrish, "History" 68). Critics such as Owens, Stephen Frye, and Jonathan Imber Shaw note that *Blood Meridian* is not only a product of nineteenth-century violence in North America but also "a gloss on" the moment of its composition, including the cultural and political anxieties in the 1980s over U.S. foreign policy, the Cold War, and "America's global mission, which created deep divisions in the nation's populace"—most explicitly in "the Vietnam War, as well as Reaganite and post-Reaganite reactionary nationalism that culminated in the First Gulf War" (Shaw, "Evil" 209; Frye, *Cambridge* 109-11; Owens, *Cormac* xi; 31).

Blood Meridian's distinctively American tenor is further reinforced by its powerful (stylistic) resonances with the works of Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Herman Melville.[61] The novel's "impersonal narration" also recalls "the ancient styles, often biblical or epic" (Donoghue, *Practice* 275; Shaviro, "Very" 146; 153; Woodward, "Venomous"), and is best illustrated by McCarthy's "optical democracy": "In the neuter austerity of that terrain all phenomena were bequeathed a strange equality and no one thing nor spider nor stone nor blade of glass could put forth claim to precedence" (*Blood* 258-59). Numerous critics observe that this passage functions "as a kind of critical gloss" on McCarthy's stylistic technique, which "avoid[s] hierarchical

relationships" by privileging "coordination rather than subordination," such that man and nature are "on equal standing" and equally indifferent to each other in *Blood Meridian* (Snyder and Snyder, "Modernism" 33; Phillips, "Ugly Facts" 28-29; 33; Woodward, "Venomous"; Guillemin, "Melancholy" 243-44; 257-58; Andreasen, "Metaphysics" 23). The sparsely-punctuated, list-like quality of McCarthy's writing "makes each clause equal within the sentence," which "adds to this leveling effect," reflecting "a postmodern anti-hegemonic sensibility" (Snyder and Snyder, "Modernism" 34). Such insistent "optical democracy" may contribute to an uncomfortable sense that the novel appears to be "ethically bereft" (Josyph, *Adventures* 70), a point to which I return when I discuss the maximal conflict between the sense- and moral-drives later in this chapter.

The Sublime and Limitlessness

Blood Meridian engenders a sense of limitlessness in McCarthy's treatment of time as well as space. Where O'Brien chooses to stretch and ultimately violate readers' sense of spatiotemporal dimensions in *Third*, McCarthy's prose emphasizes perpetuity and the cosmic to foster readers' sense of infinitude. McCarthy continually coordinates *Blood Meridian*'s events against "celestial motions and divine plottings"—a gesture that invokes the cosmic in ways that resonate with the sublime's etymological root "from the Latin *sublimis* (elevated; lofty)" (Masters, "Witness" 34; Morley, *Sublime* 14). The novel opens with the image of the 1833 Leonids meteor shower, marking the kid's year of birth: "God how the stars did fall. I looked for blackness, holes in the heavens" (*Blood* 3). Such recurrent gestures toward the cosmic are evident in descriptions of how Sproule lets out a

"howl of such outrage as to stitch a caesura in the pulsebeat of the world" (69) and of how the Glanton gang seems "a patrol condemned to ride out some ancient curse" (157).[62]

Extradiegetic prolepses scattered throughout the novel—typically insinuations or bald-faced statements about how gang members will meet their end—such as the fatal conflict between "black and white Jacksons" (85; 96-97; 111-13) or the Vandiemenlander (92; 237),[63] alongside the chapter summaries or blurbs at the beginning of each chapter, give *Blood Meridian* a sense of prophetic doom that implies or is underpinned by a cosmic consciousness. Its cosmic quality is further reinforced by the sudden switches of verb tense that recur throughout the novel. Though McCarthy uses the present tense for the first three pages of the novel, most of *Blood Meridian* is set in the past tense with only occasional shifts. The interweaving of passages such as "[n]ow come days of begging, days of theft" (16) or "[f]or each fire is all fires, the first fire and the last ever to be" (255) gives the narration an ever-present quality, as though channeling an underlying cosmic consciousness. This sense of cosmic resonance is reinforced by the novel's ending, with the awful refrain of the judge's dance, of his being "a great favorite," and the ominous, repetitive chorus that he "never sleeps" and that "he'll never die" (348-49). The chilling celebratory refrain and the epilogue switch back to the present tense, keeping this violent chapter of U.S.-Mexican history alive and in the present, as something that readers need to continue to grapple with, rather than that which is known, dead, and buried in the past.

Readers' sense of the sublime and limitlessness are further evident in McCarthy's treatment of space and landscape.[64] Shaviro notes that *Blood Meridian* manifests "a sublime visionary power" in its epic scope, its cosmic resonance, and its obsession with open space, as McCarthy explores "vast uncharted distances with a fanatically patient minuteness" ("Very" 146).[65] Though the novel traces the scalphunters' historical journey "through real places like Ures, Chihuahua, and the Hueco tanks near El Paso," Stacey Peebles observes that "the landscapes that surround them are cosmic and otherworldly" ("Yuman" 235). Bernard Schopen observes that the open topography perpetuates a sense of "inexorable onwardness," stylistically reflected in the repetition of phrases such as "He went on," "They rode on," or the exhortation "to go on," but without a specific destination to ever ride *to* ("They Rode On" 188-89; McCarthy, *Blood* 47-48). Such gestures towards limitlessness are reinforced in the epilogue's final sentence—"Then they all move on again" (*Blood* 351)—facilitating a sense of cosmic open-endedness unto perpetuity ("They Rode On" 188-89).[66]

Vividly calling the novel's subtitle *The Evening Redness in the West* to mind, the scalphunters' bloody deeds are implied in the very landscape as the earth is "drained up into the sky at the edge of creation" to run like blood across the firmament (*Blood* 47). In *Blood Meridian*, the world "is a great stained altarstone," with a thirst that cannot be satisfied even by the "blood of a thousand Christs" (108)—the single man who in Christian understanding was sent for the redemption of all humankind. The chilling proportions of a bloodthirsty world—one in which readers are inescapably implicated, given the text's historical underpinnings—are vividly invoked as the entire world is

channeled into the single image of an altarstone, a grotesque inversion of the celebration of sacrifice with no possible hope of redemption.

The landscape echoes with a vivid sense of the cosmic in McCarthy's descriptions of the scalphunters' expeditions across the Southwest. Cholera survivors of Captain White's army, for instance, "lay quietly in that *cratered void* and watched the whitehot stars go rifling down the dark. Or slept with their alien hearts beating in the sand like pilgrims exhausted upon the face of *the planet Anareta*, clutched to a namelessness wheeling in the night" (47-48; emphasis added).[67] The cosmos becomes McCarthy's canvas for situating humankind and their deeds, as the scalphunters' insignificance is made apparent in comparison with the vastness of the landscape. To see the scalphunters as pilgrims exhausted upon the face of a planet of destruction or "migrants under a drifting star" with "the star spent reaches of the galaxies hung in a vast aura above" their heads (160) reminds readers time and again of the inconsequentiality of the human species and our deeds, even our most unremitting violence towards each other.

Cosmic indifference is further invoked in what Phillips calls the novel's "lack of human implication," whereby nature and humankind "are equally violent and indifferent to each other" ("Ugly Facts" 33; Andreasen, "Metaphysics" 23). Following the brutal slaughter of the peaceful Tiguas, readers are confronted with the awful reality that

> [i]n the days to come the frail black rebuses of blood in those sands would crack and break and drift away so that in the circuit of few suns all trace of the destruction of these people would be erased [. . . .] and there would be nothing, nor ghost nor scribe, to tell any pilgrim in his passing how it was

that people had lived in this place and in this place died. (*Blood* 182; see also p. 192)

Such inconsequentiality in the face of the perpetual destruction ultimately contributes to the conflict between readers' sense- and moral-drives in our response to McCarthy's work, as I go on to discuss in more detail. *Blood Meridian* itself, I suggest, works as a fictional historical testimony against such cosmic indifference and forgetting.

Events "take place with a circular or cyclical repetitiveness," whereby even historical figures such as Glanton or Angel Trias "are merely props for McCarthy's portrayal of history as the eternal return of violence" (Andreasen, "Metaphysics" 19; Parrish, *Civil* 85). The ubiquitous recurrence of violence gives the novel epic proportions that fail to be contained either by geographic space or by the passage of time, as implied by McCarthy's choice of epigraph from *The Yuma Daily Sun*, emphasizing the perpetuity of violence even across continents and the span of 300,000 years.[68] Judge Holden's terrible mantra of war—the "ultimate trade" awaiting humankind, "its ultimate practitioner" (*Blood* 259)—resounds throughout the novel in the unremitting historically-based violence with which readers are repeatedly confronted.

This cyclical sense of infinitude is also reinforced by the recurrence of meteors that the kid-turned-man observes, in his final vision of the open skies before encountering the judge in the jakes: "Stars were falling across the sky myriad and random, speeding along brief vectors from their origins in night to their destinies in dust and nothingness" (347). The kid's birth and end then are finally tied to the cosmic and to the fallen stars' destinies in dust and nothingness. This vivid sense of perpetuity is also reinforced in the

switch from past to present tense in the narration as the scene moves from the unwritten episode in the jakes back to the dance hall, where the judge's dance resonates with the rhythmic chant of a limitless diabolism, though it is not the person of the judge (who is inescapably human, however abhorrent the idea may seem) who will never sleep or never die, but all that he stands for: the insatiable human appetite for perpetual power over others and the endless, indefinite cycle of violence in a world doomed to eternal recurrence.[69]

Aestheticizing Violence: Tension between Representation and the Unpresentable

Though McCarthy's allusions to the cosmic, recurrence, and limitlessness in *Blood Meridian* reinforce existing understandings of the sublime, postmodern and contemporary fiction like *Third* and *Blood* also complicate such iterations of the sublime. Almost in defiance of the vastness that typically characterizes the experience of the mathematical sublime, O'Brien chooses to overwhelm readers' perceptual and imaginative capacities in the opposite direction, tending towards infinite regress, imperceptibility, and intangibility: for instance, with chests "nearly half a size smaller than ordinary invisibility" (what other kind of invisibility is there, we wonder?). Verbosity and garrulousness in *Third* only serve to emphasize the inadequacy of words for verbalizing the nameless narrator's extraordinary experience. *Blood Meridian*, on the other hand, subverts the traditional notion of a "lack" (in perceptual or imaginative terms) that attends the Kantian sublime—that is, the inadequacy of words in bringing experience to account—by reinvesting readers' faith in the representability and power of words to

vividly call experience to the mind's eye.[70] "In an age in which we have been made increasingly aware of the limits of language, of its inability to 'signify the real,'" *Blood Meridian* makes McCarthy's "profound love of language [and] his confidence in its ability to do what he wants it to" startlingly clear with his highly stylized and aestheticized renditions of violence (Cant, *Cormac* 3; Snyder and Snyder, "Modernism" 32).

Critics like Vereen Bell, John Cant, and Denis Donoghue suggest that McCarthy's "mastery of language" has an "eidetic" quality to it "that is photorealistic in its precision and yet charismatically rich and suggestive" (Cant, *Cormac* 3; 11; Donoghue, *Practice* 261). The scene most frequently referenced as a powerful instance of aestheticized violence is the one where the kid rides out with Captain White for the first (and last) time, against Comanche

> archers bearing shields bedight with bits of broken mirrorglass that cast a thousand unpieced suns against the eyes of their enemies. [. . .] half naked or clad in costumes attic or biblical or wardrobed out of a fevered dream with the skins of animals and silk finery and pieces of uniform still tracked with the blood of prior owners, coats of slain dragoons, frogged and braided cavalry jackets, one in a stovepipe hat and one with an umbrella and one in white stockings and a bloodstained weddingveil [. . .] and one in a pigeontailed coat worn backwards and otherwise naked and one in the armor of a Spanish conquistador, the breastplate and pauldrons deeply dented with old blows of mace or sabre done in another country by men

> whose very bones were dust [. . .] and all the horsemen's faces gaudy and grotesque with daubings like a company of mounted clowns, death hilarious, [. . .] screeching and yammering and clothed in smoke like those vaporous beings in regions beyond right knowing where the eye wanders and the lip jerks and drools.
>
> Oh my god, said the sergeant. (*Blood* 54-55)

McCarthy's lengthy sentence captures the chaos of the scene with painstaking, minute detail in the chaotic, incongruous mishmash of outfits and accessories that vividly invoke times, places, and peoples past, from the slain bride's wedding-veil to the "men whose very bones were dust."

Robert Jarrett points out that, from an aesthetic point of view, several of *Blood Meridian*'s most violent scenes "probably comprise the best writing in the novel" (75; 88). The sublime beauty of McCarthy's prose emerges from highly stylized but heterogeneous configurations of violence that fuel the sense-drive, which Schiller notes "desires change" and thrives on variation (*Aesthetical* "Letter XIII" 37). The violence is at times characterized by visual chaos and sensory overload—with "bits of broken mirrorglass that cast a thousand unpieced suns against the eyes" in the "fevered dream" of the Comanche attack (54-55)—but ephemeral and surrealistic at other points in the narrative. The dream-like confrontation with the Apaches in chapter nine, for instance, blends man and landscape, as the "thin frieze of mounted archers," "immense and chimeric," "trembled and veered in the rising heat," "like burnt phantoms" out of a "vanished sea," kicking up "spume that was not real," "shimmer[ing] and slurr[ing]

together" as they were "lost in the sun" and the lake (115). As the kid fires at them, they begin to "crumble in the serried planes of heat and to break up silently," vanishing and "dissolving in the [. . .] hallucinatory void" (115; 119).

At other times still, the highly contrived, almost theatrical, images of violence function like stylized, visual choreography. During the confrontation with the Chiricahuas, for instance, Glanton spins around to see his men "frozen in deadlock with the savages, they and their arms wired into a construction taut and fragile as those puzzles wherein the placement of each piece is predicated upon every other and they in turn so that none can move for bringing down the structure entire" (239). In another instance, when the Glanton gang arbitrarily decide to run a group of mercury-bearing muleteers off into an abyss, the animals drop "silently as martyrs, turning sedately in the empty air and exploding on the rocks below in startling bursts of blood and silver as the flasks broke open," and "small trembling satellites" of mercury race "in the stone arroyos," as though "some ultimate alchemic work" was being decocted in "the secret dark of the earth's heart" (203). The multifarious configurations of the remorseless, savage fireworks or choreographed friezes that pervade *Blood Meridian* attest to McCarthy's mastery of aesthetic technique—and facilitate a corresponding unease many critics and readers experience in the gratuitous spectatorship of violence in which we are thus implicated when reading the novel.

Most readers likely experience a sensory overdrive after 350 pages of unrelenting violence, as we are continually confronted by partially eaten human bodies (63; 189) and other corporeal desecrations that are wrenching in their intimacy. Our mind's eye is

forced to participate in co-constructing images of “eyes cooked in their sockets” (63) and sickening, gut-wrenching acts of scalping that recur throughout the novel (56).[71] The sensory overstimulation triggers readers’ “visceral revulsion” (Eddins 32; Attridge, “Once” 330), as the tension between the unpresentable or *unnarratable* (in this case, for reasons of decorum or taste) and McCarthy’s violent representations stem from his willful contravention of such implicit rules—in line with the sense-drive or imagination’s liberatory tendencies “to emancipate itself from all laws” (Schiller, *Aesthetical Letters* “The Pathetic” 84).[72]

Following the confrontation with the Comanches, Sproule and the kid come to a bush hanging “with dead babies. [. . . .] These small victims, seven, eight of them, had holes punched in their underjaws and were hung so by their throats from the broken stobs of a mesquite to stare eyeless at the naked sky. Bald and pale and bloated, larval to some unreckonable being” (*Blood* 60). The exactitude of McCarthy’s representation may cause readers to reel with sickening disgust, the recount and specialized diction (“stob” and “mesquite”) causing us to stumble momentarily as we are forced to dwell with the number of dead babies and the precision with which they are calculatedly hung from the tree.[73] The punctiliousness with which McCarthy lingers over the precise nature of how the infants are strung up, where each hole and string goes, is nauseating. Scrupulous in his description of not only the cruel method, McCarthy takes the reader’s mind’s eye over the infants’ bodies, moving our gaze from throat to eye socket to scalp, forcing us to confront the very corporeality of these babies in an excruciating fashion.[74]

Nor are such descriptions sporadic or infrequent. In another precise and relentless act of violence,

> one of the Delawares emerged from the smoke with a naked infant dangling in each hand and squatted at a ring of midden stones and swung them by the heels each in turn and bashed their heads against the stones so that the brains burst forth through the fontanel in a bloody spew and humans on fire came shrieking forth like berserkers and the riders hacked them down with their enormous knives and a young woman ran up and embraced the bloodied forefeet of Glanton's warhouse. (162)

The methodical, procedural deliberateness of McCarthy's descriptions—squatting, swinging, bashing, bursting forth, hacking, and the unexpectedly, almost tender gesture of embracing at the end (which emerges from what Derek Attridge has elsewhere called the use of a completely "different aesthetic register" ["Once" 336])—becomes so overwhelming that the authorial audience is frequently torn between staying with the scene/text and feeling compelled to avert our vision from the mental carnage, which simply becomes too much. McCarthy shows that words are more than adequate—perhaps too much so for many readers, who reel from the visions of exacting cruelty.[75]

In *Blood Meridian*, the dynamical sublime comes not from the inadequacy of words in calling experience to account, but from McCarthy's insistence on representing what some readers consider *should* perhaps be left *un*presented—especially in light of a readership that is constantly under threat of being desensitized by the carnage we frequently see on the television screens in our own living rooms, in both fictional and

non-fictional programs. Owens notes that *Blood Meridian* is "pure anoesis, sensation without understanding, devoid of ethical or mythic comfort" (*Cormac* 7). McCarthy thus reinvests in the representability of words but emphasizes language's capacity for sensuousness rather than understanding, engaging our sense- rather than form-drive. Furthermore, the "sensationalist aspect" of the contemporary sublime (Crowther, *Contemporary Sublime* 10-11), especially with regards to *Blood Meridian*'s use of such explicit and relentless violence, puts readers' sense- and moral-drives in conflict, as moral issues are inevitably foregrounded and exacerbated by the text's own strange dearth of ethical comment—compelling us to question the degree to which our acts of spectatorship in the process of reading become complicit with the monstrous deeds enacted.

Negotiating Affect: Maximal Conflict between the Sense- and Moral-drives

Schiller's version of the dynamical sublime (otherwise known as the "pathetically sublime") consists of two laws: "to represent suffering nature" *and* "to represent the resistance of morality opposed to suffering" (Schiller 77; Guyer, *Antiquity* 106). He proposes that suffering is depicted in sublime works of art *in order to* represent "moral freedom," in its "resistance to painful affections" or "the violence of feelings" (Schiller 75-77)—an impulse notably absent in both novels discussed in this chapter. In positing a postmodern literary sublime, I suggest that in sublime works of postmodern and contemporary fiction, Schiller's second law is deferred or transferred to the reader, such that negotiating the conflicting affective response that attends the sublime becomes the

role and means by which readers are (implicitly) invited to a more active engagement with the text. Postmodern texts participating in the aesthetic of the sublime stage this affective conflict in idiosyncratic ways, in line with their thematic concerns and overall textual design. *Third*, for instance, facilitates readers' abandoning of real-world cognitive frames of physics and philosophy, which inhibit the text's pleasurable nonsense. *Blood Meridian*, on the other hand, stages an affective conflict between aesthetic appreciation and ethical dissent, between beauty and violence, between nihilism and sense-making, and between *imagination* and *reason* (the sense- and moral-drives). I suggest that these tussles or continual oscillations between such dialectical energies are critical to our experience of the dynamical sublime in *Blood Meridian* and constitute the central readerly response McCarthy's prose invites readers to engage in.

Critics frequently emphasize *Blood Meridian*'s capacity for vividly engendering conflicting affective states, as evident in references to its "blood music" or the "difficult beauty" of McCarthy's prose (Josyph, *Adventures* 51; Donoghue, *Practice* 277).[76] Frye suggests that the novel is broadly "informed by the Burkean sublime" and Eddins reads it through a Schopenhauerian sublime, alternating "between awe at the sumptuous prose and the haunting vignettes[,] and visceral revulsion at the heinous atrocities unremittingly depicted in them" (Frye, *Cambridge* 109; 117; Eddins 32). Several interrelated issues drive the conflict between the sense- and moral-drives. The first has to do with McCarthy's highly stylized prose in its aestheticizations of violence: Donoghue's experience of reading and teaching the novel entails an acute awareness of the difficulties of speaking of *Blood Meridian*'s "language, form, style, and tone without appearing

decadent [and] ethically irresponsible" (*Practice* 258)—a struggle I have myself experienced in the process of writing about and teaching the novel.

Second, *Blood Meridian* is a troubling book because it has the appearance of being "ethically bereft,"[77] in the conspicuous absence of ethical comment or judgment that pervades the text (Josyph, *Adventures* 70). The novel's lack of ethical commentary is further reinforced stylistically, by the distance at which the narration holds us: readers are given very limited access to characters' minds or inner lives and all is treated with the same "thoroughly dispassionate" equanimity (Phillips, "Ugly Facts" 35-37). This narratorial distance, as mentioned previously, is fortified by McCarthy's use of the cosmic to foster readers' sense of infinitude. That the novel is driven by historically-based sources only serves to make such refusal to engage in moral conversations even more disturbing; thus critics like Holmberg and Shaviro note that "*Blood Meridian* seems to have nothing to do with actively righting the wrongs of history," since readers "are called to no responsibility" (Holmberg, "Nomenclature" 141; Shaviro, "Very" 148).[78]

My proposal of a postmodern literary dynamical sublime—which posits the reader's active role in resisting *Blood Meridian*'s explicit representations of suffering—pushes back against such judgments. Instead, I argue that the novel itself is an act of fictionalized historical testimony in which readers are called to the responsibility of *exercising* our moral freedom, in both senses of the word: the use/application of our *practical reason* (i.e. our concern with moral law as we grapple with the atrocities represented) and the fictional text as a means of training and stretching such capacities for ethical response. Like Frye and Donoghue, I consider McCarthy's refusal to pass

ethical comment to be an ethical stance in and of itself—and one that requires no mean aesthetic feat (Donoghue, *Practice* 259; Frye, *Cambridge* 108).[79] The usual catharsis associated with poetic justice, for instance, fails to resonate here.

One of the Delawares, earlier shown to be responsible for the brutal mutilation of an infant in each hand, meets his own grisly end along with numerous fellow scalphunters, head hanging “downward from the limbs of a fireblacked paloverde tree. They were skewered through the cords of their heels with sharpened shuttles of green wood and they hung gray and naked above the dead ashes of the coals where they’d been roasted until their heads had charred and the brains bubbled in the skulls and steam sang from their noseholes” (*Blood* 162; 237). The bubbling brains and singing steam are clearly meant to resonate with his own earlier act of bashing the infants’ “heads against the stones so that the brains burst forth through the fontanel in a bloody spew” (162), yet readers will likely find it nauseatingly difficult to rejoice in the implicit act of poetic justice—only a further sickening sensation registers, in the face of such unrelenting exactitude about the gory violence. Our sense- and moral-drives are at maximal conflict as readers struggle with the excessive violence that marks the potential act of terrible poetic justice, unsettled by the sense that there is something terribly wrong with it all.

McCarthy’s deliberate orchestration of such gut-wrenching scenes of apparent poetic justice, combined with his withholding of any certainty of ethical judgment by refusing to attribute causality, forces the reader to confront the meanings of such terrible violence over and over again, against aggressors and innocents alike. The ethical implications of *Blood Meridian*’s atrocities are therefore foregrounded by the absence of

ethical commentary, which Frye suggests is evidence not of "an impoverished moral vision" but the use of aesthetic means that "makes ethical considerations unavoidable" (*Cambridge* 115). Readers' own (rudimentary) attempts at meaning-making, and the struggle between our sense- and moral-drives, are very much the ethical point of *Blood Meridian*.

Blood Meridian's textual design stages the conflict between the sense- and moral-drives in two distinct ways: first, in the refusal to allow the value and meaning of violence to be assimilated to the *understanding*, which some historians and critics rightly identify as a type of violence in and of itself;[80] second, in confronting the possibility of the fundamental nonrationality of the world, especially in an age of increasing secularity and agnosticism in certain cultures and regions.

In order to work against the consumption of historical violence as objects of knowledge, understood and settled once and for all, historians and critical theorists have "sought to guard critical thought against transforming painful and traumatic histories into a field of enjoyment" (Hooker, *Contemporary Sublime* 51; Shaw, *Sublime* 128; Slade, "*Antigone*" 90).[81] Dominick LaCapra, for instance, "sees the aesthetic of the sublime, as theorized by Jean-François Lyotard and Slavoj Žižek, as an effort to transform the violent and traumatic histories of the twentieth century into sacred objects that can comfort us through their aesthetic value" (Slade, "*Antigone*" 90). However, *Blood Meridian* seems to work against such a model; in this novel, the aestheticization of violence serves to disconcert rather than comfort us.

Slade notes that “sublime figurations avoid complicity with repetitions of terror and death by refusing to pass from feeling to knowledge” (*Lyotard* 90). McCarthy’s act of withholding ostensible ethical judgment in *Blood Meridian* “short-circuit[s] easy assimilation” (Hooker, *Contemporary Sublime* 51) and works against readers’ consumption of *Blood Meridian*’s terrible violence as a tidy object of historical knowledge. Readers’ struggles with their conflicting sense- and moral-drives prevent the novel’s historically-based violence from passing from feeling to knowledge, by sustaining the dynamic oscillation between ethical revulsion at the aestheticized violence and aesthetic appreciation of the novel’s landscapes of sublime beauty and orchestration of assorted aesthetic registers, in ways that ultimately remain troubling and unresolved. Negotiating this affective conflict becomes the central readerly task McCarthy ultimately invites his readers to undertake. As George Guillemin remarks, “McCarthy’s fiction belongs to what Roland Barthes designated ‘writerly’ (as opposed to ‘readerly’) literature, the meaning of his writings being dependent on what we make of them and their epidemic destructiveness” (“Melancholy” 262).

I suggest that this active co-construction of meaning in which twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature invites readers to participate constitutes the dominant shift in updating our understanding of aesthetic paradigms in the present moment (see also pp. 5; 8; 10; 13 of this MS). In part one, I showed that texts demonstrating an aesthetics of play partially shift the onus of co-constructing formal coherence and meaning onto readers—that is, in relation to the tensions between the form- and sense-drives (see pp. 24 and 95-98 of this MS); here, I suggest that that texts exemplifying an aesthetics of the

sublime likewise invite readers to participate in meaning-making vis-à-vis our renegotiations of affective and ethical implications—that is, in relation to the tensions between the sense- and moral-drives. This active readerly co-construction of meaning is thus foregrounded in many works of post-war fiction.

A second function of the sublime in *Blood Meridian* is its implication of the world's non-rationality: Guyer notes that "if we take the Dionysian as Nietzsche's version of the sublime, then Nietzsche has radically reconceived the experience of the sublime as an intimation of the fundamental nonrationality of existence, rather than its rationality" (*Antiquity* 115). Anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes observes that "the one thing humans seem unable to accept is the idea that the world may be deficient in meaning" (qtd. in Dickson and Romanets 19). This non-rationality certainly seems to be the position implied both by *Blood Meridian* and by McCarthy's remarks in an interview that there is "no such thing as life without bloodshed" and "the notion that the species can be improved in some way, that everyone could live in harmony, is a really dangerous idea" ("Venomous"). Many readers struggle with *Blood Meridian* partly because we want the terrible violence to mean something at the end—such as condemnation of racism, for instance—but McCarthy offers the chilling alternative that there may be no such compensatory significance, or at least that vindication or meaning is not his to offer. *Blood Meridian* seems to imply that the only available ethical move is one that is up to the reader to make, not McCarthy. In so doing, McCarthy ensures that the literary art object itself does not pass from feeling into knowledge; the move from feeling to knowledge, from nihilism to meaning-making, is ours to make—and the corresponding

responsibility that comes with this knowledge, the responsibility for co-building a better world, the reader's as well.

Conclusion

In a recent collection of essays that deals with the subject of the sublime topically, through categories such as the unpresentable, transcendence, technology, terror, the uncanny, and so on, Simon Morley observes that "[u]ltimately, the sublime is an experience looking for a context. In the pre-modern period, this context was mostly provided by religion. [. . . .] more recently, [by] spectacle and the mass media [. . . .]. The sublime is an experience that can serve many interests; it is now for us to decide what it holds for the future" (*Sublime* 21). Morley's remarks point to an idea that underlies my larger claim in this study, which is that though certain aesthetic categories and/or terminology fall in and out of critical favor, the experience that underpins these categories remains pertinent and integral to our encounter with the (literary) art object—even if the models used to describe and explain such experiences may at times be in need of updating or further finessing.[82] Accordingly, aesthetic evaluations of literature serve not only to account for authors' artistic strategies, as informed by the novel's broader situational and historical contexts, but also to illuminate the frequently shared or common affective experience of reading.

Though theorists tend to advocate that "no determinable concept" or "single figure or trope" will stand "as a definitive example of the sublime" (Lyotard, *Sublime* 59;

Shaw, *Sublime* 47), that has not stopped others, including myself, from attempting to find ways to articulate the distinctive experience of the sublime, as evident from the re-emergence of critical interest in the concept in the eighteenth and again in the twentieth century. My own attempt has involved using two very diverse texts to demonstrate the range and rich complexities that characterize the spectrum of the sublime, while also positing several key attributes I consider to be definitive of a (postmodern) literary sublime, namely: limitlessness and the infinite, the unresolved tension between representation and the unpresentable, and the process of negotiating the conflicting affective states idiosyncratically staged in a given work depending on its thematic and aesthetic concerns.

Other approaches to studying the sublime include categorical ones, as in Morley's collection of essays. In his analysis of Yeats' poetry, Jahan Ramazani also suggests that the category of death is an "occasion of the sublime": in a variety of guises and names, "death precipitates the emotional turning called the sublime" and is the "recurrent obsession" for theorists "from Longinus to Heidegger and Bloom" (*PMLA* 173-74; 164). Ramazani observes that death is Longinus's "organizing trope," and drawing on Hertz, Weiskel, and Heidegger, he interprets the sublime as "a *staged* confrontation," an "ecstatic encounter with death" (164). Since the sublime is predominantly concerned with the unpresentable (including that which remains ultimately unknowable), it seems inextricably linked to death. The play with the posthumous in *Lanark*, *Third*, and other postmodernist texts makes the relationship between death and the sublime a potential avenue of further study, especially in light of McHale's remark that "postmodernist

fiction is *about* death in a way that other writing, of other periods, is not. Indeed, insofar as postmodernist fiction foregrounds ontological themes and ontological structure, we might say that it is *always* about death" (*Postmodernist Fiction* 231). More generally, future productive explorations of the (literary) sublime may possibly be undertaken to examine particular literary tropes closely associated with the sublime and/or their relationships to the unknowable.

Though the sublime has traditionally been underpinned by its relation to the moral-drive, Schiller rightly notes that the "praiseworthy object of pursuing everywhere moral good as the supreme aim" has already "brought forth in art so much mediocrity" (181). "If it is the aim that is moral, art loses all that by which it is powerful,—I mean its freedom, and that which gives it so much influence over us—the charm of pleasure" (181). By positing the (postmodern) literary sublime as principally driven by the sense-drive/*imagination*, in increasing degrees of conflict with the moral-drive/*reason* as we move from the mathematical to the dynamical sublime, my revised proposal foregrounds the *active* exercise of readers' moral freedom in its resistance to representations of suffering and more effectively accounts for readers' sublime experience of the literary art object. *Imagination* survives the violence done to itself and the sublime finally accomplishes the awakening of the moral-drive or *practical reason* only indirectly, in its conflict with the sense-drive. Art's autonomy thus takes on a new dimension in the aesthetic practices of twentieth and twenty-first century novelists, whose orchestrations of the sublime invite readers to participate in these always unfinished acts of meaning-making.

Chapter Four An Aesthetics of Muted Beauty

"To feel beauty is a better thing than

to understand how we come to feel it."

(George Santayana, The Sense of Beauty*)*

In contemporary works such as Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1979), Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985/1988), J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999), John Banville's *The Sea* (2005), Ian McEwan's *On Chesil Beach* (2007), and Julian Barnes's *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), amongst others, we witness a (re)turn to fragmentary or incongruous beauty. A key issue in these texts is how literature might reconcile the brokenness of human experience with the phenomenon or quality of beauty, especially given the historical moment in which we live—by which I mean not only the radical skepticism that characterizes the postmodern period and the loss of faith in grand narratives, including those associated with the quality or experience of beauty, but also the constant exposure to violence enabled by our media and new media technologies.

More than at any other point in history, thanks to the advent of the Internet and the proliferation of media technologies, humankind is more aware and informed of the atrocities happening across the planet. While violence around the world may or may not have grown, the immediacy of our awareness of violence and our ability to access it

quickly and intimately (through the journalist's camera lens, for instance) certainly has. Such weighty knowledge finds its way (insidiously or otherwise) into literary creation,[83] as contemporary aesthetic theorists like Danto, Shusterman, George Dickie, and Pierre Bourdieu affirm; these theorists all argue that the "artworld" or, more broadly, the systems and conditions under which literature and the other arts come into being, should bear on our evaluation of texts. Authors, however, deal with these conditions in very different ways: some, like Cormac McCarthy, juxtapose beauty with impossibly violent imagery to create sublime works of literature; others, like Kazuo Ishiguro, imagine a terrifyingly plausible and futuristic world (set, paradoxically, in recent history) through a very muted sort of beauty.

Galen Johnson argues that "it is a serious loss for philosophical thought, our lives with others, and our openness to the world and nature that throughout the twentieth century beauty has been a nearly completely neglected idea. Nevertheless, this very philosophical trope must itself be worked and reconfigured in an altered cultural climate" (*Retrieval* xviii). As I explain in the introduction (see pp. 5-7 of this MS), by reworking Kant's and Schiller's definitions of beauty, my revised theoretical framework accounts for both the formal and the moral modes of ordering associated with experiences of beauty. I suggest that twentieth and twenty-first century fiction manifests the aesthetic category of the beautiful in at least two distinct ways: my first case study, Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992), deals with a more traditional conception of beauty as the harmony of the form- and sense-drives, while the second, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), complicates that classical understanding of beauty by

foregrounding both harmony *and* tension between the form- and moral-drives. I ultimately suggest that beauty is grounded in the form-drive, variously engaged with the other two drives. By rooting beauty in the form-drive and the sublime in the moral-drive, I also reinforce the distinction that theorists like Burke and Kant have made between the two aesthetic emotions—a contrast that has gained neurobiological corroboration in recent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) experiments.[84]

Santayana notes that we might approach the subject of beauty didactically, historically, psychologically, or theoretically; more recent approaches include considering perspectives from ecology, evolutionary psychology, and neuroaesthetics. Since I am interested in proposing a concept of literary beauty in relation to other aesthetic categories I perceive as being most relevant to twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction, I keep my review of these various approaches to beauty grounded in the form-drive or in relation to formal matters. (I suggest that there is no singular or definitive theory of the beautiful; what makes beauty such an elusive and, consequently, fascinating subject of sustained scholarly inquiry for philosophers, aestheticians, and writers across millennia, is in part related to beauty's polysemy and dynamism.)[85] I suggest that readers are likely to discern beauty in one of two ways: the experience of beauty as *local* moments or apprehending beauty in the work's *global* form. By discussing the cluster of features gleaned from multiple aesthetic traditions, in conjunction with my two case studies, I outline an aesthetics of literary beauty in post-war fiction.

Theorizing Beauty

The third-century Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus remarks that the experience of beauty is attended by "astonishment, and a sweet shock, and longing, and erotic thrill, and a feeling of being overwhelmed with pleasure" (*Aesthetics*, "Ennead I, iv" 59). Of these affects, pleasure has received the most sustained treatment in contemporary aesthetics (Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* 12-13; Shusterman 29; Nehamas, *Promise* 24-25).[86] Danto, in fact, suggests that the resurgence of interest in beauty in the final decade of the twentieth century was in part so exciting because "beauty was proxy for something that had almost disappeared from most of one's encounters with art, namely enjoyment and pleasure" ("Boxes" 61).

One of the key developments in scholars' understanding of the relationship between beauty and pleasure comes from the contribution of neuroaesthetics: using fMRI studies to investigate neural correlates of beauty, Hideaki Kawabata and Semir Zeki found "an activation of the brain's reward system with a certain intensity" (Aldama and Hogan, *Conversations* 120). Jean-Pierre Changeux notes that reward neurons are crucial to evolution as "the genetic memory of successful positive or negative experiences from the phylogenetic history" in evaluating the consequences of our actions on the environment, thus enabling an organism to maximize its experiences for reward or punishment (*Good* 56-57). The desire to repeat or return to the experience of the beautiful[87] in order to maximize such rewards, likely bears out what many of us

encounter in our experiences of artistic beauty—a feature Étienne Gilson identifies as a quality of beauty's *radiance* (Gilson, *Arts* 35; Johnson, *Retrieval* 170).[88]

An important characteristic that has persistently been attributed to beauty throughout the millennia across a variety of cultures, countries, and aesthetic traditions but has received relatively scant attention is beauty's dialectical nature (see Santayana, *Sense* §43; Calvino, *Six Memos* 15; Turner, *Beauty* 4; Johnson, *Retrieval* 169; 174; 145), which has regained emphasis from the twentieth century forward, particularly in light of interest in Nietzschean philosophy and the significance of the Marxist dialectical method.[89] From the ancient Greeks down to the Renaissance, when the "Grand Theory" of beauty (consisting in proportion of the parts) reached its zenith, Eco notes that there were simultaneously "centrifugal forces whose thrust was toward a disquieting, nebulous, and surprising Beauty"—a dialectical tension that reflects the fragile and transient equilibrium of its historical moment (*History* 214; 216). This emphasis on beauty's dialecticism was taken up in the eighteenth century by the British writer and painter William Hogarth (1753), who identifies fundamental principles—including *variety* and *uniformity*, and *simplicity* and *intricacy*—which "co-operate in the production of beauty, mutually correcting and restraining each other" (Davis, "Introduction"; Hogarth, *Analysis* 12).

The concern with beauty's dialectical energies is likewise evident in the German aesthetic tradition. Kant and Schiller conceived of beauty as a harmony between the liberatory energies of the imagination/sense-drive and the ordering qualities of the form- and/or moral-drives. "The [German] Romantics—particularly Novalis and Friedrich

Hölderlin—were not looking for a static and harmonious Beauty, but a dynamic one, in the process of becoming" (Eco, *History* 315). Nietzsche (1872/1886) most famously pointed to the unresolved antithesis inherited from the Greek concept of beauty, between the *Apollonian* (understood in terms of "[s]erene harmony," "order and measure") and the *Dionysian* (a chaotic, "joyous and dangerous" beauty that breaches all rules) (Nietzsche, *Aesthetics*, "Birth" 222; Eco, *History* 53-55; 58).

Twentieth-century American philosophers have also pointed to this dynamic, dialectical tension that underlies artistic forms more generally: from a pragmatist stance, Dewey (1934) "repeatedly insists that [. . . .] the permanence of experienced unity is not only impossible, it is aesthetically undesirable; for art requires the challenge of tension and disruptive novelty and the rhythmic struggle of achievement and breakdown of order" (Shusterman 32). Susanne Langer (1953) remarks on this dialecticism in terms of emotional structures: "the power of artistic forms to be emotionally ambivalent springs from the fact that emotional opposites—joy and grief, desire and fear, and so forth—are often very similar in their dynamic structure, and reminiscent of each other" (*Feeling* 242). Echoing Hogarth's dialectical principles from an evolutionary approach, Dutton (2010) too points to the "unity in diversity" that undergirds the traditional aesthetic notion of organic unity (*Art Instinct* 52). From this perspective, Kant's account of beauty as the harmony between the dialectical energies of the freewheeling imagination/sense-drive and the ordering impulses of the understanding/form-drive can be viewed as a heuristic structure that has become ever more relevant to considering the issue of

complex or difficult modes of literary beauty in twentieth- and twenty-first-century fiction.

In positing a framework for studying an aesthetics of literary beauty, I suggest that readers are likely to experience either *local* moments of beauty or apprehend a *global* "architecture of the beautiful" in the work's formal shape/structure (Johnson, *Retrieval* 145).[90] At the level of local, individual instances of beauty, apart from the attendant aesthetic emotions discussed earlier that typically indicate its presence, the "difficult work of engaging a text on its own (uniquely complex) aesthetic terms" makes it challenging to establish any sort of rigorous model that does not simply end up being "a parody that fails to have any explanatory power when confronted with any specific art object picked at random" (Beach, *Beauty* 101; Adorno, *Beauty*, "Concept" 78). I shall nonetheless draw on insights from critical discussions of the subject to propose readings of Winterson's and Ishiguro's novels that suggest strategies for elucidating instances of local beauty.

Beauty may be manifest in stylistic expression, individual episodes, artful characterization, and innumerable other local aspects of narrative structure. *Written* is particularly notable for its artful use of literary/poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance, repetition, rhyme, and so on, which emphasize the lyricality of Winterson's prose and its aural pleasure. As with other aesthetic categories discussed in this project, however, the aesthetic emotions that attend one's personal experience of the prose necessarily grounds recognition of these local moments of beauty (Bell, *Aesthetics*, "Art" 262-263; Carroll, *Philosophy* 158; Nehamas, *Promise* 78-79), such that the mere presence

of these devices does not automatically mark a passage of prose as an instance of beauty. Authors like Winterson also tend to favor the rich multiplicity of wordplay in their use of linguistic devices such as homonyms, given the polysemy and dynamism that typically attends our experience of beauty.

In his book *On Eloquence*, Donoghue explores numerous exquisite modes of literary beauty, three of which are most relevant to my analysis in this chapter; these local instances, I suggest, also relate (loosely) to beauty's dialecticism and its quality of surprise. The first type of eloquence "comes in flashes, sometimes in a phrase or two," sometimes breaking "forth in a single word"; they are "*sudden* gestures, flares of spirit, words *breaking free from every expectation*, *audacities* of diction and syntax" (19-20; emphases added).[91] Another is an "eloquence of situation," which "issue[s] from something memorably done," whereby "the words don't matter" and "could easily have been replaced by different ones: what matters is the *gesture,* the little *unpredictable* thing done" (62-63; emphases added).[92] The third is an eloquence of the unsaid or of something "almost being said" that implicitly "allude[s] to larger contexts" readers expect to be told of, but which remain mutely unarticulated or only hinted at (70).[93]

Despite being very different types of eloquence—one pivoting on locution, the other heedless of it, and the third implying an absent utterance—all three depend on the dialectical harmony between the expected syntax/diction/development of events and the pleasurable violation of expectancy that attends our experience of beauty, that is, between the order of the form-drive and the liberatory energies of the sense-drive. Frederick Turner remarks that this "necessary element of pure surprise" is paradoxically "followed

by a realization of the appropriateness, the necessity," the fitness, "even the inevitability of the surprising element" (*Beauty* 4). The quality of surprise, which has been translated from Plotinus's *Enneads* as "astonishment," is one that writers and philosophers return to repeatedly (*Aesthetics*, "Ennead I, iv" 59; Schjeldahl, *Uncontrollable* 53). Dutton further identifies art's "capacity to surprise its audience" as one of numerous characteristics found cross-culturally in the arts (*Art Instinct* 51; 54).[94]

Apart from (relatively autonomous) *local* moments, an alternate though related mode of discerning literary beauty lies in readers' recognitions, perceptions, and/or determinations of authors' skillful fashioning of the text's complex configurations in relation to *global form*/shape/architecture (Schelling, *Aesthetics*, "Philosophy" 174-75; Bell, *Aesthetics*, "Art" 262-63; Shusterman 92; Aldama and Hogan, *Conversations* 116-18). The earliest considerations of global form may be traced to the ancient Greeks who emphasized "the correspondence between Form and Beauty" in terms of "conceptual formalisms such as order, symmetry and proportion," which were taken as objective standards of beauty that persisted throughout the Renaissance and beyond" (Eco, *History* 61; Benezra, Viso, and Danto 87; Plotinus, *Aesthetics*, "Ennead I, iv"; "Ennead I, vi"; Gilson, *Arts* 31).[95] Philosophers and writers such as the Third Earl of Shaftesbury (1711), Kant (1790), Santayana (1896), and Clive Bell (1913), amongst others, continued to explicate ancient Greek as well as Hellenistic understandings of beauty in various ways, emphasizing formal elements of design, composition, unity, and the relation of elements to each other (Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Aesthetics*, "Characteristics" 80; Kant, *Aesthetics*, "Critique" 139; Santayana, *Sense* §17; §36; Bell, *Art* 13).

Shusterman rightly points out, however, that such notions of organic unity have been "radically challenged by recent developments in postmodern art and aesthetics" as "a repressively rigid ideal which stifles creativity and formal experiment, and can induce in us an overly facile and complacent sense of harmony in the world" (63)—an awareness that has been radically foregrounded by the perception of violence and rupture that characterizes the post-war world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is precisely in light of these challenges that the issue of how we are to understand the form-drive and its role in making aesthetic sense of (literary) art becomes pertinent for the analysis of post-war fiction. Our ability to sort and make sense of data—impulses of the form-drive—is an evermore crucial cognitive skill in the present age, not only for processing aesthetic experiences of art but also for attending to the informational glut of everyday life and experience. Adorno, in fact, emphasizes this dimension of aesthetic appreciation in the twentieth century: "Less and less does the beautiful actualize itself in a particular purified shape; more and more does it manifest itself in the dynamic totality of the work of art," in what Shusterman terms "complex forms of coherence" (Adorno, *Beauty*, "Concept" 80; Shusterman 75-77).[96]

In Part I, I suggested that discerning the shape of textual worlds is part of the (game-)task readers engage in when reading playful postmodern fiction, and proposed the use of Ryan's possible-worlds theory as a way of determining the global forms and structures of O'Brien's and Gray's textual worlds. Here, I suggest that global forms may be perceived in formal aspects of fitness or proportion (parts in relation to the whole), unity, coherence, harmony, pattern, and what neuroscientist V. S. Ramachandran

identifies as “universal laws of aesthetics”: the interrelated principles of *grouping*, *orderliness*, and *symmetry* (*Brain* 199).[97] By combining Kantian and Deweyan approaches to aesthetics, the “principle of interpretive holism” and other impulses of the form-drive are thus pragmatically justified “as a strategy of reading” (Shusterman 75-77).

Written on the Body: Harmony between the form- and sense-drives

In *Written on the Body*, a homodiegetic (more specifically, autodiegetic) narrator of uncertain gender recounts his/her love affair with a married woman named Louise. Midway into the novel, the narrator interpolates his/her anatomical annotations of the/Louise’s body—cells, cavities, skin, skeleton, and so on—as a way of coming to terms with Louise’s leukemia and his/her decision to leave her, before eventually repenting of this decision and setting out in search of her in the final section of the book. Winterson creates a rich palimpsestic effect in the novel through her manipulations of frequency and order, in Genette’s sense of those terms. Not only does the narrator interpolate “the story s/he is telling about the beloved Louise with other past affairs,” creating the effect of intercalated narration that continually oscillates backward and forward in time where “the narrating and the experiencing [‘I’] alternate”; what is more, these deliberate distortions in chronology are foregrounded as the narrator first thinks back to “a certain September,” then “a hot August Sunday,” followed by “the wettest June on record” (Farwell, *Heterosexual* 187; Fludernik, “Time in Narrative” 610; *Written* 9; 10; 20).

Such chaotic, Dionysiac[98] tendencies of the sense-drive in the presentation of time are countered by the use of repetitive telling, which establishes a poetic order (foregrounding the form-drive), as the narrator turns his/her memories of Louise's remarks into refrains that resound throughout the novel.[99] The repetitions, "You said, 'I'm going to leave. [. . . .] I love you and my love for you makes any other life a lie'" (18-19; 98), "I will never let you go" (69; 76; 96; 163), and "It's the clichés that cause the trouble" (10; 155; 189), cycle the narrative back to specific moments in the narrator and Louise's relationship over and over again, turning time and memory into rich palimpsests, as the narrator tries "to find the place to go back to where things went wrong. Where I went wrong" (17). These repetitions resonate ominously at times, such as the haunting note the narrator leaves for Louise, which echoes the note s/he finds written "five years earlier" by a friend killed in a road accident, arranging to meet her/him in the café, asking "you'll be there won't you, won't you?" (155; 181)—a refrain that adds to the ambiguity of whether Louise really does return at the end of the novel.[100]

Though *Written* was Winterson's "first international success" to reach "millions of readers in translation," ironically, it was also the text in which the tide of reviews and criticism "turned against Winterson and her work" (Kostkowska, *Ecocriticism* 57; Finney, "Bonded" 23; Ellam, *Love* 105; Stowers, "Erupting" 89; Winterson and Andermahr, *Jeanette* 155; Makinen, *Novels* 119; Pearce, "Emotional" 29-40).[101] Critics have judged the novel deficient on several counts (while others have risen to its defense): first, the narrator-protagonist's uncertain gender has been considered a flimsy "gimmick"; second, the narrator's "invasive" appropriation of Louise through his/her

anatomical annotations, especially in the aestheticization of her leukemia, is deemed to be ethically troubling; third, the novel has been judged as "lack[ing] subtle character shading and emotional authenticity," particularly given the "self-indulgent" narrator's portrayal of other characters' feelings "as one-dimensional or comic and [hence] easy to dismiss"; fourth, these problematic dimensions of the narratorial persona are (implicitly) extended to Winterson's authorial persona (Annan, "Devil"; Miner; Detloff, "Energetic" 154; Makinen, *Novels* 119; Pearce, "Emotional" 29-40; Harris, *Other* 138-39; Vaux, "Body" 20; Miner, "At" 21; Finney, "Bonded" 25).

Winterson's work is most frequently taken up by those working in the areas of postmodernism, feminism, and LGBTQ studies—though not to unanimous approval, with *Written* being the subject of particularly contentious debates. Critics like Marilyn Farwell, Jennifer Smith, Antje Lindenmeyer, Pamela Petro, and Gregory Rubinson have rigorously defended Winterson's use of the genderless narrator as a device that "discloses gender identities as performance" and celebrate the "ceaseless transitioning of the narrator's gender [as] creat[ing] a space within which the reader can [. . .] assum[e] a transgender gaze—as s/he comes to empathize with the narrator's experience of love" (Lindenmeyer, "Postmodern" 53; Smith, "Trans-formative" 417; Petro, "Original" 112-13).[102] My analysis focuses on the three remaining, loosely-interrelated lines of criticism: of the narrator's anatomical annotations, the narrator's persona, and the autobiographical or authorial persona. By offering an aesthetic reading of Winterson's novel, I point to its dialectical qualities of beauty with reference to both instances of local beauty and global form as a way of addressing these criticisms.

Critics such as Farwell, Brian Finney, and others have commented extensively on Winterson's postmodernist style—characteristics of her writing include intertextuality, "parody, irony, pastiche, self-reflexivity, and playfulness, a sense of multiplicity, fragmentation, instability of meaning, and an apparent distrust of grand narratives"—but Lyn Pykett points out that Winterson's fiction "also resists the postmodernist label in a number of important ways": for instance, in its affirmation of "such universals as art, the imagination, and romantic love" (Finney, "Bonded" 25-26; Farwell, *Heterosexual* 188-89; Pykett, "New" 54; 56). I suggest that Winterson aesthetically "reclaim[s] storytelling from postmodern exhaustion" in at least two interrelated ways: first, through the dialectical quality of beauty, especially in her narrator's anatomical annotations; and second, by recourse to the excesses of the sense-drive (as reflected in the way critics have discussed the quality of her writing), particularly in the shaping of her narrator's persona (Andermahr, *Jeanette* 167).

My first subsection deals with the dialectical quality of beauty while the second addresses criticisms of the narrator's persona—which relates to Winterson's larger aesthetic project in terms of the way the working parts fit with the whole, but is only marginally concerned with beauty. Discussions of the narrator's persona also relate to the engagement of and/or harmony between the sense- and moral-drives, which I use to illustrate how different readers may perceive distinctly different sets of impulses to be at work. I return to this issue in the chapter conclusion to explain why *Written* dominantly engages the form- and sense- drives (rather than the sense/moral-drives or the form/moral-drives).

Dialectical Quality of Beauty

I begin with a close analysis of *Written*'s anatomical annotations, which numerous critics have identified as an important component of the novel's imaginative strength, given Winterson's skillful hybridization of "a wide range of discourses – meteorology, biology, anatomy, chronobiology, physics, astrophysics, zoology, not to mention the Bible – [. . .] to rejuvenate the jaded language of love" (Finney, "Bonded" 26; Andermahr, *Jeanette* 83; Rubinson, "Body" 218-19). These sections are of interest not only because they are extraordinarily beautiful, but also because of the important ethical challenges that critics like Lynne Pearce and Andrea Harris have raised, which have largely gone unaddressed.

Following an initial need to "defend the text" against *Written*'s hostile public reception, Pearce was eventually "unable to engage emotionally with most of the novel's description of Louise's body [and] found the narrative personally alienating": to describe "Louise's disease as seductively attractive was a problem for both personal and academic reasons. Having had the personal experience of watching cancer's depredations created the first difficulty and the text's similarity to Pre-Raphaelite glamorisation of female suffering [. . .] compounded the difficulty" (Makinen, *Novels* 119; Pearce, "Emotional" 29-40). Harris, in fact, asserts that the "narrator violates Louise, from a metaphorical standpoint," in these anatomical annotations and that his/her literal abandonment of Louise at this point in the narrative makes "this violent rewriting" of Louise's body "all the more violent" (*Other* 138-39). Though Harris's and Pearce's reactions are not the

dominant critical positions on *Written*, their response raises important challenges and, correspondingly, presents a worthwhile theoretical opportunity to test the efficacy of an aesthetic interpretation against such criticisms of ethical deficiency.

The anatomical annotations are characterized by the harmony between the diverse energies of the sense-drive and the ordering impulse of the form-drive: by the dialectical principles of "*variety* and *uniformity*," which Hogarth identifies as mutually cooperating principles of beauty, or what Dutton has termed "unity in diversity" (Davis, "Introduction"; Hogarth, *Analysis* 12; Dutton, *Art Instinct* 52). What is particularly impressive is that none of these annotations statically replicate in a wholesale fashion devices used in another section; the narrator does something different with every aspect of Louise's anatomy, fuelling the imaginative play of the sense-drive.

The first section, for instance, features subsections on the body's cells, tissues, and cavities, each employing a different motif. In characterizing Louise's leukemia, the narrator metamorphosizes Louise's cells into "rebelling security forces" that stage "a coup," a "blind tide" that bypasses the sleeping keeper, carrying their murderous cargo through her portal veins and artery canals (*Written* 115-16). On the other hand, s/he emphasizes the sensuousness of Louise's body in the subsection on tissues, as the lining of her mouth become the narrator's "landing strip" in the intimacy of a remembered kiss. "My eyes are *b*rown, they have **f**luttered across your *b*ody like *b*utter**f**lies. I have **f**lown the distance of your *b*ody from side to side of your ivory coast. I know the **f**orests where I can rest and **f**eed" (117; emphases added). The lyricality of Winterson's prose is emphasized in the end-rhymes of "eyes" and "butterflies," the alliterative brown

butterflies, and repetitions of the fricative *f*-consonants. The beloved's life-giving body is transfigured into familiar forests that nourish the narrator's longing for the absent Louise.

The subsection on CAVITIES features the narrator as "the archaeologist of tombs," "embalm[er]," and coroner ("I'll have you bagged neat and tidy. I'll store you in plastic like chicken livers. Womb, gut, brain, neatly labeled and returned. Is that how to know another human being?"), who explores the "mausoleum" of Louise's body and its susceptibility to decay, in light of how her illness has drastically accelerated its deterioration (119-20). This metaphor of the debilitating body is taken up again at the end of the next section on "*The Skin*," where the narrator ruminates: "You were milk-white and fresh to drink. Will your skin discolour, its brightness blurring? Will your neck and spleen distend? Will the rigorous contours of your stomach swell under an infertile load? It may be so and the private drawing I keep of you will be a poor reproduction then. It may be so but if you are broken then so am I" (124-25). The narrator's musings in the subsection on CAVITIES thus invokes the one before on TISSUES, as the "ivory coast" of Louise's "milk-white," life-giving body becomes "distend[ed]" and "infertile."

Despite the imaginative diversity of tropes taken up as the narrator makes his/her way across Louise's anatomy, Winterson simultaneously forges a complex coherence between sections and sub-sections which remain tethered to each other and the rest of the novel. Ruminations on the scapula and clavicle (subsets of the section on "*The Skeleton*"), for instance, begin with the narrator's meditation on the shapes of the bones as prompted by the anatomical definitions, but these reveries play out in very different ways. Reimagining Louise's scapula or shoulder blade as "[s]huttered [. . .] blades of

wings" based on the "triangular shaped bone," the narrator transfigures her into the glorious "winged horse Pegasus who would not be saddled" and "a fallen angel" whose "great gold wings cut across the sun"—in fitting homage to Louise's strongly independent character. Though the narrator calls Louise his/her "Pre-Raphaelite beauty," she is far from the glamorized, suffering victim that critics like Pearce make her out to be (*Written* 159; Makinen, *Novels* 119; Pearce, "Emotional" 29-40). More than capable of holding her own in confrontations with Elgin or the narrator, Louise in fact proactively pursued the narrator and reveals that she chose to marry Elgin because she knew "I could control him, that I would be the one in charge" (34; 90; 87; 84-85; 49). The narrator's imaginative transfigurations of Louise and the helplessness s/he frequently feels in the face of Louise's unwavering love precisely resist the passive victimhood of Louise as suffering Pre-Raphaelite female.

With the clavicle or collar bone, the narrator fleshes out the etymological dimensions of the root word *clavis* or key, unfolding the word both in terms of its musical and functional definitions. The narrator associates the clavicle with musical keys given the grace of its shape (a "balletic" bone with "the double curve lithe and flowing with movement") and the memory of lovingly fastening his/her fingers over the recesses behind Louise's collar-bone, like keys on a keyboard (129). These musings then blend into a markedly different meaning of *clavis*/key as an implement or tool:

> Thus she was, here and here. The physical mem**o**ry *b*lunders thr**o**ugh the d**oo**rs the mind has tried to seal. A skeleton key to *B*lue*b*eard's cham*b*er. The *b*l**oo**dy key that unl**o**cks pain. Wisd**o**m says f**o**rget, the *b***o**dy h**o**wls.

> The *b***o**lts of y**o**ur c**o**llar *b***o**ne und**o** me. Thus she was, here and here. (130; emphases added)

The echoing refrain of the first and final lines of the block quote reinforces the harmonious repetitions of the plosive *b*-consonants and assonance of the *o*-vowels. The assonance, in particular, emphasizes the narrator's implicit howl of pain at losing Louise ("the body howls")—a thread taken up in a subsequent subsection on "HEARING AND THE EAR," where the narrator "call[s] Louise from the doorstep because I know she can't hear me. I keen in the fields to the moon. Animals in the zoo do the same, hoping that another of their kind will call back. The zoo at night is the saddest place [. . . .]. I wish I could hear your voice again" (135). Winterson builds these threads of correspondences throughout her novel to give the narrator's meandering musings a rich coherence of parts brought together within a larger whole.

The passage literalizes the convention of the *blason*, while the references to "Bluebeard's chamber," "bolts," "bloody key," "body," and sealed "doors" also invoke both the folktale of Bluebeard and Angela Carter's rewriting of it in *The Bloody Chamber* (41; 16)—which, like *Written*, lingers on the voluptuous pleasures of the female body, though in this case, it has to do with the pervasiveness of the narrator's memory of the remembered physicality of an absent Louise.[103] Bluebeard's chamber, as a literal mausoleum of the female body, is a literal and much more sinister parallel of the narrator's act of memorializing Louise's body in the anatomical annotations—with the crucial difference that one is a heinous act of murder (and perhaps perverse love?) whilst

the other is an act of eulogistic love and memory, where Bluebeard and the narrator both function as an embalmer of sorts, resonating with the earlier subsection on CAVITIES.

Just like the clavicle, which the reader is informed functions as a "link between the upper extremity and the axial skeleton," the implicit reference to Carter's transfigured Bluebeard folktale also creates a bridge between the two divergent meanings of *clavis*/key—as musical instrument or a device to un/lock—since Carter's homodiegetic protagonist, to whom the murderous Marquis hands the keys to his bloody chamber, is herself a pianist who later falls in love with a blind piano tuner; the tune that brings the young pianist and her piano tuner together is (coincidentally?) *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (*Written* 129; *Bloody* 30). The subsection is thus not only bridged by the narrator's ruminations on the clavicle's etymology, which appear to initially take two distinct directions but ultimately converge in Carter's transfigured Bluebeard folktale, but is, more importantly, held together by the narrator's tender memory of fingering Louise's clavicle.

The narrator's remark, "[t]he bolts of your collar bone undo me," takes up her/his earlier loving memory of fastening her/his hand on Louise's collar bone from the previous paragraph, even as s/he struggles to cope with the loss of the beloved, the "physical memory" of Louise's body "blunder[ing] through" the unity of imagery given in words such as "seal," "bolts," "doors," "key," "undo," and "unlock." Not only is the subsection's title called to mind in the references to "collar bone" and "key," the broader section title on the skeleton is evoked through the use of "skeleton key," foregrounding

the orderliness of Winterson's text despite the narrator's apparent freely meandering associations.

Within the overarching trajectory of the narrative, the anatomical annotations function as the narrator's way of coping with losing Louise—where the anatomical list of facial bones, for instance, "[f]rontal bone, palatine bones, nasal bones, lacrimal bones, cheek bones, maxilla, vomer, inferior conchae, mandible," serve as the narrator's "shields" and "blankets, those words don't remind me of your face" (132)—with her/his (cowardly) decision of choosing to leave her, and as a means of distraction, of marking time till s/he has news of Louise. The very first line transitioning back from the anatomy sections to the narrative's main trajectory reads, "March. Elgin had promised to write to me in March. I counted the days like someone under house arrest" (141). Though it is certainly possible to read the anatomical annotations as a problematic appropriation of the body of the female lover (who, Madelyn Detloff points out, "does not even have to be present for the narrator to engage in this fantasy of proprietary knowledge" [154]), her absence is precisely the point of these reveries. It is what fuels this attempt to expand the typical relationship most people tend to draw between love and the body, that is, not merely for sex, but as an exploration of the way Louise's leukemia rewrites the body (the bruises of passion, for instance, now the mark of her increasingly debilitated body), the relationship between the self and the lover, and the narrator's writing of his/her own longing and helplessness on the memory of the rich "palimpsest" that is Louise's body (*Written* 89; 124; 111; 51). The narrator as anatomist, archaeologist, coroner, and embalmer attempts to stage his/her own narrative defenses against death.

Louise's body becomes the dialectical site between that which is life-giving (the subsection on "TISSUES," for instance, emphasizes her body as sustaining forests) and death-marked (most evidently played out in the section on "*The Skin*," in the contrast between the epidermis and the dermis). The narrator's admission of "stroking [Louise] with necrophiliac obsession," adoring even the parts of her that are already dead, rewrites the relationship between love and the lover's body beyond physical pleasure, highlighting the dialectical tension between life and death—"[t]he dead you is constantly being rubbed away by the dead me. Your cells fall and flake away, fodder to dust mites and bed bugs. Your droppings support colonies of life that graze on skin and hair no longer wanted" (123)—which takes on new valences for the narrator in light of Louise's potentially impending death.

While I acknowledge and sympathize with the difficult emotional experience Pearce and other readers might have encountered in the course of reading *Written*, it is important to point out the sensuous descriptions of Louise's body have more to do with the narrator's imaginative transfiguration of his/her *memories* of Louise than with aestheticizing her disease. The narrator uses these transfigured memories as a defense against the certainty of Louise's death, whether by disease or eventual old age. In fact, s/he does not shy away from squarely facing the debilitating effects of cancer but shows a thorough familiarity with it, "training [herself/himself] as a cancer specialist" via medical textbooks in her/his self-imposed exile, visiting terminal ward patients, where s/he "listened to their stories, found ones who'd got well and sat by ones who died. I thought all cancer patients would have strong, loving families. The research hype about going

through it together. It's almost a family disease. The truth is that many cancer patients die alone" (149; 175). In the irrefutable reality of suffering and the lack of knowledge concerning the crucial causes of cancer and its prevention or cure (as Louise attests of Elgin's work, which is reinforced by the narrator's conversation with a junior doctor at the terminal ward; see *Written* pp. 67; 149-50), perhaps the imagination is the only defense we can mount against despair. In the imaginative transfigurations of the beloved as a way of holding on to her, the reality of disease and death is not repudiated, but only temporarily held at bay.

Apart from the contextual interest of mounting aesthetic defenses against Louise's cancer and, by extension, against the proliferation of disease's terrible realities for so many in the present age, *Written* is more broadly invested in refurbishing "an exhausted culture's imagination" "*through* an emphasis on pleasure" (Burns, "Fantastic" 279). The way Winterson's writing harmonizes the poetic order of the form-drive and the excesses of the sense-drive is implied in critics' appreciation of her writing. They praise "the exceptional quality of her prose," its "clear, unequivocal beauty," which "heightens her readers' awareness of the 'body' of the word—its sensate properties—through repetition of sounds and an elaborate incorporation of rhythm," emphasizing "language's *tonally* metonymic effects (puns, rhythm, lyricism)" (Petro, "Original" 112-13; Burns, "Fantastic" 280; Makinen, *Novels* 110).

These excesses of the sense-drive are further foregrounded by the narrator's constant interrogation of language's plurality and diversity of use, both at the literal and metaphorical levels, and also by a typical postmodern refusal to take it on conventional or

unexamined terms. Such interrogations take place not only in the anatomical sections but throughout the novel. For instance, when the narrator recalls her/his relationship with Bathsheba, who is also her/his dentist, s/he remarks: "Against your white coat, their heads on your breast, no-one fears the needle and syringe. I came to you for a crown and you offered me a kingdom. Unfortunately I could only take possession between five and seven, weekdays, and the odd weekend when he was away playing football" (47). The innocuous alignment of patients' heads at the dentist's chest level is metaphorically transfigured into the sensual act of laying their heads on Bathsheba's breast—a literal act in the narrator's case, given his/her sexual relationship with her.

Winterson's choice of the names *Bathsheba* and husband *Uriah* invokes the biblical narrative from the second book of Samuel, which is an account of King David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba (the wife of Uriah the Hittite) whom he later makes his queen. The terms *crown* and *kingdom* work as a paired metaphor invoking not only the Bible, but also fairytales, princes/ses, and happily-ever-afters—promptly subverted by the declaration of effective visiting hours—though *crown* in dentistry also refers to the artificial replacement of the upper part of a tooth. The narrator thus plays with the imaginative possibilities of words, keeping readers on the alert as we are forced to slow down and excavate language's multi-layered possibilities, enjoying the imaginative range and pleasure of Winterson's prose as she eases her way among the multiple valences of each word.

The phrase *take possession*, which refers to a player's temporary control of the ball in sports, invokes not only Uriah's pastime of playing football—time that effectively

allows her and the narrator to conduct their affair—but further highlights the temporary nature of the narrator's demands on Bathesheba's time, even as it exposes the narrator's, Bathesheba's, and Uriah's identities as players, for whom love becomes a sport. (The sporting metaphor also functions in contrast with the narrator's later description of his/her relationship with Louise: "I don't want to be your sport nor you to be mine" [88].) By foregrounding the readerly role of attending to the excessive, imaginative possibilities of language, Winterson's emphasis on the sense-drive compensates for the "postmodern exhaustion" of language (Andermahr, *Jeanette* 167)—a revitalizing project that gains further momentum in her choice of narrator, who undertakes the explicit challenge of narrating love and sensuousness from his/her treacherous capacity as one compulsively addicted to taking up with married women, in an age where language constantly betrays us: "'I love you' is always a quotation," the narrator observes, and even more disturbingly, is later revealed to be an act of attempting to "regain control" (11; 52-53).

Homo/Autodiegetic Narration and the Narrator's Persona

Critics have been split in their judgments of how well Winterson has handled the construction of the narrator's persona: Anna Vaux, for instance, suggests that "[t]here is something unpleasant at the centre of the book," a "self-indulgent [. . .] sensibility" and "deep self-satisfaction behind all the mourning," especially in the autodiegetic narrator's dismissal of other characters' feelings "as one-dimensional or comic" whilst "dwell[ing] so much on its own high passions" ("Body" 20). Even those who defend Winterson's artistic choice remark on the risks of employing such a narratorial persona: Andrea

Stuart, for instance, observes that "Winterson's characteristic willingness to take risks" in her choice of the autodiegetic narrator's exclusive perspective, "with all its attendant dangers of seeming preachy and narcissistic, could have gone horribly wrong. With characteristic cheek, she just about gets away with it; and the solipsism of Winterson's storyteller fits in almost entirely with her depiction of the self-referential world of love" ("Terms" 38).

Even more problematically, however, is the implied equation of this narratorial persona with Winterson's authorial persona. Brian Finney rightly notes that *Written* "is still largely discussed in terms of Winterson's known sexual orientation," whereby she "is in effect being charged with writing a gay novel that is being coy about its gayness" through "her use of an ungendered narrator" ("Bonded" 25).[104] Such interpretations are also influenced by the reception of her first book, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, which "was widely received as autobiographical" and "has installed the expectation [. . .] that subsequent texts by Winterson can be read within the context of an autobiographical project" (Gilmore, "Anatomy" 227). Gabriele Annan, for instance, reads the protagonist as a continuation of *Oranges*' autobiographical personality; however, she judges the new persona to be "more plaintive and given to self-pity, more sententious and preachy," and "harder to like, which is a pity, because Winterson has a lot of talent" ("Devil").

Susan S. Lanser has written extensively about the "readerly inclination to blur the lines between I-narrator and author," which "must be acknowledged, even if it is nowadays severely frowned upon" amongst academics ("Beholder" 207).[105] "Because autobiography and homodiegetic fiction deploy the same range of linguistic practices"

(206), novels like *Written* become particularly susceptible to this conflation between narrator and author.[106] (I return to Lanser's work when I discuss Phelan's *mask narration* in a subsequent section.) Rather than reading the narrator as an extension of the autobiographical self, I suggest that we need to consider the narrator's persona in light of what is at stake in Winterson's overall aesthetic project in *Written*—that is, by considering issues of "fitness" in light of the novel's global form.[107]

"Hogarth refers to Pythagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle, stressing 'fitness', as the first fundamental law in nature with regard to beauty" (Davis, "Introduction"; Hogarth, *Analysis* 12). James Hillman, who takes a contemporary ecological approach to beauty, notes that the Greek sense of *Kosmos* "is an aesthetic term, best translated into English as fitting order—appropriate, right arrangement [. . . .]. Cosmos does not present itself as an all-embracing whole, but as the appearance of fittingness of each thing as and where it is; how well, how decorously, how appropriately it displays. And its beauty is that very display" (*Uncontrollable* 268-69). *Written*'s fitness may thus be discerned in understanding how the solipsistic, "self-indulgent" narrator is relevant or appropriate to Winterson's larger aesthetic project of reinvigorating the "postmodern exhaustion" of language using "hybridized discourses," to redeem or recuperate what Catherine Belsey has termed conflicted "postmodern love" (Andermahr, *Jeanette* 167; 83; Burns, "Fantastic" 279; Belsey, "Postmodern" 685; Finney, "Bonded" 26-27; Lindenmeyer, "Postmodern" 59). "'Postmodernism . . . has tended to imply a refusal of the possibility of romantic love because of its presumed status as an illusionary discourse of authenticity,'" but Lindenmeyer and others have rightly pointed out that Winterson

scrupulously "avoids rejecting love as mere illusion" ("Postmodern" 59). Her choice of narrator in *Written* exposes the ambition and scope of her project, both in terms of recuperating love from exhausted clichés and the postmodern suspicion of grand narratives, and by enlarging the reader's capacity for understanding the possibility of love existing beyond the sanctum of marriage between heterosexual couples.

Winterson's choice of a Don Juan/a who is addicted to relationships with married women (though not married women exclusively) is a challenging figure for attempting to narrate love, fitting particularly well with Winterson's project of exploring postmodern love. Drunk on the excessive, Dionysiac frenzies of his/her affairs and the emotional turbulence that accompanies them, the narrator encompasses the liberatory energies of the sense-drive: "This is the voluptuous exile freely chosen. [. . . .] We don't take drugs, we're drugged out on danger, where to meet, when to speak, what happens when we see each other publicly" (*Written* 72). Given this persona, readers are thus meant to hold the narrator's words at a distance (with its at-times hollow "stream of superlatives" and smug sanctimoniousness) and rightly be suspicious of it, as Louise herself is initially (Annan, "Devil"; *Written* 52-53; Andermahr, *Jeanette* 167; 83; Burns, "Fantastic" 279). Yet, by the same token, the narrator's unexpected gems of beauty and truth that manage to break through the clichés and our suspicions of his/her self-indulgent grand sentiments are what make these moments so powerful in the novel's pleasurable eloquence. This dialectical tension between insincerity and authenticity allows Winterson to articulate the challenges of writing love in a post-postmodern age.

Winterson sustains what Phelan terms “the ethics of the told” and “the ethics of the telling” in several ways: the narrator is constantly exposed by other characters when s/he falls short of honest self-evaluation/judgments—that is, when s/he is an unreliable evaluator of her/his own actions (Stuart, “Terms” 38; Phelan, *Experiencing* 11; Phelan and Martin 94-95).[108] Take, for instance, her/his partly well-intentioned act of leaving Louise in order for her to gain access to the medical care Elgin promises. Gail points out the cowardice of the narrator’s actions which s/he has tried to mask behind the solipsism of heroics: “‘You shouldn’t have run out on her.’ Run out on her? That doesn’t sound like the heroics I’d had in mind. Hadn’t I sacrificed myself for her? Offered my life for her life?” (159). Louise too shows the narrator up for what s/he is really like on numerous occasions, revealing her/his use of *I love you* as an act of control (11; 52-53). An unnamed friend also exposes the narrator’s relationship with Jacqueline as a farce, an unfair act of bullying, and tells him/her: “Pick on someone your own size” (28).

But in the larger context of Winterson’s aesthetic project of a reflective meditation on the nature of love, memory, and the body, for the most part, the narrator does try to be honest about how s/he sees herself/himself, flaws and all, and these crystalline gems of truth that manage to surface and endure, despite the clichés and language misuse and/or abuse that occur, are what ultimately make the narration so compelling, in spite of the flawed narrator.[109] Early in the novel, the narrator highlights the differences between Louise’s careful articulation of love, solemn as before a “private altar,” in contrast with his/her own careless use of *I love you* as quotation, “dropping them like coins into a wishing well, hoping they would make me come true. [. . . .] I had

given them as forget-me-nots to girls who should have known better. I had used them as bullets and barter" (9; 11-12).

There are many layers to Winterson's use of language: the single phrase, *I love you*, is at once a solemn vow before a private altar, a futile act akin to coins discarded in wells that could not possibly fulfill wishes, handed out like forget-me-nots (both in the words' literal meaning and as a species of flowers) to more than one lover, and used to wound and trade. Even as this initial self-portrayal exposes the narrator's flaws as a lover, a nuanced representation of him/her is simultaneously established, in the implicit, almost child-like naïveté of dropping *I love you* as "coins into a wishing well, hoping they would make me come true," hoping against hope despite the knowing futility of the act. That s/he drops these words as a way of "hoping they would make *me* come true" also leads readers to a somewhat more generous judgment of the narrator's character and perspective, given the general propensity of most people to consider our hopes/expectations of the other more frequently than our hopes/expectations of ourselves when it comes to examining the state of our romantic relationships.

The narrator's representations of infidelity and adultery are particularly complex and nuanced. As s/he finds herself/himself becoming increasingly attracted to Louise, s/he remarks,

> I used to think that Christ was wrong, impossibly hard, when he said that to imagine committing adultery was just as bad as doing it. But now, standing here in this familiar unviolated space, I have already altered my world and Jacqueline's world for ever. She doesn't know this yet. She

> doesn't know that there is today a revision of the map. That the territory she thought was hers has been annexed. You never give away your heart; you lend it from time to time. If it were not so how could we take it back without asking? (38)

By relentlessly interrogating the languages of love many tend to take for granted, such as statements about giving our heart away when we fall in love, Winterson sympathetically articulates the emotional struggles of fidelity and commitment, richly rendering love's complexities in this most unlikely of figures.

Adultery becomes the normative position in *Written*, as the narrator explores the subject from the perspectives of the cheater, the cheated, and the one who enables the cheating. S/he rehashes its associated clichés:

> You had no choice, you were swept away. Forces took you and possessed you and you did it but now that's all in the past, you can't understand etc etc. You want to start again etc etc. Forgive me. In the late twentieth century we still look to ancient daemons to explain our commonest action. Adultery is very common. It has no rarity value and yet at an individual level it is explained away again and again as a UFO. I can't lie to myself in quite that way any more. [. . . .] I know exactly what's happening and I know too that I am jumping out of this plane of my own free will. No, I don't have a parachute, but worse, neither does Jacqueline. When you go you take one with you. (39)

Winterson thus renders the cheating partner's experience visible, rather than dismissing it or simply sweeping it out the door because it is morally objectionable, complicating representations of the narrator whilst depicting him/her more sympathetically in his/her regard for Jacqueline despite the impending betrayal.

> I've never been the slippers; never been the one to sit at home and desperately believe in another late office meeting [. . . .] and felt the cold weight of those lost hours ticking in my stomach.
>
> Plenty of times I've been the dancing shoes and how those women have wanted to play. Friday night, a weekend conference. Yes, in my flat. Off with the business suit, legs apart, pulling me down on them [. . .]. And while we're doing that somebody is looking out of the window watching the weather change. Watching the clock, watching the phone, she said she'd ring after the last session. She does ring. She lifts herself off me and dials the number [. . . .] wet with sex and sweat. "Hello darling, yes fine, it's raining outside." (71-72)

The muted nuance with which the narrator renders the experience of the cheated partner—anxiously looking out the window, constantly waiting, as the "cold weight of those lost hours" tick away—significantly complicates the reader's relationship with the narrator: on the one hand, the sympathetic nuance with which s/he portrays the forlorn waiting partner suggests a certain tender-hearted sensibility; on the other hand, the decision to continue enabling the cheating partner despite such emotional clarity perhaps heightens readers' sense of her/his callousness.

Even cheating spouses are complexly rendered, in the very different portrayals of Bathsheba—who is more like the unnamed woman in the business suit from the passage above—and Louise who, despite her own culpability in initiating the affair with the narrator, recognizes that s/he is no freer than herself to declare love simply because s/he is unmarried (84-85; 30; 37; 52). Another poignant example of such nuanced portrayal—this time, of the lover who enables the cheating spouse—comes from the narrator's two-page scene of "an imaginary melodramatic playscript," in which the married woman's verbosity of "clichéd excuses" are "neatly undercut" by the "Beckettian silence" of her lover's lone figure crying silently in the bathroom (Finney, "Bonded" 26; *Written* 14-15). Winterson's project of explicating postmodern love depends on such complex portrayals and dialectical energies: "Love is [. . .] at once endlessly pursued and ceaselessly suspected. [. . . .] It cannot speak, and yet it seems that it never ceases to speak in late twentieth-century Western culture" (Belsey, "Postmodern" 685; Finney, "Bonded" 27). This "mixture of the genuine and secondhand" (Finney, "Bonded" 26), of illusoriness and authenticity, of excuses and silences, of cliché and surprise, creates a rich texture to Winterson's writing, drawing readers to return again and again to these sites of complex beauty.

Many of these moments also seem to work as what Phelan calls *mask narration*—the interpretive phenomenon when a character is perceived to "function as a mask through which the implied author speaks" in order to "express his or her own thoughts and beliefs"—or what Lanser has called *attached discourse*, "in which the primary 'I' of the text is identified with the author" (Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric* 112; Phelan, *Living*

197; 202).[110] Unlike Phelan and Lanser, however, who focus on explicating the complex engagements between (implied) authors and readers, my own interest here is restricted to instances of mask narration that are shaped in aesthetically satisfying ways and on its aesthetic impact in terms of the form-, sense-, and moral-drives.

Aesthetically well-shaped instances of mask narration that can be comfortably "lifted from their novelistic contexts" correspond to a type of local beauty I have been discussing in this chapter, what Donoghue calls *eloquence* in the "exuberance" with which the writing "presents itself as if it had broken from its setting" (Phelan, *Living* 202; Donoghue, *Eloquence* 44-45). The autodiegetic narrator's lengthy meditations on love in a post-postmodern age, particularly ruminations on his/her relationship with Louise, create a readerly tendency for considering them to be gems of local truth that are relevant beyond the context of the narrator's particular situation, as a broader sort of poetic truth about the state of love in the present age—what Lanser has termed the "*atemporal* or *nonnarrative*" dimensions of the literary text's potential for attachment, where readers may attach "quite firmly to the author the philosophical generalizations this same narrator makes about the world" ("Beholder" 215-16).

One reason why some critics struggle with the narrator's persona may be that they interpret some of the earlier quoted passages about adultery as mask narration, sympathetically portraying adultery and, at some points, even defending it. These include sentiments such as: "Marriage is the flimsiest weapon against desire," "Adultery is as much about disillusionment as it is about sex," and "I used to think of marriage as a plate-glass window just begging for a brick. The self-exhibition, the self-satisfaction,

smarminess, tightness, tight-arsedness" (*Written* 78; 13). The conflation of narratorial with authorial/autobiographical persona, or what Lanser has termed potential for attachment, is further reinforced by Winterson's frank admission in an interview that the novel is based on her affair with Pat Kavanagh, who was married to novelist Julian Barnes and (temporarily) left him for Winterson; Kavanagh eventually died of brain cancer almost two decades after *Written* was published (Lanser, "Beholder" 211-13; Harris, *Other* 174; 144; Winterson and Field, "Insincerity" 38).[111]

The similarities between the unnamed narrator's and Winterson's personal circumstances offer ample potential for readers to (rightly or mistakenly) attach the narrator's voice to the author's. Interactions between readers' potential interpretations of mask narration, especially in the passages relating to adultery, and extratextual knowledge of Kavanagh's affair with Winterson clearly have the potential to complicate readers' reception of *Written* (and perhaps some might feel, justifiably so). The more aesthetically well-shaped these instances of mask narrations are, the more readers are likely to struggle with Winterson's ethics of telling, since it is difficult to shake the sense that the pleasure derived from them inevitably implicates readers in endorsing views they may not hold in real life.

Reading the narrator in light of his/her functions within the overall global form of *Written* (rather than as autobiographical or mask narration) allows us to shift our attention back to the text, whereby the narrator forms part of an ambitious aesthetic project that attempts to challenge and enlarge readers' capacities for openness and sympathy to the possibility of love that exists in deliberate violations of matrimonial sanctity. Winterson

deliberately carves out a narratorial persona that is (initially) enamored of his/her own self-satisfied sophistication about love and marriage. That journey from the clichés, from love as quotation, to what the narrator's relationship with Louise eventually leads him/her to gradually understand about love, about commitment, and about respecting the beloved's choice, is crucial to the narrator's emotional maturation (*Written* 156-57; 159; 11-12). Not only does Winterson attempt to break through the clichés and postmodern exhaustion of language to find a new way of articulating love, but she further raises the difficulty of her task by choosing to tell the story through a very flawed narrator who is the most unlikely of candidates to narrate an authentic love-story.[112] She ultimately offers us a narrator who, in spite of his/her flaws, convinces the reader of the validity of his/her love and its narrative representations from an aesthetic perspective, upholding the power of the imagination's sensuous excesses working in harmony with the form-drive to defend against the skepticism that characterizes our post-postmodern age.

Never Let Me Go: Engaging the form- and moral-drives

In the second half of this chapter, I turn my attention to a different type of beauty in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, which mainly engages the form- and moral-drives, as compared to the harmony of the form- and sense-drives in *Written on the Body* (see pp. 172; 219-221 of this MS). Likewise featuring an autodiegetic narrator, both *Never* and *Written* are marked by contentious and divergent critical readings, especially in terms of critics' attitudes toward their narrators. Structured as a *Bildungsroman* of sorts and set in

England in the 1990s, Ishiguro’s novel is retrospectively narrated in largely chronological order over three sections by Kathy H., who in part one recounts her life with Ruth, Tommy, and others from the age of about five to sixteen at Hailsham—which initially appears to be a boarding school, with guardians such as Miss Emily, Miss Lucy, and a mysterious Madame who collects their artwork. In part two, Kathy and her friends move to the Cottages upon graduation from Hailsham, which ends with her falling out with both Ruth and Tommy, leading to her decision to begin training as a “carer.” Part Three documents her time as a carer, her reconciliations with Ruth and Tommy, and her coming to terms with their deaths as “donors” and what their life at Hailsham meant as she herself prepares to become a donor at the age of 31.

Several critics observe that one of the novel’s strengths is how “the narrative manages the disclosure of information to forestall surprise”: the horrific truth—“that Hailsham is essentially a kind of death row for adolescent clones, waiting in limbo until called to give up their organs—emerges in piecemeal fashion. There is no revelatory moment; the students at Hailsham [as Miss Lucy observes] both know and do not know the truth of their situation” (Ingersoll, “Taking” 48; Cooper, “Imagining” 19; *Never* 80). Kathy’s piecemeal disclosures are reinforced by her consistent habit of “underreporting” (Phelan and Martin 95)—that is, telling the reader less than she knows, given the retrospective narration. In some cases, crucial moments are first hinted at or anticipated before they occur, such as Ruth’s death after chapter nineteen, which Kathy refers to in chapter six. In other cases, key interactions between characters are incompletely told the first time around and later revisited in light of other significant events or knowledge that

emerge. I examine one such instance in the next section, in which Madame weeps as she sees Kathy dancing—an event Kathy retells several times over the course of the novel. As such, John Freeman observes that "[t]he novel exists in a world whose contours we must infer, rather than witness, which gives it an ominous cast" (*Conversations* 196).

Through its premise of a society that sanctions genocide of cloned young adults, *Never* engages with twentieth and twenty-first century discourses of atrocities in at least three important ways: first, by historical association with World War II; second, as a reaction against fetishizations of the suffering human body; and third, as a metaphor for the "bystander effect" that makes people complicit in enabling atrocities. Shameem Black, Anne Whitehead, Keith McDonald, and others, point to *Never*'s implicit historical associations with World War II, noting that "Kathy's use of the words 'carer' and 'donation,' and the subsequent revelations of organ harvesting" parallels "euphemistic phrases [such] as 'evacuation,' 'transport,' and 'Final Solution'" used during the Holocaust, "eloquently communicat[ing] the ways in which language can be used both to disguise and normalize atrocities" (Whitehead, "Writing" 76; McDonald, "Days" 78; Black, "Aesthetics" 797). Titus Levy, on the other hand, situates the novel as an ethical response to the paradox of trauma narratives, as it "shrouds the damaged and disfigured body" in ways "that simultaneously hint at suffering [yet] resist the invasive impulse to fetishize the pain of the oppressed," even when the characters undergo "the painful cycle of extraction and convalescence" ("Human" 14).[113]

Ishiguro's novel also engages with discourses of atrocity in relation to "cultural apathia" or the "bystander effect" (Groes and Lewis, *Kazuo* 5; Levy, "Human" 13).[114]

Like many "who are vaguely aware of the mass suffering that occurs in distant, unfamiliar regions of the world, the citizens of Ishiguro's novel" intuitively "recognize how the entitlements they enjoy have a direct connection to the suffering of others"—a recognition that thereby invites readers to consider how our own potential failures to engage with atrocities that occur in our world also constitute a similar "denial of moral responsibility" ("Human" 13). Their act of turning a blind eye to the clones' plight was "not necessarily evil," but, as Miss Emily remarks, "their overwhelming concern was that their own children, their spouses, their parents, their friends, did not die from cancer, motor neurone disease, heart disease. So for a long time [. . .] people did their best not to think about you. And if they did, they tried to convince themselves you weren't really like us" (Levy, "Human" 13; *Never* 263).[115] Thus, the paradox and "true horror of Ishiguro's dystopic society is revealed: it is shown to be founded, precisely, on relations of care" (Whitehead, "Writing" 77). I explore these layered ethical complexities more fully in the first subsection on harmony between the form- and moral-drives when I analyze the interactions between Kathy and Madame.

Never is also frequently discussed as an instance of dystopian science fiction, in relation to both issues of class and bioethics—though numerous critics have simultaneously remarked on ways in which it *resists* the label, given the "conspicuous absen[ce]" of science and technology that tends to be "salient in most science fiction" (Shaddox, "Generic" 448-49; 468; Freeman, *Conversations* 196; Mirsky, "Notes" 628-29). "Through its veneer of science fiction," critics like Black, Whitehead, and Gabriele Griffin note that the novel offers "a metaphor for the inequalities and predations of

national and global economic systems" in their "systematic exploitation" of "vulnerable actors in our modern economic order": "[i]ndeed, the clones believe themselves to have been modeled on lower class citizens" (Black, "Aesthetics" 785; 797; Griffin, "Science" 652; Whitehead, "Writing" 62-63).[116]

Critics tend to foreground two aspects of bioethics in their analyses of Ishiguro's novel. The first relates to *Never*'s implicit engagement of issues relating to organ donation, global organ shortage, and the organ black market. Horrifying as the novel might be, Anita Desai notes that it "makes no mention of a far greater and more real horror, which is the trafficking in organs of donors in the desperately poor countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, compelled by their poverty to provide organs for which the first world with its obscene wealth can pay" ("Shadow" 51). I return below to this issue of what remains unsaid, in conjunction with Ishiguro's shaping of the narrator's voice, when I discuss the dialectical oscillations of conflict and harmony between the form- and moral-drives.

Never also engages with bioethics as an imaginative exploration of how "contemporary biotechnology [. . .] will alter human nature"—what Bart Simon has termed "critical posthumanism": "a way of *thinking* the human, or as 'implicated in the ongoing critique of what it means to be human'" (Simon, "Introduction" 1; Wallace, "Literature" 692). Instead of simply using "bioethics as an engine to drive the plot," Ishiguro uses "it as a prism that shines new light onto timeless questions about what it means to be fully human" (Montella, "Novel"; Corliss and Farouky, "Everlasting" 59-61; Deb, "Lost" 55; Wood, "Human" 38; Ishiguro, Wong, and Cummett, *Conversations* 214-

15). “The fact that the clones’ time is short lends their thwarted love affairs, their lazy afternoons spent reading in meadows, and their day trips to the coast a nearly unbearable intensity” (Fisher, “Precarious” 31-32). Ishiguro thus brings readers “to a raw confrontation with death – loss – and the unendurable fragility of everything we love,” as we see Kathy’s “foreshortened and stunted life as not so very different from our own. The biological revolution’s greatest surprise of all may be that its dilemmas are not really new. Instead, it may simply deepen the ones we’ve always faced about how to find meaning in our lives and the lives of others” (Scurr, “Facts” 21; Freeman, *Conversations* 197; Montella, “Novel”).

Never inevitably foregrounds readers’ engagements with the moral-drive, given the bioethical travesties that underlie the text. Spolsky suggests that from an evolutionary psychology perspective, “narratives are themselves the processes that human beings have evolved to understand, express and meet the need for revised and revisable behavior in an unstable world. It is not, however, the truth or falsehood of stories,” or the “production of any one moral or another,” “but their *indirection* that is crucial to their usefulness” (180-81; 194). I suggest that it is such indirection that characterizes “the complexity, the indeterminacy, [and] the *sheer* difficulty” of readers’ ethical judgments in *Never* (Gaut, *Aesthetics*, “Ethical” 594).[117] As I explain in the introduction, within my aesthetic framework, the moral-drive is an ordering principle that relates to unity and conformity vis-à-vis the tendency toward a greater congruence of a constructive shared vision of how we are to live and act, especially with and towards others. The moral-drive tends to be foregrounded when injustice is perceived; thus, to speak of beauty in light of injustice is

always particularly tricky terrain and ethically complex in and of itself. I suggest that representations of injustice, as mediated by beauty, can be characterized by the *harmony* and/or *conflict* between the form- and moral-drives—though authors can certainly adopt both approaches at different points in their texts, as I argue Ishiguro does.

Just as harmony between the form- and sense-drives is characterized by a sense of fitness—personified in *Written* by a Don Juan/a narrator who is drunk both on the Dionysiac excesses of love and on the excessive possibilities of language—harmony between the form- and moral-drives is also characterized by a sense of fitness, between narrative form and the text's implicit or explicit ethical position or attitudes.[118] In what follows, I turn first to the *harmony* between the form- and moral-drives by analyzing local moments of beauty in what Donoghue calls "eloquence of situation" (or gesture) in relation to global form, explicating the complex layers of ethical tensions that underlie Kathy and Madame's interactions.

I then turn to *conflicts* between the form- and moral-drives by examining local moments of beauty characterized by the unsaid, in relation to Kathy's narratorial voice. I define conflict between the form- and moral-drives as readers' sense of the (initial) perceived unease of fit, or tension, between authors' chosen narrative forms and the ethical position implicit to or expressed by the text. An example would be Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), which poetically and controversially explores the relations between the pedophilic aesthete Humbert Humbert and twelve-year-old Dolores Haze, whom he nicknames Lolita and worships as the great love of his life. Though I suggest that beauty can be characterized by the conflict between the form- and moral-drives—as

evident in the complex forms of beauty many twentieth and twenty-first century novelists seem partial to—I contend that a corresponding dialectical oscillation between conflict *and* harmony of the two drives is crucial to our judgments of a literary text as aesthetically beautiful.

Dewey "repeatedly insists that the unity of aesthetic experience is not a closed and permanent haven in which we can rest at length in satisfied contemplation. It is rather a moving, fragile, and vanishing event," which is also Adorno's emphasis (Shusterman 32; 26-27). Drawing on Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics, Shusterman notes that the artist cultivates "moments of resistance and tension" in "the rhythmic struggle of achievement and breakdown of order" "'not for their own sake, but for their potentialities' for transformation into a unified experience [. . . .]. We need disturbance and disorder, since 'the moment of passage from disturbance to harmony is that of intensest life'" (32). I suggest that such transitions from disturbance to complex harmonies are what give *Never* its powerful dialectical energies. I thus characterize beauty as crucially connected with form and (complex) harmony, and further suggest that where there is *only* conflict between the form- and moral-drives, these are works that belong in a completely different (and perhaps no longer aesthetic?) category.

Harmony between the form- and moral-drives

"Form, as it is present in the fine arts, is the art of making clear what is involved in the organization of space and time prefigured in every course of a developing life-experience. [. . . .] Moments and places, despite physical limitation and narrow

localization, are charged with accumulations of long-gathering energy" (Dewey, *Aesthetics*, "Experience" 303). It is just such accretions of complex ethical energies that characterize the beauty of Ishiguro's novel. To explore the ethical issues Ishiguro choreographs in his careful pacing of Kathy's disclosure and withholding of information, I focus on a series of interrelated interactions between her and Madame Marie-Claude from chapters three, six, twenty-one, and twenty-two, which culminate in Madame's surprising though ultimately fitting eloquence of gesture and beauty that carries the entire weight of what lies at the core of this heartbreaking novel.

At the age of eight, Kathy and her friends are full of curiosity about the "snooty" Madame, who comes to Hailsham to collect the children's best art several times a year. When Ruth declares that "Madame is scared of us," they put her theory to the test as a light-hearted dare, by swarming past Madame together, as thirty-one-year-old Kathy recollects:

> I'll never forget the strange change that came over us [. . . .]. And I can still see it now, the shudder she seemed to be suppressing, the real dread that one of us would accidentally brush against her. [. . . .] Ruth had been right: Madame *was* afraid of us. But she was afraid of us in the same way someone might be afraid of spiders. We hadn't been ready for that. [. . . .] So you're waiting, even if you don't quite know it, waiting for the moment when you realise that you really are different to them; that there are people out there, like Madame, who don't hate you or wish you any harm, but who nevertheless shudder at the very thought of you—of how you were

> brought into this world and why—and who dread the idea of your hand brushing against theirs. The first time you glimpse yourself through the eyes of a person like that [. . .]. It's like walking past a mirror you've walked past every day of your life, and suddenly it shows you something else, something troubling and strange. (*Never* 31; 35-36)

Kathy's switch to the present tense and her vivid memory of that troubling day ("I can still see it now") collapses her two emotional selves that are more than two decades apart, an eight-year-old experiencing-I and a thirty-one-year-old narrating-I in the moment's muted emotional intensity.[119] Because the children's identities as clones—which will be articulated by Miss Lucy about seven years (four chapters) later—has not yet been disclosed, many readers are likely to identify with eight-year-old Kathy and her friends' bewildered confusion at being treated not even as someone but rather as some*thing* to be dreaded. That the gesture of brushing against someone's arm is so innocuous reinforces readers' sense of the children's vulnerability whilst highlighting Madame's and other "normals'" (non-clones') inadvertent cruelty: despite their lack of maliciousness or ill-will, they wield a powerful influence over Kathy and her friends' fragile sense of selves, as evident in Kathy's consistent mental image of herself thereafter as a spider or "something" physically repulsive "that gave [Madame] the creeps" in all their subsequent interactions (35; 72).[120] The tentative confessions of vulnerability that Kathy occasionally volunteers with great restraint creates a poignant tension in the delicate concert of clones' and normals' relations to and mutual fears of each other, such as Kathy's abashed admission that "somewhere underneath, a part of us stayed like that: fearful of the world

around us, and—no matter how much we despised ourselves for it—unable quite to let each other go" (120).

Madame is a crucial pivot on which most of the novel's complex ethical tensions revolve. Her physical reactions to Kathy and the children—"the shudder [. . .] of real dread," "stiffen[ing]," "tuck[ing] her shoulders in tightly," "almost shrinking back," and "trembling"—allow readers to gain the clearest insight into most normals' relations to the cloned children (35; 248; 251; 270; 272). That this rejection is not maliciously intended, however, complicates readers' moral judgments of Madame and, by extension, the class of normals she represents. These ethical complexities are exacerbated by the fact that the normals' acts of uncaring (treating clones as non-human "[s]hadowy objects [from] test tubes") are paradoxically founded on their ethics of care for themselves and their loved ones (Whitehead, "Writing" 77; Levy, "Human" 13; *Never* 263; see p. 197 of this MS). Such ethically charged relations between normals and clones are reinforced by Ruth's comments about the gallery owner ("Do you think she'd have talked to us if she'd known *what* we really were?") and, perhaps most damningly and heartbreakingly, by Miss Emily's admission: "We're *all* afraid of you. I myself had to fight back my dread of you all almost every day I was at Hailsham. There were times I'd look down at you all from my study window and I'd feel such revulsion…" (*Never* 166; emphasis added; 261; 269).

Miss Emily's unexpected self-disclosure is particularly challenging for *Never*'s authorial audience, who up to this point have judged Miss Emily and Madame's Hailsham enterprise as essentially well-meaning (striving towards "more humane and better" relations between normals and clones in a largely uncaring world [259]) but as

nonetheless complicit in enabling the systematic butchering of clones. Their comparative kindness towards the students hones the children's passive acceptance of their fates, in part by sheltering them from the truth, timing disclosures (as Tommy later realizes) "very carefully and deliberately [. . .], so that we were always just too young to understand properly the latest piece of information" (82). In light of Miss Emily's honest self-disclosure, which comes as a surprise and a blow since she has never demonstrated her fears of the students, readers are forced to reevaluate our ethical assessments of the value of knowledge and honesty when it is emotionally so crushingly cruel, and the value of the "*sheltering*" protection Hailsham did offer the children against the world's indifference (268). Ishiguro thus deftly choreographs these complex dialectical ethical tensions between ignorance and knowledge, and kindness and cruelty, as Tommy and Kathy's muteness in the face of Miss Emily's honest disclosure speaks volumes.[121]

Given Miss Emily's emphasis, during this final meeting with Kathy and Tommy, on the good that Hailsham did bring about, readers are (paradoxically) likely to judge her a little more harshly, because it demonstrates her inability to see Hailsham's complicity in enabling a grossly unjust system. It is more difficult to extend these same judgments to Madame, given her reticence and greater "disillusion[ment]" (256) with how Hailsham's project ended, suggesting a different set of relations between Madame and the reader, as compared to Miss Emily and the reader.[122] Whatever their shortcomings, however, Miss Emily and Madame invite readers' complex ethical judgments because they belong to a handful of figures in the text who actively devoted their lives to improving the clones'

living conditions—even at personal costs to themselves, as implied by their selling of furniture and the "mountain of debt" they end up saddled with (265).

Ishiguro continually orchestrates such layered tensions in his formal shaping of a small number of key characters who carry the entire weight of the novel's complex ethical issues. *Never* appears to be a deceptively straightforward book, but coming to terms with its ethical implications is fraught with difficulty. Ishiguro's masterfully well-paced disclosure and withholding of information continually exacerbates readers' sense of the novel's ethical stakes. To paraphrase Gaut, "the complexity, the indeterminacy, [and] the *sheer* difficulty of moral choice" thus configured in the text's formal design attests to the novel's "aesthetic merit" (*Aesthetics*, "Ethical" 594).

A "quietly devastating, beautifully written novel," *Never* is beautiful in a particularly remarkable way, given that it is "so mundanely told, so excruciatingly ordinary in transit" (Dalfonzo, "Lucky Pawns" 54; *Maclean's*, "Accidental"; Wood, "Human" 36).[123] Unlike the rich, voluptuous pleasure of the linguistic and aural fireworks exhibited in *Written*, Ishiguro's novel exudes beauty in the "eloquence of situation" or gesture, which typically "issue[s] from something memorably done," making words ancillary to it; "what matters is the gesture, the little unpredictable thing done" (Donoghue, *Eloquence* 62). I suggest that such eloquence of situation or gesture functions within the formal shaping of aesthetic experience, by the "'internal integration and fulfillment' reached through a developing organization of meanings and energies" that produces its charged emotional qualities (Shusterman 27). By way of illustration, I turn to Kathy and Tommy's interactions with Madame in Part Three, which in turn depend

crucially on the "developing organization of meanings and energies" in Part I for their enormous affective power.

In addition to Kathy's initial realization that Madame was afraid of them, Madame unexpectedly chances upon Kathy once more, several years later, dancing to the song, "Never Let Me Go": "the odd thing was she was crying. [. . . .] sobbing and sobbing, staring at me [. . .] with that same look in her eyes she always had when she looked at us, like she was seeing something that gave her the creeps. Except this time there was something else, something extra in that look I couldn't fathom" (*Never* 71-72). When they encounter each other two decades later in Part III, they both recall the encounter and Madame shares her interpretation of the event in light of all Kathy and Tommy have just learned from Miss Emily about the "donations programme":

> "I saw a new world coming rapidly. More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh, cruel world. And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go. That is what I saw. It wasn't really you, what you were doing, I know that. But I saw you and it broke my heart. And I've never forgotten. [. . . .] Poor creatures. I wish I could help you. But now you're by yourselves."
>
> She reached out her hand, all the while staring into my face, and placed it on my cheek. I could feel a trembling go all through her body, but she kept her hand where it was, and I could see again tears appearing

in her eyes.

"You poor creatures," she repeated, almost in a whisper. (271-72)

Madame's tears and repetition of the phrase "poor creatures" is prefigured in her exchanges with Kathy and Tommy before Miss Emily emerges to explain Hailsham's role within the larger context of the "donations programme." When Tommy earnestly explains that they have come to apply for a deferral because they are certain of their love for each other, Miss Emily asks, with "little tears in her eyes as she looked from one to the other of us. 'You believe this? That you're deeply in love?'" (253). Tommy goes on to explain their belief that the purpose of Madame's gallery was to "help show you what we were like," prompting her to remark with "tears in her eyes again": "Poor creatures. What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans?" (253).

Madame's comparative reticence gives readers limited access to her mind, making it somewhat more difficult to fully interpret the implications of her silence and what little she does say. The configuration of events, particularly in the repeated references to Madame's tears and repetition of the phrase "poor creatures" (which jars in light of its nonhuman implications), however, allows us to draw at least two important inferences. The first is Madame's bittersweet recognition that at the very moment when Hailsham's political and social failure seemed sealed—the movers coming to sell their furniture that very day being a pointed reminder—Kathy and Tommy emerge as living proof of how their labors at Hailsham have succeeded on another level, as Madame asks repeatedly if they are sure they believe themselves to be deeply in love.[124] Madame and Miss Emily's efforts to convince the world of the children's humanity, that the student

clones' lives meant more than the sum of their four donations, is affirmed through Kathy and Tommy's love for each other: a love attesting to their humanity at a moment when the world has decided it no longer has any desire for nor need of it.

Madame also seems to intuitively realize now that their enterprise was perhaps more cruel than kind: even as they gave the children the hope that the "old kind world" still existed (vis-à-vis Hailsham's sheltering them from the world's uncaring indifference, a hope that led to Tommy and Kathy's present application for a deferral), that vision was ultimately always a sham. As Miss Emily explains, "this dream of yours, this dream of being able to *defer*. Such a thing would always have been beyond us to grant, even at the height of our influence" (261). Madame's tearful remark, "What did we do to you? With all our schemes and plans?" (253), is an implicit realization of the paradox of their Hailsham enterprise, which worked to shape the belief or appearance of an older, kinder world, only to dash those hopes with an ever greater force, since there was never going to be any alteration of the children's course toward premature death. The false hope of a potentially different course for their lives, of a better way for things to be, and of more equitable relations between normals and clones, had been a sham from the beginning, despite the promise epitomized by Hailsham. The point is most poignantly borne out by Tommy's question about whether the deferral rumor was ever true, before Hailsham's closure, to which "Miss Emily said gently: 'No, Tommy. There's nothing like that. Your life must now run the course that's been set for it'" (258-59; 266).

Despite the muted futility that characterizes Kathy and her friends' circumstances, Ishiguro's novel ultimately offers the implicit promise of a slightly kinder world, not at

the global social or political level of the storyworld, but carefully circumscribed in the locally changed relations between two women. In their final conversation, with tears in her eyes, Madame reaches out and places her hand on Kathy's cheek. The unexpectedly gentle act is charged with what Dewey and Shusterman term the "internal integration and fulfillment" of the text's "meanings and energies" (Shusterman 27). Riding on that single tentative touch is the cumulative weight of the unjust relations between clones and normals that has been gathering force throughout the novel, reaching its climax in Miss Emily's disclosures. But also at a personal level, it represents Madame's changed understanding and perspective ("I saw you and it broke my heart") as she touches Kathy's cheek, "all the while staring into my face," taking one tentative step past her personal fears of even innocuously brushing up against eight-year-old Kathy and her friends in Part One, to offer her own unexpectedly ordinary affirmation of solicitude in Part Three.[125] That Madame remains fearful—"I could feel a trembling go all through her body, but she kept her hand where it was"—heightens the moment's poignancy (272).[126]

The beauty in Madame's evolving relationship with Kathy, culminating in this eloquence of gesture, comes as close as the novel gets to an affirmation of the possibility of changed relations between normals and clones, in a way that sustains those tensions rather than simplistically erasing or resolving them. This reading is borne out by Tommy and Kathy's retrospective sense of intimacy with Madame: "The strange thing was—and Tommy agreed when we discussed it afterwards—although at Hailsham she'd been like this hostile stranger from the outside [. . .], Madame now appeared to me like an intimate, someone much closer to us" (252). Ishiguro's novel thus exudes beauty in the harmony

between the form- and moral-drives not only in its formal orchestrations of complex ethical tensions, but also in the eloquence of situation or gesture that is both surprising yet pleasurably fitting by the same token.

Conflict and complex harmonies between the form- and moral-drives

Nearly all of Ishiguro's critics inevitably point to the tension or conflict between the form- and moral-drives, particularly in his shaping of the narrator's voice. The "disjuncture between Kathy's unaffected manner and the horror of her fate" causes "consternation" and "unease in the novel's readers," given how her "colloquialism," "somewhat anxiously ingratiating" manner, "pale narration," "uninflected tone," and "very even, unemotional, matter-of-fact style" is "at odds with the disconcerting content of the narrative," representing a "calculated risk" on Ishiguro's part (Garlick, "Uncanny" 150; Puchner, "When"; Wood, "Human" 37; Desai, "Shadow" 51; Lochner, "Scientific" 229).

This risk has paid off with critics who recognize "Ishiguro's matching of Kathy's voice to her experience" as "a feat of imaginative sympathy and technique," where the "consistently battened-down tone is key to the [novel's] powerful emotional impact" (Beedham, *Novels* 138; Kerr, "*Never*"; Sim, *Kazuo* 81). Kathy's flatness of voice in describing her "horrifying world [. . .] almost in passing, as an afterthought," heightens the conflict between the form- and moral-drives: for the "more one learns about this underclass of organ donors, the more disturbing the casual blandness of Kathy H.'s voice becomes, leading to an ever increasing divide between her disaffected tone and one's

own growing horror and outrage" (Puchner, "When" 35-36; Lochner, "Scientific" 229).[127]

Though Ishiguro's "calculated risk" has paid off with readers and critics who recognize the strength of the dialectical energies underlying the jarring juxtaposition between voice and the ethically charged subject matter, others have judged the "simply bland and inept" Kathy to be an authorial failing, where the "lack of plausibility in the style [. . .] affect[s] the interest of the novel," which Philip Hensher attributes to Ishiguro's "limited linguistic inventiveness" in *Never* (Wood, "Human" 37; Jennings, "Clone" 44; Hensher, "School" 32-33; Beedham, *Novels* 138). These criticisms of Kathy's narratorial voice are further exacerbated by what some critics judge to have been problematically left unarticulated in the novel, both at the level of characters' and Ishiguro's authorial discourses. That is, they take issue with the "ethics of the told" and the "ethics of the telling" (Phelan, *Experiencing* 11; see also p. 187 of this MS). By putting examples of both character and authorial reticence in critical conversation with critics' conflicting interpretations of the unsaid, I use Donoghue's notion of the eloquence of "something almost being said" to suggest the strengths of such muted beauty, in what I term the oscillating conflict and harmony between the form- and moral-drives.

For all that Kathy does say, *Never* is, for the most part, characterized by a sense of great reticence, reinforced by Kathy and her friends' largely innocent collusions in collective (childhood) fantasies—which take on ethically problematic dimensions within the unarticulated larger context of their circumstances as systematically oppressed

suppliers of organs trapped in an unjust system of societal relations. From Ruth's formation of Miss Geraldine's "secret guard"[128] to hypotheses about "Madame's gallery," "dream futures," "possibles" (human clone models), "donations" (mandatory organ extractions), and "completions" (dying), Kathy and those around her remain continually fearful of confronting the truths about their circumstances and, by extension, engaging with the realities of the system of their oppression: "we all sensed that to probe any further [. . .] would get us into territory we weren't ready for yet" or "we'd all sense we were near territory we didn't want to enter, and the arguments would fizzle out" (*Never* 37; 139).

Most poignantly, towards the end of the novel, even after everything they learn from Miss Emily and Madame—when the blatantly unfair system of relations they are caught up in has been exposed—Kathy and Tommy remain quite unable to overcome these childhood fears:

> "You know why it is, Kath, why everyone worries so much about the fourth? It's because they're not sure they'll really complete. If you knew for certain you'd complete, it would be easier. But they never tell us for sure." [. . . .] How maybe, after the fourth donation, even if you've technically completed, you're still conscious in some sort of way; how then you find there are more donations, plenty of them, on the other side of that line; how there are no more recovery centres, no carers, no friends; how there's nothing to do except watch your remaining donations until they switch you off. It's horror movie stuff, and most of the time people

> don't want to think about it. [. . . .] As it was, after I dismissed it as rubbish, *we both shrank back from the whole territory*. (279; emphasis added)

The terrifying prospect of being unable to die even after their fourth "donation" is anguished and heartrending; it is up to Kathy to explicate (for the reader) Tommy's and all "donors'" unarticulated fears and mental images of dying alone. Such incidents are likely to have fuelled some critics' sense that "the complacency of the cloned students has provoked intense outrage among Ishiguro's readers, who cannot understand why Kathy and virtually all other characters in the novel express so little explicit anger at their condition and take so few steps to contest their fate" (Black, "Aesthetics" 791; McDonald, "Days" 81; Sawyer, *Kazuo* 239; Tsao, "Tyranny" 224). "[T]heir quiet responses," Valerie Sayers observes, "may roil readers more than open rebellion" ("Spare" 28).[129]

Hensher, for instance, is one such reader, lashing out at what he perceives to be *Never*'s implausibility of situation with a barrage of questions that the novel has failed to account for, suggesting that the plot's muted context is not really much more convincing than its style: "It is an awful thing to say, but I believed so little in any of the people, their situation, or the way they spoke that I didn't really care about what happened to them" ("School" 32-33).[130] Characters' affective muting and Ishiguro's muting of context, in the unanswered questions and the unsaid, take on particularly complex valences in *Never*, working both for *and* against the novel in terms of readerly engagements. Given *Never*'s premise, there is a noticeable absence "of wider sociopolitical debates about cloning and

organ harvesting" in Kathy's narrative; Simon Cooper suggests that "[t]he book's *weakness* lies in the fact that it is able to say nothing about the society that would sanction this kind of living organ factory" (Eatough, "Time" 136; Cooper, "Imagining" 20; emphasis added). Yet such muteness, I suggest, *is* its greatest indictment.

Even as *Never* implicitly engages with issues of class, posthumanism, bioethics, and discourses of atrocity (see pp. 196-99 of this MS), critics like Montella, Matthew Eatough, Mike Godwin, and others, have observed the simultaneous deliberate stripping away of contexts that gives the novel its curious dialectical energies.[131] It is in such stripping away or muting of contexts that I detect *Never*'s affinities with what Donoghue has termed an eloquence of "something almost being said" or Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "mute radiance." Drawing on Louise Glück's notion of the power of the "ellipsis," of "suggestion," and of "deliberate silence," an eloquence of the unsaid is "analogous to the unseen; for example, to the power of ruins, to works of art either damaged or incomplete," which haunt us in their inevitable allusions to larger unseen or unarticulated contexts (*Eloquence* 70). In such cases, these silences are "not mute, but pregnant and teeming with the figurations that call to be seen and to be expressed. [. . .] Merleau-Ponty's reference to the 'mute radiance' (*le rayonnment muet*) [. . . .] means that silence and vacuity are not defects, but the occasion for solitude and contemplation, a sense of fullness rather than emptiness" (Johnson, *Retrieval* 231).

Never's muted beauty creates occasions for ethical contemplation in several ways. Patricia Waugh notes that "the emotional absence and ethical failure enacted" in *Never* "is ironically and disturbingly redeemed by our proper responses as readers, pathos

worryingly elicited in our recognition of the cultural apathia" that characterizes the contemporary era (Groes and Lewis, *Kazuo* 5; 2). Their moral-drive stoked into action, readers are made to vividly identify with characters' affective muteness, with Kathy and her friends' fears, vulnerabilities, and the fragility of their modest dreams:

> Maybe once Hailsham was behind us, it was possible, just for that half year or so, [. . . .] to forget for whole stretches of time who we really were; [. . . .] to live in this cosy state of suspension in which we could ponder our lives without the usual boundaries. [. . . .] Mind you, none of us pushed it *too* far. I don't remember anyone saying they were going to be a movie star or anything like that. The talk was more likely to be about becoming a postman or working on a farm. (*Never* 143)

Occasions for ethical contemplation are also driven by the dialectical cycles of conflict and harmony between the form- and moral-drives, given Ishiguro's artful shaping of ethically complex characters. At numerous points in her narrative, for instance, Kathy exhibits an unconscious internalization of the system that oppresses her, particularly in her discourse pertaining to her work as a carer. When Tommy asks if it really matters at the end of it all, she remarks, "Of course it's important. A good carer makes a big difference to what a donor's life's actually like," simultaneously demonstrating her own sense of satisfaction in her work (282). Given all that has transpired, their disappointment at learning that deferrals have never existed and that Tommy's life must, as Miss Emily put it, "now run the course that's been set for it," that is, towards certain death, Kathy is seemingly unconscious of the hollow ring in her statement that carers make a "big

difference to what a donor's life's actually like" (266; 282). On the one hand, such incidents foster readers' conflicted moral judgments of Kathy's (and, by extension, of other clones') role as both victim and enabler; on the other hand, they heighten our moral revulsion at a system that makes the victims into enablers of their own and others' victimization.

Ishiguro's muting of contexts also creates occasions for ethical contemplation by generating a dialectical tension between two possible ways of interpreting the clones' behaviors: passive acceptance on the one hand, and active resistance on the other. To see Kathy and her friends as "complacen[t]" and complicit in the crimes being perpetuated against them is ethically complicated. Critics such as Hensher's judgments of aesthetic deficiencies are crucially related to what they perceive as Ishiguro's "failure" to fully flesh out contextual circumstances that would allow for a stronger assessment of the clones' passivity or for an evaluation of possible forms of resistance available to them. Unanswered questions such as why they took "so few steps to contest their fate," "why don't any of them ever run away," for instance, are factors that would allow for more explicit determinations of the degree to which Kathy and her friends resist or are complicit with the system (Black, "Aesthetics" 791; Hensher, "School" 32-33).

For these critics, the implicit question—which is not fully answerable given the text's muted refusal to flesh out these contexts—seems to hinge on whether these characters did all they possibly could and were ultimately unable to defy the system, or whether they were complicit in enabling its continuity. I suggest that Ishiguro is more invested in sustaining these tensions of oscillating conflict and harmony between the

form- and moral-drives than in simplistically resolving them. Furthermore, the question seems to imply that the only kind of resistance "properly" justifiable is a political one (which is certainly a necessary type).

Ishiguro is interested in more than one form of resistance. Kathy and her friends' forms of resistance are non-political, non-grandiose, and done on an individual level, for the self and their loved ones. For instance, though it "wasn't easy" to find Madame's address (which took "a long time" and included running "a few risks"), Ruth is determined to atone for her past mistakes and scrambles for a way to give those she loves, Kathy and Tommy, a chance to live and love a little longer despite her own impending death (233). Upon returning from the final meeting with Madame and Miss Emily, Tommy persists with his art despite its apparent futility in granting him a life-extension. Kathy's story serves as her form of narrative defense in the face of the cruel circumstances they are confronted with and over which she has no real control, except never to let those she loves go, by holding them both in her memory and narrative.[132] Their forms of resistance are not for the greater good of all clones or other "grand narratives" of justice, equality, or rights, but only their own local narratives of love and friendship.

Ironically the main form of political resistance (Madame and Miss Emily's), imperfect and inadequate as it was, is ultimately subverted, ending in Hailsham's closure and the two well-intentioned women's disillusionment. In the end, Ishiguro's beautifully-shaped novel perhaps suggests that we can each only put up the forms of resistance within our reach, to the best of our ability, by treating one another with greater love and

kindness, and holding on to the people and things that matter with an ever greater persistence; all forms of resistance are equally valid, so long as they are grounded in a loving and constructive vision of how we are to live and act, with and towards others.

Conclusion

Many post-war novelists have found the issue of beauty to be crucially tangled with issues of the moral and, correspondingly, have shaped literary projects in late twentieth and twenty-first century fiction that reflect this entanglement. Even when novelists themselves have not been explicitly concerned with foregrounding issues relating to the moral-drive, some critics and readers are nonetheless interested in engaging with these issues. I identify *Written* as sitting more squarely in the form/sense rather than form/moral engagement of beauty (despite challenges to the moral-drive that a handful of critics have detected) because Winterson uses aesthetic strategies that are invested in formal and sensuous dimensions of her prose rather than the moral or ethical.

In comparison with the other two drives, our sense of the moral-drive is perhaps more susceptible to change, as mediated by continually evolving social and cultural contextual understandings. When Winterson first published *Written* in 1992, the implicit challenge to engage readers at the thematic level—to enlarge their understandings of the moral and of "permissible" loves (whether it be adulterous love or the ungendered narrator's potentially homosexual or transgender perspective on love)—takes on slightly different implications for a reader who picks it up now, twenty-three years later in 2015,

given the altered social landscape.[133] The text's formal and sensual engagements, on the other hand, have remained relatively resistant to such contextual changes. Winterson herself has remarked that she is far less interested in these thematic engagements and this authorial vision translates into her choice of aesthetic strategies.[134]

What does this then mean in terms of the form/moral engagement of beauty that I use to characterize Ishiguro's aesthetic project in *Never*? While *Written*'s engagement of the moral-drive is heavily anchored in its thematic dimensions and its mode of narration, *Never*'s engagement of the ethical is implicit in the novel's entire aesthetic design, including Ishiguro's shaping of voice and layering of ethical tensions. Thus, though *Never* is likewise susceptible to the contextual changes that the moral-drive is always subject to—such as humankind's changing perceptions of bioethical boundaries—its moral/ethical engagements are more persistent because they are not dominantly "issues-driven" and hence "time-sensitive." The engagements between the form- and moral-drives that propel the text remain as beautifully moving as ever, a decade after its publication; in fact, Whitehead points out that by the time Ishiguro was writing *Never*, the "reality" of its context was already becoming somewhat "obsolete," allowing him "to shift perspective from the actuality of scientific practice to the moral and ethical questions that it raises" ("Writing" 61).[135] When we connect such authorial choices to his decision to set *Never* in the recent past (England in the late 1990s), predating its publication (2005), Ishiguro's deliberate muting of such contexts suggests his ardent desire to dislodge his novel from continually changing social, political, and scientific landscapes in order to shape an enduring novel of timeless beauty.

Ishiguro's novel also shows that there is no simple or straightforward continuity between ethics and aesthetics, but that a sensitivity to beauty enlarges our capacity for ethical response, especially in the final exquisite exchanges among Madame, Miss Emily, Kathy, and Tommy. While Miss Emily and Madame's Hailsham enterprise was essentially a move towards doing what was right/good/ethical, Miss Emily's startlingly honest revelations and articulations of these motives at the end of *Never* are likewise moments of crushing cruelty. To miss the novel's beauty is to miss the opportunity to be profoundly moved by the strength of these ethical moments. Kathleen Marie Higgins notes that "beauty allows moral insight to develop further" because it "develops our capacity for nuance" in a way that "moral outrage typically does not. [. . . .] Without a sense of degrees, moral indignation is stupid and dangerous. Beauty may indeed have limits as a moral arm, but it is indispensable to reflective and responsible moral outrage" ("Whatever" 34-35). I ultimately argue that beauty can only enlarge our capacity for ethical response, not dictate nor create it. Beauty works to tutor the faculties, including those responsible for the moral-drive, in the long run.

Lyotard suggests that it is an aesthetic of the sublime rather than the beautiful that characterizes mid-to late twentieth-century works of art; by contrast, I propose that in the post-postmodern era of the contemporary we may be making a cyclical re-turn to beauty. At stake is not simply an inherited beauty, but rather a return that resurrects the value of Platonic beauty alongside Kantian beauty. Platonic beauty, as reconceived by Nehamas, is committed to beauty as love/*erōs*, emphasizing an invested, interested, and passionate attitude towards beauty, while Kantian beauty is more strongly affiliated with an

analytical, disinterested, and contemplative attitude (Nehamas, *Promise* 6-7; Kant, *Aesthetics*, "Critique" 134).[136] What these two conceptions of beauty share in common, however, is their commitment to liberty and the free play of the faculties. Beauty cannot be a matter of propaganda, even when its purpose is a worthy one, such as fostering a more ethical outlook on the world; instead, it works at the height of its power when the form-drive is in free play with the sense- and moral-drives. Beauty's calling is ultimately to a poetic truth.

Coda

Art's autonomy takes on a new dimension in the aesthetic practices of twentieth and twenty-first century novelists, whose orchestrations of play, the sublime, and beauty, invite readers to participate in their always unfinished acts of meaning-making. I suggest that this active co-construction of meaning constitutes the dominant shift in updating our understanding of aesthetic paradigms in the present moment. In chapters one and two, I identified the tensions between the form- and sense- drives, suggesting that through our participation in the game-like structures and textual mayhem of postmodern fictional worlds, texts like *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *Lanark* partially shift the onus of creating narrative form onto readers.

Chapter three posits that the postmodern literary sublime is propelled by the sense-drive in increasing degrees of conflict with the moral-drive as we move from the mathematical to the dynamical sublime, foregrounding the active exercise of readers' moral freedom—in our resistance to representations of suffering in *Blood Meridian* for instance. As Adorno observes of twentieth-century art objects of beauty: "Less and less does the beautiful actualize itself in a particular purified shape; more and more does it manifest itself in the dynamic totality of the work of art" (*Beauty*, "Concept" 80). Grasping this pleasurable dynamic totality in the text's complex coherences, unity,

orderliness, symmetry, pattern, and so on, becomes the reader's key task in our discernments of beauty in chapter four. By putting the form-drive in (complex) harmonies with the sense- and moral-drives respectively, authors stage encounters with literary beauty in a dynamic plurality of ways, faithful to beauty's spirit of polysemy.

Robert Morgan notes that "the omnipresent glut of information" in the contemporary age "has distorted our means of sensory intake," whereby the "reception of data—scientific, economic, cultural, and political—has become so overabundant as to suggest infinity" (*Uncontrollable* 75), which has at least two implications for our aesthetic engagements with literature. On the one hand, to paraphrase Matei Calinescu, it has become far too easy for rich literary aesthetic experiences to become lost in the glut of kitschy literature, advertisements, and other cultural artifacts that mimic and/or create abbreviated or diluted versions of the pleasures we encounter with aesthetically well-shaped literary texts that demand of readers more rigorous and complex engagements.[137] On the other hand, as Morgan notes, it has become more difficult to give validity to "sensory experience" or "the rightness of the senses as a perceptual filter in determining quality in works of art," which are invariably blunted or dulled by the daily informational gluts, and sensory overloads and assaults (*Uncontrollable* 75). Thus, as I suggest in chapter four's epigraph, in the contemporary age, Santayana's vivid sense that "[t]o feel beauty is a better thing than to understand how we come to feel it" perhaps rings truer today than ever, for feeling beauty—which, as I demonstrate in *Written on the Body* and *Never Let Me Go*, is crucial for engaging with the texts' complexities—has become ever more difficult and elusive in the present age of distraction.

Notwithstanding such challenges, aesthetically pleasing works of literary art continue to be written in the twenty-first century and, as I noted in the introduction, the resurgence of interest in aesthetics and beauty over the past two decades, both in the arts and in the critical paradigms used to examine them, makes the present an opportune moment to reexamine our notions of how aesthetics has survived the postmodern age, for "[n]either art nor philosophy was kind to beauty during the twentieth century" (Nehamas, *Promise*).

Danto observes that beauty "connects with something inherent in human nature, which would explain why aesthetic deprivation—depriving individuals of beauty—should have taken on the importance it did in the artistic agendas of the avant-garde" (*Abuse* 33). He adds that "[b]eauty is an option for art and not a necessary condition. But it is not an option for life. It is a necessary condition for life as we would want to live it. That is why beauty, unlike the other aesthetic qualities [. . .], is a value" (160). Precisely because beauty is implicated in life as we would want to live it, I suggest that given the avant-gardes' artistic agenda of aesthetic deprivation, it was simply a matter of time before beauty would return. In fact, readers' engagements with aesthetic experiences such as the beautiful have never gone away despite the waxing and waning of interest in critical aesthetic paradigms; what is now in need of a new conceptualization is our changed relationship to the aesthetic in light of postmodernism's skepticism and "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Lyotard, *Postmodern* xxiv).

The theoretical model I put forward to examine this relationship is a dynamic one because the form-, sense-, and moral-drives are ever in need of updating, in reference to

the context of their particular historical moment. Though aspects of the form-drive such as global aesthetic shape are relatively less susceptible to historical variability, the effects of formal stylistic practices that dominate particular literary periods or artistic movements are nonetheless subject to historical influence, as noted in the introduction (see pp. 8-9 of this MS): when the effects of defamiliarization "wear off," for instance, the metaleptic transgressions we encounter in *At Swim-Two-Birds* lose some of their initial disorientating power for readers accustomed to postmodern literary techniques. Writers are thus constantly challenged to manifest the dynamic energies of the form- and sense-drives in ever new ways to surprise and engage their readers. The moral-drive, as I observed at the end of chapter four, is particularly susceptible to change in our constantly evolving sense of ethical relations with our fellow human beings.

Since aesthetics as a field of study works to explain "our basic intuitions about [literary] art and beauty" (Dutton, *Art Instinct* 39), particularly the pleasures we derive from them, attending to aesthetic engagements highlights an important aspect of readerly experience that historical and sociopolitical approaches tend to overlook. The pleasures of literary fiction draw us to invest our time, attention, interest, and emotions in a wide range of thematic concerns: from global capitalism's consequences on Scotland to the insatiable human appetite for violence buried in historical annals. My three-drive model thus complements other ways of reading post-world war fiction—such as historical approaches to *Lanark* or *Blood Meridian* (see pp. 70-72; 135-39 of this MS)—by highlighting how authors use sophisticated and aesthetically well-shaped projects to

engage and challenge readers' capacities for meaning-making as they stretch our form- and moral-drives.

Though the three modes of play, sublime, and beauty do not exhaust the diverse aesthetics organizing post-war literature in English, they can be viewed as junctures that offer us an alternative trajectory for thinking about forms of literary practice during the period in question. Categories also shade off into one another, with porous rather than rigid borders: for instance, the proliferation of worlds in radically playful texts (especially highly anti-mimetic worlds requiring great leaps of the imagination) tend to verge on the mathematically sublime's postulation of infinite worlds. Texts such as Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, for example, seem to comfortably straddle multiple aesthetic modes: at the chapter-level, it hovers uncertainly between the categories of play and the mathematically sublime, but the novel's ultimate aesthetic commitment belongs to the mode of beauty.

Future directions or related extensions of this project include a more fine-grained consideration of how the interactions between drives may yield multiple aesthetic categories—for example, harmony between the form- and sense-drives may account for other aesthetic modes in addition to beauty—as well as accounting for emerging categories of the aesthetic (such as Ngai's "zany," "cute," and "interesting") or cross cultural aesthetics such as the Japanese mode of *wabi-sabi*, to see how they might fall within (or out of) these parameters. More ambitiously, I am also interested to see how the model functions when tested on other kinds of artistic practices.

Aesthetics works to "explain our basic intuitions about art and beauty," and to account for "the pleasures that we derive from art" (Dutton, *Art Instinct* 39). Though my project works to explicate (and thus implicitly defend) aesthetic dimensions of fiction as integral to the reading experience, I recognize that the experience of art—especially the literary arts—is certainly not limited only to the aesthetic; but there are important reasons for focusing on the aesthetic, as I hope to have shown in this study. If critical scholarship and literary analyses are implicit attempts to claim legitimacy for, prioritize, or foreground particular interpretations, I am making the case that responding to a literary work of art's aesthetic dimensions is a particularly rich and crucial form of readerly engagement. After all, as Shusterman observes, "mere pleasure is far from a trivial thing," since as human beings, we spend a significant part of our lives in pursuit of "sensual and emotional satisfaction" (29), be it through family, friendship, religion, travel, art, or love. Attending to the aesthetic enlarges and enriches our capacities for vivid experience, both in literature and in life.

Notes

1. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe suggests that "[i]t is now quite clear that when we hear the term anti-aesthetic we mean anti-beauty, and that this is because the beautiful is regarded as inherently frivolous" ("Attractiveness," *Deconstruction* 14). Despite the dominantly anti-aesthetic emphasis in critical paradigms, postmodern theorists like Jameson and Lyotard have interestingly (re)turned to and revised the eighteenth-century aesthetic category of the sublime to characterize this moment in history—an issue I take up more fully in chapter three when I deal with the historical trajectory of the sublime.

2. Jameson uses "Lacan's account of schizophrenia" (i.e. "breakdown[s] in the signifying chain") as a new "aesthetic model" to characterize the postmodern period, describing it as "a "virtual grab bag [. . .] of disjoined subsystems and raw materials and impulses of all kinds" (*Postmodernism* 26; 31).

3. The resurgence of interest in both the aesthetic and beauty from the final decade of the twentieth century onward is well-documented: "In 1994 curator Ann Goldstein organized 'Pure Beauty: Some Recent Work from Los Angeles' for the American Center in Paris in cooperation with the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles"; in 1995, "Lynn Gumpert organized 'La Belle et La Bête' (Beauty and the Beast) for the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris"; in 1996, "Dan Cameron's 'On

Beauty' for the Regina Gallery in Moscow"; "in 1997, Mosa Martinez's 'On Life, Beauty, Translations and Other Difficulties,' the fifth Istanbul Biennial"; in 1999, Benezra and Viso curated 'Regarding Beauty: A View of the Late Twentieth Century' at the Smithsonian's Hirshorn Museum in Washington D.C. (Benezra, Viso, and Danto 12).

Writing in 1997, Christopher Beach notes that "questions concerning the nature and role of the aesthetic stubbornly persist in our discussion of both literature and culture. In recent years, books by Michael Sprinker, Richard Shusterman, Peter de Bolla, Terry Eagleton, David Carroll, Jonathan Loesberg, Frances Ferguson, J. M. Bernstein, and Christopher Norris, amongst others, have attempted to accommodate discussions of the aesthetic within the contemporary discourse of literary theory. It would seem that at the very moment when the study of the aesthetic is said to be on the verge of disappearing [. . .] it has reasserted itself more strongly than ever" (*Beauty* 96).

4. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, R. G. Collingwood suggested that "[t]he understanding of the audience's function as collaborator is a matter of importance for the future of aesthetic theory and of art itself" (*Aesthetics*, "Principles" 291). Peter Rabinowitz notes that during the heyday of New Criticism in the 1940s and 1950s, the reader or "audience was generally ignored by the formalists," but both political and literary forces "brought audiences (especially readers) centre stage" in the 1960s and early 70s ("Audience" 29).

5. For instance, Leo "Tolstoy rejected much of the celebrated art of his day because it did not fulfil his preferred criterion of communicating moral feeling between human beings" (Janaway, *Aesthetics* 165).

6. George Santayana, for example, suggests that the sublime "is the supremely, the intoxicatingly beautiful" (*Sense*, §60).

7. From an evolutionary perspective, Dutton suggests that "[t]he ability to imagine scenarios and states of affairs not present to direct consciousness must have had adaptive power in human prehistory, as it does in today's world. [. . . .] Imagination allows for the weighing of indirect evidence, making chains of inference for what might have been or what might come to be" (*Art Instinct* 105).

8. Nietzsche was also influenced by Schiller's philosophical thought, and characterized "the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence" ("Birth" 230).

9. Frederick Aldama asserts that "[a]ll aesthetic experience is about shape and meaning," and he calls shape "a necessary condition for aesthetic pleasure" (Aldama and Hogan, *Conversations* 116-18).

10. Our judgments of beauty as the hope "of *establishing* a community that centers around it—a community, to be sure, whose boundaries are constantly shifting and whose edges are never stable" (Nehamas, *Promise* 82).

11. Huizinga, *HL* ix.

12. Huizinga explains from the outset that "it was not my object to define the place of play among all the other manifestations of culture, but rather to ascertain how far culture itself bears the character of play," that is, to understand play as a "cultural phenomenon" (*HL* ix). It is thus perhaps unsurprising that later theorists like Robert Detweiler and Kimberly Bohman-Kalaja find Huizinga's theory lacks organization or is "so broad that it is indistinct," since the scope of his model "incorporates nearly every human behavior into a broad definition of Play," rendering it "almost useless" for a direct "application to a literary-theoretical mode" (Bohman-Kalaja 15-16; Detweiler 57).

13. Sutton-Smith's nine categories of play are "subjective play," "solitary play," "playful behaviors," "informal social play," "vicarious audience play," "performance play," "celebrations and festivals," "contests," and "risky play." Reading falls under what he terms "solitary play" (299-301).

14. As Ryan observes, "*agôn*" is the least useful here, since it "has little to offer on the metatextual level" (*VR* 183), and though "*alea*" is useful for thinking about certain kinds of modernist and postmodernist textual designs, such as Tristan Tzara's cut-up technique of composing Dadaist poems that actively work to incorporate the dimension of chance into their texts, I do not discuss it here since it has limited relevance for understanding *At Swim*'s and *Lanark*'s textual designs.

15. For a fuller sense of this debate, see Ryan's entry on "Possible-Worlds Theory" in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan), pp. 446-50.

16. Ryan's principle of minimal departure has obvious resonances with Walton's "reality principle" and "principle of mutual belief," and also in part with Wolfgang Iser's contention that "omissions" or textual gaps created by withheld information "are repaired by the reader's own imagination" (Ryan, "Possible" 447; Iser, "Reading" 36).

17. The Russian Formalists used the term *fabula* to denote the chronological sequence of events that occur in the textual world.

18. For instance, while the inclusion of V. Wright's letter is signaled by the use of a heading, no headnote is used to signal the switch from the end of the letter back to the narrative present (*ASTB* 9).

19. At times, these italicized headings are also used to gloss information that the student-narrator provides: for instance, when the narration breaks off into a new paragraph as he remarks on the "*Quality of rasher in use in household:*" or provides a *"Description of my uncle*:" (*ASTB* 6).

20. Transworld identity signals the "constancy" of the character's identity and "its congruence between multiple localizations"—its "persisten[ce] through alternate states of affairs" (Eco, *Role* 230ff.).

21. See *ASTB* pp. 31; 49; 51; Shanahan and Lamont nearly left the country with "two decadent Greek scullions, Timothy Danaos and Dona Ferentes," who turned out to be "employed [. . .] as panders by an eminent Belgian author who was writing a saga on the white slave question" (*ASTB* 99). The two Greek names are a play on a Latin phrase

from Virgil—who happens *not* to be Belgian—in the *Aeneid*, "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes" meaning "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts."

22. "Finn MacCool, a legendary character hired by Trellis [. . . .], Antony Lamont he has already hired" (*ASTB* 57-58).

23. In this section, I focus on delineating TAPW 1 and its possible sub worlds, since *At Swim* devotes comparatively more attention to this TAPW than others. However, an example of another TAPW (which I shall call TAPW 2) are the events outlined in William Falconer's "The Shipwreck" (*ASTB* 209-10). Inhabitants of TAPW 2 include "the master, and his officers, Albert, Rodmond, and Arion, Palemon, son of the owner of the ship," "Anna, the daughter of Albert," and so on (209). The reader is cued to delineate this as an APW of the TAW (rather than of TAPW 1) because we are explicitly told that this is a poem that the student-narrator is perusing in "a volume [he took] from the mantelpiece" (207). O'Brien takes a poem that exists in the AW—the events of the poem technically constitute another TAW for the reader—and circumscribes it as TAPW 2 to the TAW inhabited by the student-narrator, thereby affirming the reader's use of the minimal departure principle to approach the TAW, given the "identity of inventory" (Ryan, *PW* 32). Simply put, Falconer's poem, which exists both in the AW and TAW, functions as a type of accessibility relation that affirms the reader's use of minimal departure principle to approach the TAW.

24. “Finn is without honour in the breast of a sea-blue book, Finn that is twisted and trampled and tortured for the weaving of a story-teller’s book-web. Who but a book-poet would dishonour the God-big Finn for the sake of a gap-worded story?” (*ASTB* 15).

25. *The Madness of Suibhne* (Sweeny being the Anglicized form of the Celtic “Suibhne”) expounds the tale of Mad King Sweeny whose violent temper and confrontation with the cleric Saint Ronan becomes his undoing. The sound of Ronan’s bell enrages Sweeny, who tosses Ronan’s psalter into the lake and seizes Ronan by the hand. When Sweeny assaults Ronan on another occasion, the latter curses him and the bulk of the narrative deals with the consequences of the curse. Shortly before Sweeny meets his death, he encounters another cleric, Moling.

In Orlick’s iteration of Dermot Trellis’s fate in TAPsW 1.2, a cleric also named Moling appears in Dermot’s bedroom (*ASTB* 164). Dermot takes on Sweeny’s attributes from *The Madness of Suibhne*, as he is likewise annoyed by a ringing bell. It is at this point that TAPW 1 Shanahan interrupts the proceedings of TAPsW 1.2, urging Orlick to hurry things along. Such interruptions from characters in TAPW 1 cause the events of TAPsW 1.2 to be re-started several times—yet another game-like quality of O’Brien’s postmodern textual worlds (*ASTB* 163; 168; 170). In one of these iterations, readers are told “Trellis took [an unnamed] saint by a hold of his wasted arm” and tore his breviary “until it was a-tatters in his angry hand” (*ASTB* 170). The AW Sweeny story has therefore been scrambled and readapted in TAPsW 1.2, where Trellis begins to take on some of Sweeny’s attributes.

26. I use the term *aesthetic judgments*, as defined by Phelan, in relation to readerly evaluations relating to "the artistic quality of the narrative and of its parts" (*Experiencing Fiction* 9).

27. However, Nastler, posited in the Epilogue as the author responsible for penning Lanark's life in a novel which will also be called *Lanark*, vociferously protests: "'*I am not writing* science fiction! Science-fiction stories have no real people in them, and all my characters are real, real, real people'"; what he claims to be doing "'is not science, it is magic!'" (*Lanark* 497-98).

28. "Identity of inventory" is established when the "TAW is accessible from AW if TAW and AW are furnished by the same objects" (Ryan, *PW* 32).

29. "Taxonomic compatibility" between AW and TAW are established "if both worlds contain the same species, and the species are characterized by the same properties" (Ryan, *PW* 32).

30. Gray himself explains, diseases like dragonhide are "metaphors for bad mental states, like the tortures in Dante's Inferno" (Gray and Axelrod 106; Falconer 178; Rhind 115).

31. Phelan uses the term *instabilities* to describe the introduction of "unstable relationships between characters" that "generates the progression of the narrative" (*Experiencing Fiction* 16).

32. Gloopy is a particularly challenging character for readers to process, since his voice is resurrected in the Institute elevator in chapter 10, while he himself makes a

return to Provan in chapter 42, and possibly at the end of the novel as well (86; 520-21; 559).

33. I do not necessarily, however, consider the Oracle an inhabitant of the TAW, since only his/her *voice* is represented. As de Juan observes, “The Oracle seems to live in a different world and in a different time — although simultaneous and parallel to that of Lanark and the other characters — and it is only the mutual need for help that acts as a link and brings both worlds together” (93-94).

34. Consider critics’ comments with regard to the relationship between Glasgow and Unthank: “Lanark’s Unthank is a fantastical, futuristic version of Thaw’s 1950s Glasgow” (Falconer 172; 188-89); “a futuristic Glasgow (in the form of the infernal Unthank)” (Wickman 179); “the dystopian Glasgow-like Unthank” (Bernstein 18); Gray’s “vision of Unthank, where the simulacrum is a grotesque parody of post-industrial Glasgow” (Smethurst 120-21; 131); “Unthank, as almost every critic has pointed out, is the dystopian version of Glasgow, Glasgow’s apocalyptic twin [. . .], ‘a nightmarish version of the city after ecological meltdown’” (de Juan 182); “Unthank, an infernal or perhaps purgatorial version of Glasgow, where he[Lanark] lived under the name Duncan Thaw” (Duncan 43); “Unthank is Glasgow in the industrial, post-war world” (Rhind 101-102).

35. “The road was hidden by a wilderness of broken chariots which loomed in the mist like a fleet of sunk battleships, the shafts, axles, broken rims and naked spokes

sticking up between sand-logged hulls like masts, anchors and titanic paddlewheels" (*Lanark* 380).

36. In book two, for instance, Thaw "invented a maggot called the Flealouse. It was white and featureless [. . . .]. While elaborating this fantasy he fell asleep several times" (*Lanark* 233). Words such as "invented," "fantasy," and "fell asleep" are explicit textual cues that direct the reader to regard such moments as a relocation from the TAW to a TAPW.

37. "Indeterminacies specific to narrative pertain to who does what, when, how often, at what ontological level or modality, and to what effect, in the narrative world that perceivers/readers (re-)construct" (Kafalenos 241). Ambiguity, gaps in the narrative discourse, and unreliability, amongst other factors, all introduce indeterminacy to the textual world.

38. The concept of "branching" is used both in possible-worlds theory and game theory whereby "the classical ontological model" is challenged "through branching plots that lead to plural actual worlds, or through the blurring of the distinction between actuality and possibility" (Ryan, "Possible" 449). Game design mechanics employ branching "to organize narrative action" by creating "the existence of multiple paths in a narration. [. . . .] video game designers have generally allowed for moderate branching while implementing plot bottlenecks, through which all players have to go in order for the story to advance" (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith, and Tosca 181).

39. Gérard Genette distinguishes between "story" and "discourse," which entails "two kinds of time and two kinds of order": *fabula* or story follows its own "internal time sequence" according to the chronology of events, such that we understand events in "the order in which they are supposed to occur" from the earliest to the latest, while *sjuzhet* or discourse sequence refers to "the order in which things are read" from the first page to the last (Abbott, *Cambridge* 16-17).

40. Phelan's rhetorical model identifies "three kinds of readerly interest in narrative: the mimetic, the thematic, and the synthetic. Mimetic interests arise when the narrative represents characters, places, and events as like those we encounter in the extratextual world. Thematic interests arise from the way that the narrative highlights the ideational/political/ethical components of those characters, places, and events—or its ways of representing them. Synthetic interests arise when the narrative calls attention to its various elements as building blocks in its larger construction" ("Implausibilities" 171).

41. "The past seemed a muddle of memories without sequence, like a confused pile of old photographs. To sort them out he tried recalling his life from the start. First he had been a child, then a schoolboy, then [. . . .]. He had been granted an unexpected holiday with Sandy, then something cold had stung his cheek— His thoughts recoiled from that point like fingers from a scalding plate, but he forced them back to it" (*Lanark* 517-18). Furthermore, de Juan points out that such symptomatic propensities for creating their own memories are evident in other characters as well: Thaw's mother, for instance, likewise creates her own reality and recontextualizes "past events to suit her personal

wishes or needs" (142). The Oracle relates that after her death, Thaw finds a letter she wrote, describing a fond memory she had of him when he was six or seven—except the memory in question had been of his sister, Ruth: "Mrs. Thaw had always preferred him to Ruth and had unconsciously transferred the incident" (*Lanark* 203).

42. As Hobsbaum observes, the scene where Lanark and Sandy bury the dead seagull together is made extremely "poignant by the sense of loss that inevitably" ensues: "Alasdair Gray has many themes. But this one, the withdrawal of paradise, is what renders him highly distinctive. It is this that causes the hills and valleys, the variegations of intensity, the quirks and the depressions of his prose. There is something of torment in his effort to establish happiness in action only to use even greater technique for the purpose of taking it away. The loss of Eden becomes more poignant than Eden itself. No writer can simulate happiness more convincingly than Alasdair Gray. His prose burgeons with joy, with discovery [. . .]. But this is the fiery surface that is an exhalation over the fathomless depths of despair" (147).

43. "In literature, *ilinx* and its free play are represented by what Bakhtin calls the carnivalesque: chaotic structures, creative anarchy, parody, absurdity, heteroglossia," the "transgression of ontological boundaries," "the treatment of identity as a plural, changeable image—in short, the destabilization of all structures, including those created by the text itself" (Ryan, *Narrative as VR* 186).

44. Andrew Slade also notes that with the sublime, "we are always in the proximity of violence" (*Lyotard* 23).

45. Longinus also proposes five sources of the sublime: the “grandeur of thought,” “vigorous and spirited treatment of the passions,” “figures of thoughts and figures of speech,” “dignified expression” in diction and use of metaphor, and, most importantly, “majesty and elevation of structure” in all of the above (*Sublime* §12).

46. See Jahan R. Ramazani’s “Yeats: Tragic Joy and the Sublime” for his thorough analysis of the sublime in poems such as “The Magi,” “Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen,” and “The Second Coming,” amongst others.

47. Barnett Newman, in particular, has invited special attention from critics, given that his magnum opus, entitled *Vir Herocius Sublimis*, explicitly invites his viewers and critics to associate his work with the aesthetic tradition of the sublime. Shaw suggests that in Newman’s paintings, “a yearning for transcendence is pitted against an open acknowledgement of the impossibility of this desire” (*Sublime* 7).

48. See Lyotard, *Sublime* 58; Gilbert-Rolfe, *BCS* 63; Derrida, “Parergon,” *Sublime* 43.

49. “But what can I say about them? In colour they were not white or black and certainly bore no intermediate colour; they were far from dark and anything but bright. But strange to say it was not their unprecedented hue that took most of my attention. They had another quality that made me watch them wild-eyed, dry-throated and with no breathing. I can make no attempt to describe this quality. It took me hours of thought long afterwards to realise why these articles were astonishing. *They lacked an essential property of all known objects*. I cannot call it shape or configuration since shapelessness

is not what I refer to at all. I can only say that those objects, not one of which resembled the other, were of no known dimensions. They were not square or rectangular or circular or simply irregularly shaped nor could it be said that their endless variety was due to dimensional dissimilarities. Simply their appearance, if even that word is not inadmissible, was not understood by the eye and was in any event indescribable. That is enough to say" (O'Brien, *Third* 135).

50. "I think I had made up my mind to go and had taken a few faltering steps forward when some influence came upon my eyes and dragged them round till they were again resting upon the house. They opened widely in surprise and once more my startled cry jumped out from me. A bright light was burning in a small window in the upper story. [. . . .] They were all empty, deserted, with no light or sign of light in any of them. Afraid to stand still, I went quickly to all the other rooms, but found them all in the same way [. . . .]. The light from the upper window was still streaming out [. . .]. The window seemed to be in the centre of the house. Feeling frightened, deluded, cold and bad-tempered I strode back into the hall [. . . .]. I felt I was standing within three yards of something unspeakably inhuman and diabolical which was using its trick of light to lure me on to something still more horrible. [. . . .] I was standing, not in Mathers' house, *but inside the walls of it*" (O'Brien, *Third* 175; 177-78; 182).

51. Hooker (*Contemporary Sublime* 48) does not use the term in the way I set out here, but his phraseology inspired my thought processes here.

52. "For O'Brien's purpose," Clissmann observes, "it is important that the reader should not know that this is a hell earned for the crime until the end, for this would make the story a fantasy rather than what seems to be, as it is read, a picture of dislocated reality. O'Brien goes to considerable lengths to make the reality seem convincing, though he does give many clues as to the true state of affairs [. . .]. The choice of a first-person narrator serves to make the reader identify with the fear and bewilderment of the narrator as he goes through his strange experience." (156)

53. See Hopper, *Portrait* 220.

54. MacCruiskeen "got up and went to the dresser and took out his patent music-box which made sounds too esoterically rarefied to be audible to anybody but himself. [. . . .] The silence in the room was so unusually quiet that the beginning of it seemed rather loud when the utter stillness of the end of it had been encountered.

How long this eeriness lasted or how long we were listening intently to nothing is unknown" (*Third* 105-6).

55. "Here I had a strange idea not unworthy of de Selby. Why was Joe so disturbed at the suggestion that he had a body? What if he *had* a body? A body with another body inside it in turn, thousands of such bodies within each other like the skins of an onion, receding to some unimaginable ultimum?" (*Third* 118).

56. Mathers's "eyes were horrible. Looking at them I got the feeling that they were not genuine eyes at all but mechanical dummies animated by electricity or the like, with a tiny pinhole in the centre of the 'pupil' through which the real eye gazed out

secretively and with great coldness. Such a conception, possibly with no foundation at all in fact, disturbed me agonizingly and gave rise in my mind to interminable speculations as to the colour and quality of the real eye and as to whether, indeed, it was real at all or merely another dummy with its pinhole on the same plane as the first one so that the real eye, possibly behind thousands of these absurd disguises, gazed out through a barrel of serried peep-holes." (*Third* 24-25)

57. Of de Selby's investigation into the nature of time and eternity by a system of mirrors: "he constructed the familiar arrangement of parallel mirrors, each reflecting diminishing images of an interposed object indefinitely. The interposed object in this case was de Selby's own face and this he claims to have studied backwards through an infinity of reflections by means of 'a powerful glass'. What he states to have seen through his glass is astonishing. He claims to have noticed a growing youthfulness in the reflections of his face according as they receded, the most distant of them—too tiny to be visible to the naked eye—being the face of a beardless boy of twelve" (O'Brien, *Third* 64-65).

58. "As he collapsed full-length in the mud he did not cry out. Instead I heard him say something softly in a conversational tone—something like 'I do not care for celery' or 'I left my glasses in the scullery'" (*Third* 16). Carol Taaffe likewise agrees that "Mathers's murder is coldly and grotesquely comic" (*Ireland* 80).

59. *Blood Meridian* is richly fashioned from a wealth of historical and geographical sources, including Samuel Chamberlain's memoir *My Confession:*

Recollections of a Rogue and other texts; see John Sepich's *Notes on* Blood Meridian for a comprehensive list.

60. The novel has alternately been read through the lens of Gnosticism (Daughtery, "Gravers"; Mundik, "Striking" 73; Frye, *Cambridge* 6) and "as part of the continuing American tradition of literary naturalism" (Owens, *Cormac* 45).

61. See Woodward, "Venomous"; Jarrett, *Cormac* 79; 89; Shaviro, "Very" 146; 153; Bowers, "Reading" 6-9; 26; Owens, *Cormac* 6; Evans, "Second" 82; Frye, *Cambridge* 3; Phillips, "Ugly Facts" 23-24; 37; Campbell, "Liberty" 221; Godden and Richmond 455; Cant, *Cormac* 171. Critics have also pointed to the influence of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Joseph Conrad on McCarthy's work (Woodward, "Venomous"; Phillips, "Ugly Facts" 37; Bowers, "Reading" 26).

62. Further examples include: "along the trembling perimeter of the world [. . . .] dry weeds lashed in the wind like the earth's long echo of lance and spear in old encounters forever unrecorded" (*Blood* 110-11); "they rode forth south after the others trammeled to chords of rawest destiny" (160).

63. "[O]n the inside of his[the Vandiemenlander's] lower arm was there tattooed a number which Toadvine would see [. . .] when he would cut down the man's torso where it hung skewered by its heels from a treelimb in the wastes of Pimeria Alta in the fall of that year" (*Blood* 92; 237).

64. See also Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, eds. *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002.

65. Its “restless, incessant horizontal movements” of “nomadic wanderings” and “topographical displacements” imply “an open topography (what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘smooth space’) in which the endless, unobstructed extension of the desert allows for the sudden, violent and fortuitous irruption of the most heterogeneous forces” (Shaviro, “Very” 147).

66. Mark Busby further notes that the epilogue’s Sisyphean resonances are evident in that “[t]he significant elements that McCarthy’s epilogue shares with Camus’ discussion of Sisyphus are repetition of seeming endless acts (rolling the rock up the hill, digging holes in the ground), rock imagery, mechanical actions, and narratives that confirm the irrevocable reality of death relieved by consciousness and will” (91).

67. Leo Daugherty explains that “Anareta was believed in the Renaissance to be ‘the planet which destroys life’” (163).

68. The epigraph reads: “Clark, who led last year’s expedition to the Afar region of northern Ethiopia, and UC Berkeley colleague Tim D. White, also said that a re-examination of a 300,000-year-old fossil skull found in the same region earlier showed evidence of having been scalped. / *The Yuma Daily Sun* / *June 13, 1982*” (*Blood* 1).

69. Some critics have suggested that the judge is to be read as a Satanic, otherworldly figure in light of the diabolical qualities associated with him in *Blood Meridian*, including the insinuation that he’ll never die. While I agree with the assessment that the judge is deliberately given Mephistophelean qualities to heighten the sense of the inexplicable we associate with his character, I argue that it is ultimately

necessary to read the judge as inescapably *human* (abhorrent as the idea may be) to avoid the easy displacement of evil as something otherworldly. McCarthy makes it explicit in *Blood Meridian* that evil is very much of *this* world and of the human race.

70. See Crowther, *Contemporary Sublime* 11; Shaw, *Sublime* 10; 138-39; Morley, *Sublime* 16.

71. "[P]assing their blades about the skulls of the living and the dead alike and snatching aloft the bloody wigs and hacking and chopping at the naked bodies, ripping of limbs, heads, gutting the strange white torsos and holding up great handfuls of viscera, genitals, some of the savages so slathered up with gore they might have rolled in it like dogs and some who fell upon the dying and sodomized them with loud cries to their fellows. [. . . .] Dust staunched the wet and naked heads of the scalped who with the fringe of hair below their wounds and tonsured to the bone now lay like maimed and naked monks in the bloodslaked dust and everywhere the dying groaned and gibbered and horses lay screaming" (*Blood* 56-57).

72. The *unnarratable* refers either to events that (a) "go without saying" or "are too boring to mention," or (b) "cannot or should not be told, because of manners, taboo, or literary convention" (Warhol, "Unnarratable" 623). It is the latter meaning that I refer to here.

73. Critics such as Donoghue and Nancy Kreml suggest that McCarthy's artful style and at times obtuse diction also forces readers to dwell with the text. "The hard words are always accurately used [. . .] and they help McCarthy to control the pace of

one's reading and therefore the duration and quality of the attention one pays. A hard word slows you down, keeps you looking" (Donoghue, *Practice* 276). "[T]he more marked style 'require[s] more effort and slow[s] down the reader's processing of thought, thus making these passages doubly noticeable and more difficult to skim past. … The length and complexity of the sentences literally, almost physically, constrain the reader to find meaning'" (Snyder and Snyder, "Modernism" 35).

74. George Guillemin, who writes about the slaughter of children and innocents in *Blood Meridian* offers this interpretation: "The terrible vignette of the bush hung with dead infants, then, translates into a pure memento mori motif [. . .], reminding us not only that even infants may be subject to murder, let alone death, but also that the world is essentially indifferent to this fact and to such incidents" ("Melancholy" 243-44; 258).

75. See also critical commentaries that note how "*Blood Meridian* comes at the reader like a slap in the face" (James, "Everybody" 31); the "unremitting slaughter of this book [. . .] was simply too much" for many readers (Arnold, "Foreword," *Notes* xii). Attridge calls McCarthy's prose "language displaying its power to horrify, to create acutely felt physical impressions, to blend the aesthetic with the cruelly factual" ("Once" 337).

76. Critics often remark on "the pleasure of speaking its darkly poetic prose" (Josyph, *Adventures* 53), that has a "strange mixture of beauty and gruesomeness" (Attridge, "Once" 338). *Blood Meridian*'s "ugly violence [in] hauntingly beautiful prose" (Evans, "Second" 81) is "the troubling transformation of blood into beauty" (Frye,

Cambridge 109). "Reading *Blood Meridian* produces a vertiginous, nauseous exhilaration," Shaviro remarks. "Bloody death is our monotonously predictable destiny; yet its baroque opulence is attended with a frighteningly complicitous joy" (Shaviro, "Very" 146). Derek Attridge suggests that "its almost excessive literariness continues the feeling of a normally forbidden combination of the aesthetically pleasing and the repellant" ("Once" 336). The conflict between "the novel's outlandish aesthetic and moral territories" becomes an issue of central concern in *Blood Meridian* (Phillips, "Ugly Facts" 18).

77. Frye comments on the novel's "amoral relativism" (*Cambridge* 7) while Donoghue observes that "[m]ost of the events of the novel are barbarous, but they seem to be protected from any ethical comment" (*Practice* 264). Peter Josyph comments that "the novel has, at times, the feel of a boy's game" that makes him wonder if the book "is not fundamentally a serious book. [. . . .] Despite its virtuosity and its bold imagination, I cannot shake a sense of emotional stinginess, a kind of aridity, at its core" (*Adventures* 71). Richard Selzer, perhaps, passes the most damning judgment: "Most of the violence is egregious, rising out of some manic cruelty and flung in the face of the reader with all the bravado and defiance of a smart-aleck teenager, as if written by an author whose emotional development had been arrested at an early age [. . . .] I continue to be nonplussed by his egregious love of depravity and violence for its own sake. What a waste! All that great gift laid at the feet of cruelty" (Josyph, *Adventures* 59-60). An instance of such mindless cruelty is when the judge buys two puppies off a little boy,

only to pitch them into the surging waters from a bridge before the boy's eyes, while the Vandiemenlander shoots the puppies from the shore, and the boy is left "holding the coin," looking down into the water (201). Holden's cruelty reviles even his own bloodthirsty gang members (see pp. 170-71, when Toadvine puts a gun to the judge's head after Holden scalps the child he was playing with not ten minutes ago). In response to Selzer, I venture to offer the argument that this is perhaps a necessary fitting of form to content, since this "egregious love of depravity and violence for its own sake" characterizes the Glanton gang's bloodthirsty murders.

78. Given how McCarthy has "gone out of his way to lock a great deal of *Blood Meridian*" to the historical sources that belie its creation, John Sepich rightly points out that "[i]f its historical base is overlooked, McCarthy's novel might appear as nothing more than three hundred pages of circumstantial evidence (all gory) to assert Judge Holden's claim of war's dominance as a metaphor in the lives of men" ("What" 137; *Notes* 5). "The novel's violence is in fact 'historical' in the fullest sense of the term; it is used so as to represent the dynamic ethnic, racial, and social tensions of this period of Western history [. . . .] not an ex nihilo creation of the imagination but based on historical men and deeds. This is not to say that we take no pleasure in this violence, for its linguistic 'rendering' is neither unadorned nor unesthetic. This very esthetic pleasure may compel the reader to a guilty consciousness of his or her own esthetic consumption of narrated violence" (Jarrett, *Cormac* 90).

Caryn James, who reviewed McCarthy's novel for *The New York Times* the year it was published, suggests that despite the novel's "ambitious, sophisticated" undertaking, McCarthy lets us down "with a stylistically dazzling but facile conclusion," for "the long ordeal of the novel's violence demand more than this easy ambiguity" ("Everybody" 31). There are clearly no straightforward "answers to the life-and-death issues Mr. McCarthy raises, but there are more rigorous, coherent ways to frame the questions" (31). Shaviro suggests that what is "most disturbing about the orgies of violence that punctuate *Blood Meridian* is that they fail to constitute a pattern, to unveil a mystery or to serve any comprehensible purpose" (Shaviro, "Very" 114; Masters, "Witness" 26).

79. To Donoghue, the work's "remarkable creative power [. . .] seems to be at one with McCarthy's refusal to bring in a moral verdict on the characters and actions of the book" (*Practice* 259). Donoghue suggests that "*Blood Meridian* raises an ethical issue mainly by not speaking of it" (*Practice* 264). Frye likewise agrees that "moral and ethical questions lie at the heart of" *Blood Meridian* despite the fact that it "seems on the surface deaf to them" (*Cambridge* 108).

80. "[T]he application of 'meaning' to violence allows observers to 'extinguish rage and grief for those whose lives are taken' [. . . .]: 'Whenever we allow ourselves to attribute meaning, whether political or spiritual, to the useless suffering of others we behave a bit like public executioners'" (Dickson and Romanets 19).

81. Lisa Dickson and Maryna Romanets note that we need to question if "artistic representations of violence [. . .] disguise suffering, 'making it at best, a sign of itself, if

not a sign for something far removed from the anguish of the victim,' reducing it by way of a 'master narrative' to a 'sentimental footnote'" (19).

82. Beyond scholarly critical favor, Morley points to two crucial reasons why "contemporary artists as a rule shy away from describing their work" as sublime: first, "the heady rhetoric of the sublime was often employed by totalitarian regimes in order to seduce the masses" in the twentieth century (for instance, "Albert Speer's 'cathedrals of light' choreography designed for the Nazis' Nuremburg rallies"). Ramazani, for instance, points out that some critics "have argued that the sublime has strong affinities with fascism (*PMLA* 173). However, he contends that the sublime "is neither 'left' nor 'right,' though it can be appropriated by either political rhetoric" (173)—an evaluation I concur with.

Second, trivial kitsch "trad[es] on the ersatz experience of the sublime [. . .] designed to stimulate an increasingly jaded consumer" in contemporary society. "The discourse of the sublime is therefore tainted by association with both malevolent politics and inauthentic mass culture. Not surprisingly, contemporary artists are often wary of attributing to their practices lofty or grandiose intentions that may seem polluted by such associations" (Morley, *Sublime* 19). These contexts demonstrate the prevalence of contemporary interest in the sublime, by means of the uses to which it has been put in service, without shedding light on the unresolved issues of its ineffable nature and how or why it wields such cultural currency in the twenty-first century in the first place.

83. Anita Desai notes that "one is struck by the way that the British novelists who take up the issues of our times prefer to do so not directly but at an angle. There is Ian McEwan, who, in addressing the shock of 9/11 [. . .] chose *Mrs. Dalloway* as a model and Virginia Woolf's way of including the horrors of World War II in a sunlit day of an English summer. Now we have Kazuo Ishiguro dealing with the present hotly debated issue of cloning by seeming to revert to an old tradition of British boarding school stories" (Desai, "Shadow" 48). Shameem Black, in fact, suggests that many of Ishiguro's novels, "*A Pale View of Hills* (1982), *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986), *The Remains of the Day* (1989), and *When We Were Orphans* (2000), all respond in different ways to the Second World War[.] *Never Let Me Go* can be read as a meditation on a world shaped by the eugenic fantasies of Nazi-era incarceration" ("Aesthetics" 789). Groes and Lewis note that "Ishiguro's ethics of empathy are directly related to the post-war consciousness. Unlike Rushdie, say, whose literary energies and emphasis on 'newness' derive from a triumphant, post-imperial spirit, Ishiguro is what the Germans call a *Nachkriegskind*: a child born into a generation that lives, and writes, in the shadow of the Second World War. This generation had no active role in – or made no direct contribution to – the atrocities perpetuated during that conflict, but they struggle to live as the inheritors of those tragic events which shaped them through their parents' experience. In this sense, Ishiguro has contributed to the post-war ethos shared by writers such as Ian McEwan, Graham Swift, Julian Barnes and Martin Amis" (*Kazuo* 5-6). Ishiguro himself explains, "I tend to be attracted to pre-war and post-war settings because I'm interested in

his business of values and ideals being tested, and people having to face up to the notion that their ideals weren't quite what they thought they were before the test came" (qtd. in Beedham, *Novels* 149).

84. Tomohiro Ishizu and Semir Zeki found "a distinctly different pattern of brain activity" when participants were exposed to visual stimuli evoking representations of the beautiful and the sublime, thus suggesting that the two aesthetic categories "engage separate and distinct brain systems" ("Neurobiological" 1).

85. "Whenever we try to say why something is beautiful, we end up disappointed, with a sense that language has failed once again to capture experience fully and, as always, has left out something essential to it. But the problem isn't with language, as it would be if the object's beauty depended on a group of particular features [. . . .] The pleasures of the imagination are pleasures of anticipation, not accomplishment. The irony is that if your guess proves to be completely correct, when you have found everything a beautiful thing has to give you will have lost what had made it beautiful, the promise of more [. . . .]. The art we love is art we don't yet fully understand" (Nehamas, *Promise* 75-76). Nehamas notes that "[b]eauty always remains a bit of a mystery, forever a step beyond anything I can say about it, more like something calling me without showing exactly what it is calling me to" (*Promise* 78-79). "Rodin has said: 'Every masterpiece has this mysterious characteristic. One always finds in it a little bewilderment. [. . . .] This mystery and interrogative power of the beautiful also draws us toward others with whom

to puzzle, reflect, agree, and disagree" (Johnson, *Retrieval* 218). See also Benezra and Viso 101; Lane, *Timeless* 43; Turner, *Beauty* 2-3.

Eco remarks on "the absolute and unstoppable polytheism of Beauty" in the twenty-first century (*History* 428) while Adorno emphasizes "the dynamic life inherent in the concept of beauty," noting that "[i]t is through its dynamic laws, not through some invariable principle, that art can be understood" (*Beauty*, "Concept" 78; *Aesthetics*, "Aesthetic" 360; *Aesthetic Theory* 176).

86. Adorno notes that "if the last traces of pleasure were extirpated, the question of what artworks are for would be an embarrassment. Actually, the more they are understood, the less they are enjoyed" (*Aesthetic Theory* 12-13). From a pragmatist perspective, Shusterman notes that "Dewey would insist that mere pleasure is far from a trivial thing, for we humans" live primarily "for sensual and emotional satisfaction" (Shusterman 29). From an evolutionary perspective, Dutton identifies *direct pleasure* as one of numerous characteristics found cross-culturally in the arts, noting that the art object "is valued as a source of immediate experiential pleasure in itself," for instance, "grasping the detailed coherence of a tightly plotted story" (*Art Instinct* 51).

87. The desire to repeat experience also relates to the quality of beauty's inexhaustibility: "You can never get to the bottom of something beautiful, because it always finds space inside itself for a new and surprising recapitulation of its idea that adds fresh feeling to the familiar pattern" (Turner, *Beauty* 2; Scarry 50).

88. “Of the traditional constituents of the beautiful [. . .] radiance, is the most important,” Gilson remarks, defining radiance as that which holds us spellbound and inspires desire to repeat the experience (*Arts* 35). Several French artists and philosophers return repeatedly to the idea of radiance: Galen Johnson notes that the nineteenth century sculptor Auguste Rodin and twentieth-century philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty have both pointed to its significance in their respective conceptions of beauty (*Retrieval* 108; 145; 217-18). I suggest that radiance is inextricably linked to Plato’s notion of *splendor*—given both words’ relationship to luminosity—which Thomas Aquinas also identifies as a constituent of beauty (Plato, *Phaedrus*; Aquinas; qtd. in Eco, *History* 48-50; 88).

89. Santayana, for instance, notes that beauty and the art of words “comes from the wealth of suggestion, or the refinement of sentiment” (*Sense* §43). This tension between the centrifugal (variety or wealth of suggestion) and the centripetal (refinement or narrowing of sentiment) implies Santayana’s concern with beauty’s dialectical energies. Calvino locates this in the tension between weight and weightlessness/lightness while Frederick Turner calls beauty “the paradoxical coexistence of chaos with order” (*Six Memos* 15; *Beauty* 4). “Repetition and difference, theme and variations, structure the beautiful. [. . . .] The most robust experiences of beauty [. . .] are filled with an insurgence of whole networks of repetitions and anticipations” (Johnson, *Retrieval* 169; 174; 145).

90. “We speak of an architecture of the beautiful [. . .] in order to indicate a certain understanding of the relation of parts and wholes in the meaning of the beautiful” (Johnson, *Retrieval* 145).

91. Donoghue points to examples from Song of Solomon in the Bible and the final word of Dante’s “Tanto gentile”: “and from her face there seems to move a gentle spirit full of love that keeps saying to the soul: ‘Sigh.’” (*On Eloquence* 19).

92. For instance, in *The Castle*, “Kafka has Mizzi playing with Klamm’s letter, during a long conversation between K. and the Superintendant, and folding it into the shape of a little boat” (Donoghue, *On Eloquence* 62).

93. Donoghue uses an example from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, particularly chapter 20 and the line “and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence,” noting that “[i]t is incompatible with the rhetoric of the first paragraph that we should ask what precisely is that roar, and where is the silence, and where is the other side of it, and how could a roar lie there, and what is the relation between the roar and the silence” (77-78).

94. Other cross-cultural features Dutton identifies include: direct pleasure, skill and virtuosity, style, novelty and creativity, criticism, representation, special focus, expressive individuality, emotional saturation, intellectual challenge, art traditions and institutions, and imaginative experience (*Art Instinct* 51-58).

95. Pythagoras’ (5th to 6th century BC) philosophical thought marked the birth of this “aesthetico-mathematical view,” which in turn influenced Plato’s (4th to 5th century

BC) conception of beauty as the "harmony and proportion between the parts" (Eco, *History* 61). These ideals of unity, order, and beauty "by participation in Form" were taken up by the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus (3rd century AD) in the *Enneads* (*Aesthetics*, "Ennead I, iv" 58).

96. Shusterman notes, "If our human need to perceive and experience satisfying unities in the disordered flux of experience is what motivates our interest in art, this need should not be rejected. What we should reject is the repressive limitation of art to the expression of only such unity, the prohibition of jarring fragmentation and incoherencies which can have their own stimulating aesthetic (and cognitive) effect, and which can result in more complex forms of coherence" (75-77); see also p. 25 of this MS.

97. V. S. Ramachandran notes that "'artistic' principles [such] as grouping by color, contrast, and symmetry are in evidence" even in nature and potentially an evolutionary adaptation (*Brain* 194). Other universal laws of aesthetics he identifies include: principles of *peak shift*, *contrast*, *isolation*, peekaboo, or *perceptual problem solving*, *abhorrence of coincidences*, and metaphor (200). Discovered by Gestalt psychologists and subsequently identified as an evolutionary adaptation, Ramachandran notes that "successful grouping feels good" since we experience "an internal 'Aha!' sensation as if you have just solved a problem [. . . .]. It's this 'Aha!' signal that the artist or designer exploits" when using the law of grouping (201-3; 206; 194). Orderliness in turn has to do with "our love of visual repetition or rhythm" (233). These ways of "seeing

things as unified rather than divided," Shusterman notes, "is simply more enriching and satisfying" (Shusterman 15-16).

98. See p. 8 of this MS.

99. *Repetitive telling* is "telling several times what happened once" (Herman, Jahn, and Ryan, *Routledge* 189).

100. Many critics have remarked on "the uncertain nature of the reunion" at the end of the novel: see Finney, "Bonded" 26; Lindenmeyer, "Postmodern" 61; 58; Farwell, *Heterosexual* 194; Litovitz 332; Rubinson, "Body" 229; Andermahr, *Jeanette* 86-87. Though most critics lean on the view that the ending is left ambiguous, there are also a few, such as Andrea Harris, who treat the ending as unequivocal, noting "their eventual reunion on the last page of the novel" (*Other* 135).

101. See Brian Finney, Jennifer Smith, Merja Makinen, Sonya Andermahr, and Gregory Smith for a comprehensive summary of criticisms against the novel from various camps.

102. Smith notes that *Written* is a powerful transgender tale, where "Winterson embeds the reader" in "a queer world" with "nonnormative sexualities and gender identities [. . .] by privileging these characters and their behaviors rather than by placing them in the minority position from which they would exercise little power to transform the reader's way of seeing. Since they are situated as the majority, the fluidity of gender and sexualities is presented as a given and not as an oddity worthy of attention and

judgment, which invites the reader to look *with* these characters and to share their point of view rather than look *at* them" ("Trans-formative" 425-26).

103. Richard Hobbs has also noted the relationship between Winterson's and Carter's writing, though he compares *Written on the Body* with Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*; see *Writing on the Body: Sex, Gender and Identity in the Fiction of Jeanette Winterson and Angela Carter*.

104. "Winterson herself insists that her use of an ungendered narrator is intended to burrow beneath the divisions of gender in order to excavate the essence of love: 'I mean, for me a love story is a love story. I don't care what the genders are if it's powerful enough. [. . . .] When people fall in love they experience the same kind of tremors, fears, a rush of blood to the head. [. . .] And fiction recognizes this'" (Finney, "Bonded" 25).

105. "Brian McHale rightly notes that if the 'default setting' for lyric is 'autobiographical authenticity,' the 'default setting' for the relationship between fictional narrator-characters and their authors is just the opposite: 'impersonation,' not 'authenticity'" (McHale 2003: 235). I would affirm this [. . .] is indeed the *default* condition of narrative fiction. But I am also arguing that this default position is frequently transgressed" (Lanser, "Beholder" 215).

106. Lanser explicates "textual signals" that might lead readers "to take a formally fictional voice for the author's"—what she terms *attachments* to or *detachments* from—which include the criterion of *anonymity*, *identity*, *reliability*, and *atemporal* or *nonnarrative* dimensions of the text ("Beholder" 211-13). Lanser notes that especially

"when a fictional narrator is unnamed," as is the case with *Written*, "it may take clearly marked *differences* in identity to deter readers from imposing the identity of the author onto an anonymous textual voice" (212).

107. Santayana notes, "like a word in a poem, more effective by its fitness than by its intrinsic beauty," our apperception of form and aesthetic value also depends on its fitness (*Sense* §28).

108. Phelan uses the term *ethics of the told* to describe ethical positions involving "character-character relations" and *ethics of the telling* to refer to "the narrator's relation to the characters, the task of narrating, and to the audience; and the implied author's relation to these things" (*Experiencing* 11).

109. "I'm as guilty as her. Hadn't I let it happen, colluded with the deceit and let all my pride be burnt away? I was nothing, a weak piece of shit. I deserved Bathsheba" (*Written* 46).

"'Give me the keys and get out.' It was as if I'd never cared for her [Jacqueline] at all. I wanted to wipe her away. I wanted to blot out her blazing stupid face. She didn't deserve this, in a corner of my mind I knew it was my weakness not hers that had brought us to this shameful day" (86).

"I mumbled something about yes as usual but things had changed. THINGS HAD CHANGED, what an arsehole comment, I had changed things. Things don't change, they're not like the seasons moving on a diurnal round. People change things. There are

victims of change but not victims of things. Why do I collude in this mis-use of language?" (56-57; see also pp. 29-30).

110. Mask narration lies on a continuum where passages are either "more rhetorically effective in context" or can be comfortably "lifted from their novelistic contexts and put on posters attributing the thoughts to [authors] rather than to their character narrators" (Phelan, *Living* 202).

111. In addition to the earlier mentioned *atemporal* or *nonnarrative* dimensions of auto/homodiegetic narration, Lanser's criterion of *anonymity* ("the absence of a proper name for the textual speaker"), *identity* (perceived similarities in "biographical background, beliefs and values"), and *reliability* ("a reader's [complex] determination that the narrator's values and perceptions are consistent with [. . .] the values and perceptions the reader believes the author holds") are particularly relevant to *Written* ("Beholder" 211-13).

112. "The narrator of this story contrasts the story s/he is telling about the beloved Louise with other, past affairs, always aware that s/he is describing love through a set of phrases and a narrative system which have the power to trivialize her/his feelings [. . . .]. The narrator only knows love—as it has been told and as we relive it by reliving stories—as a cliché. [. . . .] The question becomes how to love without being trite, without repeating the same story" (Farwell, *Heterosexual* 187-88).

113. Levy refers specifically to trauma narratives that "reinforce an exploitative relationship" by placing the "suffering body prostrate in front of the voyeuristic gaze of a

distant witness" ("Human" 14). Instead of installing "victim and witness into positions of hierarchical observation, compulsory visibility, and non-reciprocal appropriation of the body in pain," Kathy "avoids painful details and refuses to describe the donations or the loss of friends and loved ones in great detail. Her unwillingness to fully engage the traumatic past reflects the novel's deeper anxiety about the indescribable nature of trauma and atrocity" (14; 11).

114. "For every humanitarian crisis that shows up on the front page of the morning paper, there are dozens more atrocities that go unnoticed and uncared for, whether because of distance or willful disengagement. [. . . .] Diffusion of personal responsibility, an inability to identify with the victim, a feeling of powerlessness, and a failure to conceive of an effective intervention all contribute to the apparent indifference of bystanders standing adjacent to atrocity (S. Cohen 2001: 16). [. . . .] Cohen explicitly relates the behavior of bystanders to the perpetrators of atrocity. It is a condemning connection, suggesting that bystanders are not simply passive voyeurs but active enablers of atrocity" (Levy, "Human" 13).

115. "As scholars such as Bruce Robbins and Ryan Trimm have argued, Ishiguro specializes in showing how moral crimes or ethical lapses often stem from the desire of ordinary individuals to adhere to the everyday codes that give their lives structure and meaning" (Black, "Aesthetics" 793). Susan Sontag "challenges those who pity the miserable and the oppressed to reflect 'on how our privileges are located on the same map as their suffering, and may—in ways we might prefer not to imagine—be linked to

their suffering, as the wealth of some may imply the destitution of others'" (Levy, "Human" 13).

116. "This may be a radical and disturbing vision, of a world in which agency is so dramatically curtailed," Claire Messud observes, "but it is also an accurate rendition of the lives of so many, who are never granted the opportunity to imagine an alternative to the microcosm into which we have been born" ("Love's" 31).

"While Ishiguro rarely refers explicitly in the novel to such phenomena," Black notes, "he makes this parallel between the clones and service classes easy to draw," implicitly asking readers "to recognize how many people in our own world are not considered fully human," "consigned to the barely visible worlds of service to others" (Black, "Aesthetics" 797; 803).

"As a global metaphor, the condition of the students also speaks to the fate of postcolonial and migrant laborers who sustain the privileges of First World economies [. . . .]. If First World economies desire labor without the inconvenient presence of human laborers [. . .], the instrumental bodies of Kathy and her classmates offer the logical and terrifying realization of such a view. These similarities may help to explain why the novel resembles not a fantastical future, but instead the period in time noted for accelerating economic imbalances worldwide: its epigraph reads 'England, late 1990s'" (Black, "Aesthetics" 797).

"The clones' service function taps into 'familiar configurations of social relations' [. . .] leaving intact the notion that social relations depend [. . .] on a service being, even on a service class of being'" (Griffin, "Science" 652).

"Eva Feder Kittay argues further that if we look at *who* engages in paid care work, it is notable that it is often supplied by migrants or noncitizens, because these are precisely the workers who tolerate the poor pay, lack of benefits or status, and long working hours. She thus contends, 'there exists a class of workers . . . who possess neither the privileges nor the protections of citizenship . . . but who, nonetheless, constitute a crucial part of the labor force that do the hands-on carework' (141). While Ishiguro's novel cannot properly be said to be *about* such issues, he nevertheless portrays a recognizable version of them in his dystopic England of the 1990s. [. . . .] Expected to perform the care work as well as to end their own lives prematurely in the isolated and run-down treatment centers, the clones powerfully engage questions of class concerning who is 'carer' and 'cared for' in society" (Whitehead, "Writing" 62-63).

117. I suggest that Ishiguro's implicit ethical vision of and relation to his readership comes through in the complex ethical energies of *Never*: "I don't share the cynicism about the dumbed-down audience. There's an audience out there that's literate in many kinds of ways. Not just in terms of books, but in all kinds of things: music, cinema, modern communications. It's a very sophisticated audience. [. . . .] There's a readership out there hungry for new adventures" (Ishiguro and Groes, *Kazuo* 261).

118. "Ethicism is the thesis that the ethical assessment of attitudes manifested by works of art [and not necessarily attitudes of characters in the work] is a legitimate aspect of the aesthetic evaluation of those works [. . . .]. So, for instance, a work of art may be judged to be aesthetically good *insofar as* it is beautiful, is formally unified and strongly expressive, but aesthetically bad *insofar as* it trivializes the issues with which it deals and manifests ethically reprehensible attitudes [. . . .]. What is relevant for ethicism are the attitudes *really* possessed by a work, not those it merely claims to possess [. . . .]. Just as we can distinguish between the attitudes people really have and those they merely claim to have by looking at their behavior, so we can distinguish between real and claimed attitudes of works by looking at the detailed manner in which events are presented" (Gaut, *Aesthetics*, "Ethical" 589-90).

119. "[I]n retrospective first-person narration," the narrating-I "is the older self who recounts the experiences undergone by the earlier 'experiencing-I'" (Herman, Jahn, and Ryan 339).

120. Madame "just went on standing out there, sobbing and sobbing, staring at me through the doorway with that same look in her eyes she always had when she looked at us, like she was seeing something that gave her the creeps. Except this time there was something else, something extra in that look I couldn't fathom" (*Never* 72).

"It was only a polite 'Excuse me!' but she spun round like I'd thrown something at her. And as her gaze fell on us, a chill passed through me, much like the one I'd felt years ago [. . . .]. I don't know if she recognised us at that point; but without doubt, she

saw and decided in a second *what we were*, because you could see her stiffen—as if a pair of large spiders was set to crawl towards her.

Then something changed in her expression. It didn't become warmer exactly. But that revulsion got put away somewhere, and she studied us carefully, squinting in the setting sun" (*Never* 248).

"[W]hen we made a move towards her, she too came forwards, and—perhaps I imagined it—tucked her shoulders in tightly as she passed between us" (*Never* 251).

"Madame watched the departing vehicles for a long time. Then she turned as though to go back into the house, and seeing us there on the pavement, stopped abruptly, almost shrinking back" (*Never* 270).

121. Such tensions between ignorance and knowledge are further epitomized in Miss Emily's and Miss Lucy's ideological differences pertaining to how they felt Hailsham should have been run (*Never* 267-68; 273).

122. Kathy asks Miss Emily, "'Why did we do all of that work in the first place? Why train us, encourage us, make us produce all of that? If we're just going to give donations anyway, then die, why all those lessons? Why all those books and discussions?' 'Why Hailsham at all?' Madame had said this from the hallway. [. . . .] 'It's a good question for you to ask.' [. . . .] Then Miss Emily said: 'Yes, why Hailsham at all? Marie-Claude likes to ask that a lot these days. But not so long ago, before the Morningdale scandal, she wouldn't have dreamt of asking a question like that'" (*Never* 259-60).

123. Cynthia Wong observes that it is exactly this “quality of ordinariness about those life situations—of coping with friendship or love or creativity—that made their abbreviated lives seem so harrowing to a reader” (Ishiguro, Wong, and Cummett, *Conversations* 214-15).

124. “‘Sure?’ It was the first time she’d [Madame] spoken for ages and we both jolted back a bit in surprise. ‘You say you’re *sure*? Sure that you’re in love? How can you know it? You think love is so simple? So you are in love. Deeply in love. Is that what you’re saying to me?’

Her voice sounded almost sarcastic, but then I saw, with a kind of shock, little tears in her eyes as she looked from one to the other of us.

‘You believe this? That you’re deeply in love?’” (*Never* 252-53).

125. “In stark contrast to her former fear of the clones ‘brushing against her,’ Madame’s reaching out to touch Kathy here is a crucial gesture affirming her empathy with Kathy” (Shaddox, “Generic” 463-64).

126. One might arguably make a related point with Miss Emily, who, following her admission of “revulsion” for the children, firmly remarks that “I was determined not to let such feelings stop me doing what was right. I fought those feelings and I won. Now, if you’d be so good as to help me out of here [. . .].’ With us at each elbow, she walked carefully into the hall” (268-69). That Miss Emily instinctively calls on Tommy and Kathy to help her out of her wheelchair, even though her nurse, George, was within calling distance, can plausibly be interpreted as Miss Emily’s changed relations to the

students—though hers presents a more problematic case-study than Madame's, since it is in part driven by need as it is by unconscious thought.

127. Kathy's "calm, almost remote manner"—a typical characteristic of Ishiguro's homodiegetic narrators "who have lived through tumultuous times," such as "the bombing of Nagasaki" or "Hitler's rise to power"—gives "the impression that the only way they can share their memories is to stand at a safe distance from them"; a narrative voice and tone that "gains a strange new power" in Kathy's telling of her story (Dalfonzo, "Lucky Pawns" 53).

128. During their time at Hailsham, Ruth and her close circle of friends, including Kathy, actively form a "secret guard" in order to foil a supposed "plot to kidnap Miss Geraldine," their favorite guardian. "And yet, all the time, I think we must have had an idea of how precarious the foundations of our fantasy were, because we always avoided any confrontation" (*Never* 52). When Kathy is unexpectedly expelled from the circle following a falling-out with Ruth, she nonetheless furiously turns on Moira, another expelled member, when Moira flatly observes that it was all simply fantasy anyway: "What it was, I suppose, is that Moira was suggesting she and I cross some line together, and I wasn't prepared for that yet. I think I sensed how beyond that line, there was something harder and darker and I didn't want that. Not for me, not for any of us" (55).

When Kathy catches Ruth at her dishonest suggestion that Miss Geraldine had shown her special favor by giving her a pencil-case Ruth had actually quietly purchased at a sale, she remarks: "Now I saw how upset Ruth was; how for once she was *at a*

complete loss for words, and had turned away on the verge of tears. And suddenly my behaviour seemed to me utterly baffling. [. . . .] So what if she'd fibbed a little about her pencil case? Didn't we all dream from time to time about one guardian or other bending the rules and doing something special for us? A spontaneous hug, a secret letter, a gift? All Ruth had done was to take one of these harmless daydreams a step further; she hadn't even mentioned Miss Geraldine by name.

I now felt awful, and I was confused." (60; emphasis added).

"I think I'd have felt better about what had happened if Ruth had held it against me in some obvious way. But this was one instance when she seemed just to cave in. It was like she was too ashamed of the matter—too *crushed* by it—even to be angry or to want to get me back" (61).

129. Ishiguro's responses to such comments about his aesthetic project are worth including here: "I was much more interested in the extent to which we accepted our fates, the kind of lives we were allowed to live as people, rather than focus on the rebellious spirit we gain and try to move out of our lives. I think this is predominantly what takes place in the world, that people take the life they feel they've been handed. They try their best to make it good. They don't really try to go outside of that. [. . . .] Nothing is a perfect metaphor for the human condition. This is just one metaphor for one aspect of how people are. The strategy here is that we're looking at a very strange world, at a very strange group of people, and gradually, I wanted people to feel they're not looking at such a strange world, that this is everybody's story" (Ishiguro, Wong, and Cummett,

Conversations 215; Ishiguro, Romanek, and Block). Ishiguro ultimately sees *Never* as "an allegory about the human lifespan and our inability to escape it" (Ishiguro and James, "Art" 39).

130. "For all this expensive education, the doctors only get at most four applications out of their subjects — a little arithmetic suggests that in this world every kidney transplant, bearing the cost of this education (at say, £25,000 a year per pupil), would cost an extra £100,000 or so. Why bother? When the products of these institutions become aware of their fate, why don't any of them ever run away? Why on earth should they be educated to a high point of liberal humanity, when human vegetables would serve the purpose just as well? [. . . .] I can imagine why Ishiguro has avoided all these questions, hoping that we as readers will just accept a world where everyone, without obvious coercion, accepts their ghastly situation" (Hensher, "School" 32-33).

131. "The cloning aspect of Ishiguro's novel is almost tangential [. . . .] even a casual reader of *Never Let Me Go* can see how little the author (who has become known in his other work for painstaking craftsmanship) cares for whether this whole cloning-for-spare-parts scenario is politically or scientifically credible. [. . . .] Nevertheless, the story is emotionally credible" (Godwin, "Remains"). Ishiguro himself candidly remarks, "ultimately I'm not that interested in saying things about specific societies; and, if I were, I think I'd prefer to do it through nonfiction" (Ishiguro, Shaffer, and Wong, *Conversations* 75).

132. “The memories I value most, I don’t see them ever fading. I lost Ruth, then I lost Tommy, but I won’t lose my memories of them. [. . . .] I’ll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that’ll be something no one can take away” (*Never* 286-87). As Henry Carrigan Jr. remarks: “Above all, [Ishiguro’s] characters strive to forge an enduring self-identity that can withstand the blows of an uncaring world” (98).

Critics have also pointed out that at a metatextual level, “Ishiguro constructs his novel as a type of human rights narrative that invokes the power of autobiographical storytelling to affirm the humanity of individuals and the democratic rights of oppressed communities” (Levy, “Human” 14-15). As autobiographical memoir, Kathy’s storytelling “fulfill[s] the collective responsibility towards the voiceless victims” and “helps to preserve [. . .] the memory of a group of people whose humanity is denied in order to silence society’s sense of guilt” (Bizzini, “Recollecting” 67; 74-75; Levy, “Human” 8-9; Shaddox, “Generic” 448; 450). However, this is distinctly different (though related) to what I am suggesting about Kathy’s narration here.

133. LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) individuals, for instance, have gained slow but greater visibility and acceptance in some cultures. Adultery is generally somewhat less prevalently frowned upon socially in a number of cultures than it would have been two decades ago.

134. “In a written interview she [Winterson] claimed bluntly that ‘the story is nothing, the language is everything’” (Petro, “Original” 112).

135. "Even as science moves toward the engineering of human tissue, thus beginning to render obsolete the need to rely on complete organs for transplantation, Ishiguro sets out in the opposite direction, imagining the cloning of people. [. . . .] It also enables Ishiguro to shift perspective from the actuality of scientific practice to the moral and ethical questions that it raises" (Whitehead, "Writing" 61). Ishiguro notes that "the fact is, yes, we will all fade away and die, but people can find the energy to create little pockets of happiness and decency while we're here. I'm probably less excited when people come and say, 'Oh, this is a chilling warning about the way we're going with cloning and biotechnology.' That's fine, I'm perfectly open to people reading it that way, but if that's all they've got out of it, then I feel the inner heart of the book has been missed" (Ishiguro and Bates, *Conversations* 201-2).

136. Adorno remarks that "[t]he route to aesthetic autonomy proceeds by way of disinterestedness [. . .]. Yet art does not come to rest in disinterestedness" (*Aesthetic Theory* 12-13).

137. Calinescu notes that "[i]n the postmodern age, kitsch represents the triumph of the principle of immediacy—immediacy of access, immediacy of effect, instant beauty" (8). "What constitutes the essence of kitsch is probably [. . .] its promise of an easy 'catharsis'" (228). "Kitsch may be conveniently defined as a specifically aesthetic form of lying. As such, it obviously has a lot to do with the modern illusion that beauty may be bought and sold" (229).

Works Cited

"18th Century German Aesthetics." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. 16 Jan. 2007. Web. 10 Jun. 2015. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-18th-german/>.

Abbott, H. Porter. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge UP, 2008. Print.

---. "Narration." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 339-344. Print.

Adams, Anthony. "Butter-Spades, Footnotes, and Omnium: *The Third Policeman* as 'Pataphysical Fiction." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 106-119. Print.

Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. Print.

Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. 1970. Trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor. Ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1997. Print.

---. "Aesthetic Theory." 1961-1970. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Print.

---. "On the Concept of the Beautiful." 1970. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 78-81. Print.

Aldama, Frederick Luis, and Patrick Colm Hogan. *Conversations on Cognitive Cultural Studies: Literature, Language, and Aesthetics*. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2014. Print.

Alber, Jan. "Impossible Storyworlds—and What to Do with Them." *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies* 1 (2009): 79-96. Web. 6 Jan 2012.

Andermahr, Sonya. *Jeanette Winterson*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.

Andreasen, Liana Vrajitoru. "*Blood Meridian* and the Spatial Metaphysics of the West." *Southwestern American Literature* 36.3 (Summer 2011): 19-30. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Annan, Gabriele. "Devil in the Flesh." *The New York Review of Books* (4 Mar. 1993). Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Arnold, Edwin T. "Foreword." *Notes on* Blood Meridian. By John Sepich. Austin: U of Texas P, 2008. xi-xvii. Print.

Arnold, Edwin T. and Dianne C. Luce, eds. *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*. Rev. ed. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1999. Print.

Asbee, Sue. *Flann O'Brien*. Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1991. Print.

Attridge, Derek. "Once more with feeling: art, affect and performance." *Textual Practice* 25.2 (2011): 329-343. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Baines, Jennika. "'Un-Understandable Mystery': Catholic Faith and Revelation in *The Third Policeman*." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 78-90. Print.

Banville, John. "The Tragicomic Dubliner." *New York Review of Books* (18 Nov. 1999). Web. 23 Mar. 2014.

Bateson, Gregory. "A Theory of Play and Fantasy." *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. Ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Cambridge and London: MIT P, 2006. 314-328. Print.

Beach, Christopher. "Recuperating the Aesthetic: Contemporary Approaches and the Case of Adorno." *Beauty and the Critic: Aesthetics in an Age of Cultural Studies*. Ed. James Soderholm. Tuscaloosa and London: U of Alabama P, 1997. 94-112. Print.

Beckley, Bill, ed. "Introduction: Generosity and the Black Swan." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. ix-xx. Print.

Beckley, Bill, and David Shapiro, eds. *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. New York: Allworth P, 1998. Print.

Beech, Dave, ed. *Beauty*. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. Print.

Bell, Clive. *Art*. 1913. Champaign, IL: Book Jungle, 2009.

---. "Art." 1913. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 261-269. Print.

Belsey, Catherine. "Postmodern Love: Questioning the Metaphysics of Desire." *New Literary History* 25.3 (Summer 1994): 683-705. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 May 2015.

Benezra, Neal, Olga M. Viso, and Arthur Danto. *Regarding Beauty*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1999. Print.

Bernstein, Stephen. *Alasdair Gray*. London: Associated UP, 1999. Print.

Bizzini, Silvia Caporale. "Recollecting Memories, Reconstructing Identities: Narrators as Storytellers in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans* and *Never Let Me Go*." *Atlantis: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 35.2 (Dec. 2013): 65-80. *Atlantis*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Black, Shameem. "Ishiguro's Inhuman Aesthetics." *Modern Fiction Studies* 55.4 (Winter 2009): 785-807. *Johns Hopkins UP*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Bloom, Harold. *How to Read and Why*. New York: Touchstone, 2000. Print.

Bohman-Kalaja, Kimberly. *Reading Games: An Aesthetics of Play in Flann O'Brien, Samuel Beckett, and Georges Perec*. Champaign: Dalkey Archive P, 2007.

Bold, Alan. *Modern Scottish Literature*. London and New York: Longmans, 1983. Print.

Booker, M. Keith. *Flann O'Brien, Bakhtin and Menippean Satire*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse UP, 1995. Print.

---. "Science, Philosophy, and *The Third Policeman*: Flann O'Brien and the Epistemology of Futility." *South Atlantic Review* 56.4 (Nov. 1991): 37-56. Web. 23 Mar. 2014.

Bowers, James. "Reading Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*." *Boise State University Western Writers Series* 139 (1999). Print.

Brooker, Joseph. *Flann O'Brien*. Devon: Northcote House Publishers, 2005. Print.

---. "Irish Mimes: Flann O'Brien." *A Companion to Irish Literature*. Vol. 2. Ed. Julia M. Wright. Malden, Oxford, and West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. 176-192. Print.

Brooks, Loura Wixley. "Damien Hirst and the Sensibility of Shock." *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. Ed. Paul Crowther. London: Academy Editions, 1995. 54-67. Print.

Brown, Chandos Michael. "The First American Sublime." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 147-170. Print.

Brown, Stuart, and Christopher Vaughan. *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. New York: Avery (Penguin Group), 2010. Print.

Burgess, Anthony. "Probably a Masterpiece." *Alive Alive O': Flann O'Brien's* At Swim-Two-Birds. Ed. Rüdiger Imhof. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985. 70-72. Print.

Burke, Edmund. "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 113-122. Print.

Burley, Justine. "A braver, newer world." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Nature* 435 (26 May 2005): 427. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Burns, Christy L. "Fantastic Language: Jeanette Winterson's Recovery of the Postmodern Word." *Contemporary Literature* 37.2 (1996): 278-306. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Busby, Mark. “Rolling the Stone, Sisyphus, and the Epilogue of *Blood Meridian*.” *Southwestern American Literature* 36.3 (Summer 2011): 87-95. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Butler, Rex, ed. *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. Print.

Cahn, Steven M. and Aaron Meskin, eds. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Print.

Caillois, Roger. *Man, Play, and Games*. 1958. Trans. Meyer Barash. New York: The Free Press (Macmillan Publishing), 1961. Print.

Calinescu, Matei. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Modernism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1987. Print.

Calvino, Italo. *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. New York, NY: Vintage International, 1988. Print.

Campbell, Neil. “Liberty beyond its proper bounds: Cormac McCarthy’s history of the West in *Blood Meridian*. *Myth, Legend, Dust: Critical Responses to Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Rick Wallach. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2000. Print.

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus: And Other Essays*. 1942. New York: Vintage International, 1991. Web. 4 Oct. 2014.

Cant, John. *Cormac McCarthy and the Myth of American Exceptionalism*. New York and London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Carrigan Jr., Henry L. Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Library Journal* (Jan. 2005): 98. *Reed Business Information*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Carroll, Noël. "Art, Intention, and Conversation." 1992. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 568-588. Print.

---. "Identifying Art." 1999. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 455-454. Print.

---. *Philosophy of Art: A Contemporary Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Carroll, Rachel. "Imitations of life: Cloning, heterosexuality and the human in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Journal of Gender Studies* 19.1 (Mar. 2010): 59-71. *Routledge*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Carter, Angela. *The Bloody Chamber*. 1979. London: Vintage Books, 2006. Print.

Cashill, Robert. Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Alex Garland et al. *Cineaste* 36.1 (Winter 2010): 48-50. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Changeux, Jean-Pierre. *The Good, the True, & the Beautiful: A Neuronal Approach.* Trans. Laurence Garey. New Haven, London, and Paris: Yale UP and Éditions Odile Jacob, 2012. Print.

Chignell, Andrew and Matthew C. Halteman. "Religion and the Sublime." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 183-202. Print.

Chua, Robbie B. H. “The Postclone-nial in Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*: Science and the Body in the Asian Disapora.” *Ariel* 41.3/4 (2011): 45-71. Print.

Clissmann, Anne. *Flann O’Brien: A Critical Introduction to his Writings (The Story-Teller’s Book-Web)*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975. Print.

Collingwood, R. G. “The Principles of Art.” *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 282-295. Print.

Comer, Todd A. “A Mortal Agency: Flann O’Brien’s *At Swim-Two-Birds*.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 31.2 (2008): 104-114. Web. 23 Mar. 2014.

Cooper, Simon. “Imagining the Post-Human.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Arena Magazine* 81 (Feb-Mar. 2006): 19-20. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Corliss, Richard, and Jumana Farouky. “Everlasting Love.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Mark Romanek et al. *Time* 176.11 (13 Sept. 2010): 59-61. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Costello, Diurmuid, Arthur C. Danto, Anna Dezeuze, Martin Donougho, Thierry de Duve, James Elkins, David Raskin, Dominic Willsdon, and Richard Woodfield. “The Art Seminar.” 2006. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 71-75. Print.

Costelloe, Timothy M., ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. Print.

Cousins, Mark. “The Ugly.” 1994. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 145-151. Print.

Craig, Cairns. "Going Down to Hell Is Easy. Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*." Rev. of *Lanark* by Alasdair Gray. *Cencrastus* 6 (1981): 19-21. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

---. "Going Down to Hell is Easy: *Lanark*, Realism and the Limits of the Imagination." *The Arts of Alasdair Gray*. Ed. Robert Crawford and Thom Nairn. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991. 90-107. Print.

---. *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999. Print.

---. *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996. Print.

Crowther, Paul, ed. *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. London: Academy Editions, 1995. Print.

Culler, Jonathan. "Literary Competence." *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Ed. Jane Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980. 101-117. Print.

Currie, Mark. *The Unexpected: Narrative Temporality and the Philosophy of Surprise*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013. Print.

Currie, Gregory. *Arts & Minds*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004. Print.

Dalfonzo, Gina R. "Lucky Pawns." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *National Review* 57.11 (20 June 2005): 53-54. Web. 16 Nov. 2014.

Danto, Arthur. *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 2003. Print.

---. “The Aesthetics of Brillo Boxes.” 2003. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 60-65. Print.

Daugherty, Leo. “Graver False and True: *Blood Meridian* as Gnostic Tragedy.” *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Edwin T. Arnold and Dianne C. Luce. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1999. 159-174. Print.

Davis, Charles. “Introduction: ‘To see with our own eyes’: Hogarth between native empiricism and a theory of ‘beauty in form.’” 2010. *The Analysis of Beauty*. By William Hogarth. London: J. Reeves, 1753. Web. 12 Mar. 2013. <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/1217/.>

De Boever, Arne. *Narrative Care: Biopolitics and the Novel*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013. Print.

De Juan, Luis. *Postmodernist Strategies in Alasdair Gray’s* Lanark: A Life in 4 Books. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003. Print.

Deb, Siddhartha. “Lost corner.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *New Statesman* (7 Mar. 2005): 55. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Demetrion, James T. “Foreword.” *Regarding Beauty*. Ed. Arthur Danto. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1999. 7-10. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. “Parergon.” 1978. Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 41-46. Print.

---. “The *Sans* of the Pure Cut.” *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 82-89. Print.

Desai, Anita. “A Shadow World.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *The New York Review* (22 Sept. 2005): 48-51. Print.

Detloff, Madelyn. “Living in ‘Energetic Space’: Jeanette Winterson’s Bodies and Pleasures.” *English Language Notes* 45.2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 149-159. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Detweiler, Robert. “Games and Play in Modern American Fiction.” *Contemporary Literature* 17.1 (Winter 1976): 44-62. Web. 15 Oct. 2013.

Dewey, John. “Art as Experience.” 1934. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 296-316. Print.

Dewsnap, Terence. “Flann O’Brien and the Politics of Buffoonery.” *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 19.1 (1993): 22-36. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Dickie, George. “What is Art? An Institutional Anaylsis.” 1974. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 426-437. Print.

Dickson, Lisa and Maryna Romanets, ed. *Beauty, Violence, Representation*. New York and London: Rouledge, 2014. Print.

Distiller, Natasha. “Written on the Body: Meaning, Gender.” *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 17 (2005): 35-44. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Dole, Nathan Haskell. *Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*. Vol. 7. By Friedrich Schiller. Boston: F. A Niccolls & company, 1902. Web. 9 Jun. 2015.

Domingo, Andreu. "'Demodystopias': Prospects of Demographic Hell." *Population and Development Review* 34.4 (Dec. 2008): 725-745. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Donaldson, George and Alison Lee. "Is eating people really wrong? Dining with Alasdair Gray." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15.2 (Summer 1995): 155. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

Donoghue, Denis. *On Eloquence*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2008. Print.

---. *The Practice of Reading*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1998. Print.

Dufrenne, Mikel. *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*. Trans. Edward S. Casey, Albert A. Anderson, Willis Domingo, and Leon Jacobson. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973. Print.

Duncan, Ian. "Allegory and Cruelty: Gray's *Lanark* and Lindsay's *A Voyage to Arcturus*." *Scotland As Science Fiction*. Ed. Caroline McCracken-Flesher. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2012. 43-54. Print.

Dutton, Denis. *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, & Human Evolution*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009.

Dutton, Denis. "A Darwinian theory of beauty." *TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design)*. Long Beach, CA. Feb. 2010. Web. 8 Jan. 2015. <https://www.ted.com/talks/denis_dutton_a_darwinian_theory_of_beauty>.

Eatough, Matthew. "The Time that Remains: Organ Donation, Temporal Duration, and *Bildung* in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Literature and Medicine* 29.1 (Spring 2011): 132-160. *Johns Hopkins UP*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Eco, Umberto, ed. *History of Beauty*. 2nd ed. Trans. Alastair McEwen. New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2005. Print.

Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979. PDF e-book.

Eddins, Dwight. "'Everything a Hunter and Everything Hunted': Schopenhauer and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*." *Critique Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 45.1 (2003): 25-33. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Simon, Jonas Heide Smith, and Susana Pajares Tosca. *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. New York and London: Routledge, 2008. Print.

Elias, Amy. *Sublime Desire: History and Post-1960s Fiction*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.

Ellam, Julie. *Love in Jeanette Winterson's Novels*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopoi, 2010. Print.

Etlin, Richard A. "Architecture and the Sublime." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 230-274. Print.

Evans, David H. "True West and Lying Marks: The Englishman's Boy, *Blood Meridian*, and the Paradox of the Revisionist Western." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 55.4 (Winter 2013): 406-433. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Evans, Michael. "The Second Horseman: The Philosophy of War in *Blood Meridian*." *Quadrant* 55.4 (Apr. 2011): 80-88. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Eyck, John R. J. "The 'Subtler' Sublime in Modern Dutch Aesthetics." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 135-146. Print.

Falconer, Rachel. *Hell in Contemporary Literature: Western Descent Narratives since 1945*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005. Print.

Farwell, Marilyn. *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*. New York: New York UP, 1996. Web. 7 Feb. 2015.

Feagin, Susan L. and Aaron Meskin. "Part III: Contemporary Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art." *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 391-395. Print.

"Fenian Cycle." *Encyclopædia Britannica Online.* Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/204272/Fenian-cycle>.

Finney, Brian. "Bonded by Language: Jeanette Wintersn's *Written on the Body*." *Women and Language* 25.2 (2002): 23-31. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

---. *English Fiction Since 1984: Narrating a Nation*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print.

Fisher, Mark. "Precarious Dystopias: *The Hunger Games*, *In Time*, and *Never Let Me Go*." *Film Quarterly* 65.4 (Summer 2012): 27-33. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Flor, Carlos Villar. "Flann O'Brien: A Postmodernist Who Happens to Be a Thomist." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 62-77. Print.

Fludernik, Monika. "Time in Narrative." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie Laure-Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 610-612. Print.

Freeman, Barbara Claire. "*The Awakening*: Waking Up at the End of the Line." *Sticky Sublime*. Ed. Bill Beckley. New York: Allworth Press, 2001.124-156. Print.

---. "The Feminine Sublime." 1995. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 64-66. Print.

Freeman, John. "*Never Let Me Go*" A Profile of Kazuo Ishiguro." *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*. Ed. Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2008. 194-198. Print.

Frow, John. *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. Print.

Frye, Steven, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. Print.

Garlick, Steve. "Uncanny sex: Cloning, photographic vision, and the reproduction of nature." *Social Semiotics* 20.2 (Apr. 2010): 139-154. *Routledge*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Gass, William H. Introduction. *At Swim-Two-Birds*. By Flann O'Brien. 1951. Normal: Dalkey Archive P, 1998. v-xviii. Print.

Gaut, Berys. "The Ethical Criticism of Art." 1998. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 589-601. Print.

Gifford, Douglas. “Private Confession and Public Satire in the Fiction of Alasdair Gray.” *Chapman* 50-51 (1987): 101-116. Web. 21 Feb. 2014.

Gilbert-Rolfe, Jeremy. “Attractiveness and the Uncontrollable: An Update.” *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Ed. Rex Butler. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. 13-32. Print.

---. “Art after Deconstruction.” *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Ed. Rex Butler. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. 33-56. Print.

---. “Afterthought about the Present.” *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Ed. Rex Butler. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. 57-84. Print.

---. *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime*. New York: Allworth Press, 1999. Print.

---. “I’m Not Sure It Is Sticky.” *Sticky Sublime*. Ed. Bill Beckley. New York: Allworth Press, 2001. 84-93. Print.

Gilbert-Rolfe, Jeremy and Bonnie Clearwater. “Interview with Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe.” *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Ed. Rex Butler. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. 85-126. Print.

Gilmore, Leigh. “An Anatomy of Absence: *Written on the Body*, *The Lesbian Body*, and the autobiography without names.” *Genders* 26 (1997): 224-228. Web. 16 Feb. 2015.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Arts of the Beautiful*. 1965. Champaign: Dalkey Archive P, 2000. Print.

Godden, Richard and Colin Richmond. "*Blood Meridian, or the evening redness in the east*: 'iterant degenerates bleeding westwards." *Comparative American Studies* 2.4 (2004): 447-460. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Godwin, Mike. "Remains of the DNA." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Reason* 37.5 (Oct. 2005): n. p. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Graff, Gerald. "Narrative and the Unofficial Interpretive Culture." *Reading Narrative : Form, Ethics, Ideology*. Ed. James Phelan. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989. 3-11. Print.

Gray, Alasdair and Mark Axelrod. "An epistolary interview, mostly with Alasdair Gray." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15.2 (Summer 1995): 106. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

Gray, Alasdair. *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1981. Print.

Grenier, Cynthia. "The Harvest Season; A fictional glimpse of a brave new world." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *The Weekly Standard* 10.40 (4-11 Jul. 2005). *LexisNexis*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Griffin, Gabriele. "Science and the cultural imaginary: The case of Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Textual Practice* 23.4 (2009): 645-663. *Routledge/Taylor & Francis*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Groes, Sebastian, and Barry Lewis. *Kazuo Ishiguro: New Critical Visions of the Novels*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.

Guillemin, George. "'See the Child': The Melancholy Subtext of *Blood Meridian*." *Cormac McCarthy: New Directions*. Ed. James D. Lilley. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2014. 239-265. Print.

Guyer, Paul. “The German Sublime After Kant.” *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 102-117. Print.

Habermas, Jürgen. “Modernity—An Incomplete Project.” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. New York: New Press, 2002. 1-13. Print.

Hansen, Jennifer. “Written on the Body, Written by the Senses.” *Philosophy and Literature* 29.2 (Oct. 2005): 365-378. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Hardin, Michael. “Dissolving the Reader/Author Binary: Sylvia Molloy’s *Certificate of Absence,* Helena Parente Cunha’s *Woman Between Mirrors*, and Jeanette Winterson’s *Written on the Body*.” *International Fiction Review* 29 (2002): 84-96. Print.

Harris, Andrea L. *Other Sexes: Rewriting Difference from Woolf to Winterson*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Harrison, M. John. “Clone Alone.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Guardian* (26 Feb. 2005): 26. Print.

Harrison, William M. “The power of work in the novels of Alasdair Gray.” *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15.2 (1995): 162. Web. 16 Sept. 2013. Print.

Harten, Doreet LeVitte. “Creating Heaven.” 1999. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 73-76. Print.

Heath, Malcolm. “Longinus and the Ancient Sublime.” *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 11-23. Print.

Herman, David, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

Herman, David. "Toward a Formal Description of Narrative Metalepsis." *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26.2 (1997): 132-152. Web. 8 Jun. 2015.

Hickey, Dave. "Enter the Dragon: On the Vernacular of Beauty." 1993. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 22-30. Print.

Hillman, James. "The Practice of Beauty." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. 261-274. Print.

Higgins, Kathleen Marie. "Whatever Happened to Beauty? A Response to Danto." 1996. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 31-35. Print.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. "The Philosophy of Fine Art." 1818-1835. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 180-192. Print.

Hensher, Philip. "School for scandal." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *The Spectator* (26 Feb. 2005): 32-33. Print.

Henstra, Sarah. *The Counter-Memorial Impulse in Twentieth-Century English Fiction*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009. Print.

Hobsbaum, Philip. "Alasdair Gray: The Voice of His Prose." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 15.2 (Summer 1995): 147. Web. 8 Jun. 2015.

Hogan, Patrick Holm. "Literary Aesthetics: Beauty, the Brain, and *Mrs. Dalloway*." *Literature, Neurology, and Neuroscience: Historical and Literary Connections*. Ed. Anne Stiles, Stanley Finger, and François Boller. *Progress in Brain Research* 205 (2013): 319-337. Print.

Hogarth, William. *The Analysis of Beauty*. London: J. Reeves, 1753. Web. 29 Mar. 2014. http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/1217/.

Holmberg, David. "'In a time before nomenclature was and each was all': *Blood Meridian*'s Neomythic West and the Heterotopian Zone." *Western American Literature* 44.2 (Summer 2009): 140-156. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Hooker, Richard. "Sublimity as Process: Hegel, Newman and Shave." *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. Ed. Paul Crowther. London: Academy Editions, 1995. 42-53. Print.

Hopper, Keith. *Flann O'Brien: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Post-Modernist*. 2nd ed. Cork: Cork UP, 2011. Print.

Houshiary, Shirazeh. "Interview with Stella Santacatterina." 1994. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 93-94. Print.

Huizinga, John. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. 1950. Boston: Beacon Press, 1955. Print.

Hume, David. "Of the Standard of Taste." 1757. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 103-112. Print.

Humicke, Robin, Marc LeBlanc, and Robert Zubek. "MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research." *Department of Computer Science, Northwestern University*. Northwestern University (faculty publications), n.d. Web. 9 Feb. 2014. <http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/pubs/MDA.pdf>

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York and London: Routledge, 1988. Print.

Hutchinson, Mark. "Nausea: Encounters with Ugliness." 2002. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 152-155. Print.

Imhof, Rüdiger, ed. *Alive Alive O': Flann O'Brien's* At Swim-Two-Birds. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985. Print.

Ingersoll, Earl G. "Taking off into the Realm of Metaphor: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Studies in the Humanities* 34 (2007): 40-59. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

---. *Waiting for the End: Gender and Ending in the Contemporary Novel*. Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2007. Print.

Iser, Wolfgang. "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Ed. Jane Tompkins. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1980. 50-69. Print.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go*. 2005. New York and London: Vintage International, 2006. Print.

---. "The Art of Letting Go." Interview with Nick James. *Sight & Sound* 21.3 (2011): 39. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

---. “Future Present.” Interview with Emily Mead. *Publishers Weekly* (31 Jan. 2005): 47. Print.

---. Interview with Karen Grigsby Bates. 2005. *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*. Ed. Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2008. 199-203. Print.

---. “The New Seriousness: Kazuo Ishiguro in conversation with Sebastian Groes.” Interview with Sebastian Groes. *Kazuo Ishiguro: New Critical Visions of the Novels*. Ed. Sebastian Groes and Barry Lewis. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 247-264. Print.

Ishiguro, Kazuo, Cynthia F. Wong, and Grace Crummett. “A Conversation about Life and Art with Kazuo Ishiguro.” *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*. Ed. Brian W. Shaffer and Cynthia F. Wong. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2008. 204-220. Print.

Ishiguro, Kazuo, and Mark Romanek. Interview with Melissa Block. *NPR News—All Things Considered* (15 Sept. 2010). Print.

Ishizu, Tomohiro, and Semir Zeki. “A neurobiological enquiry into the origins of our experience of the sublime and beautiful.” *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8 (Nov. 2014): 1-10. Web. 1 Apr. 2015. <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00891/full>.

James, Caryn. “Is Everybody Dead Around Here?” Rev. of *Blood Meridian*. *New York Times* 28 Apr. 1985: 31. Print.

Jameson, Fredric. “Postmodernism: Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.” *New Left Review* 146 (1984): 53-92. Web. 6 Sep. 2014.

---. “Transformations of the Image in Postmodernity.” 1995. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 107. Print.

Janaway, Christopher. “Part II: Modern Theories. Introduction.” *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 163-166. Print.

Jarrett, Robert L. *Cormac McCarthy*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997. Print.

Jenkins, Henry. “Game Design as Narrative Architecture.” *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. Ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2006. 670-689. Print.

Jennings, Bruce. “Biopower and the Liberationist Romance.” *Hastings Center Report* (Ju.-Aug. 2010): 16-20. *Hastings Center*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Jennings, Jay. “Clone Home: Jay Jennings on Kazuo Ishiguro.” *BookForum* (Apr./May 2005): 44. Print.

Jerng, Mark. “Giving Form to Life: Cloning and Narrative Expectations of the Human.” *Partial Answers* 6.2 (2008): 369-393. *Johns Hopkins UP*. Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

Jervis, Lauren. “Childhood in Action: A Study of Natality’s Relationship to Societal Change in *Never Let Me Go*.” *Childhood and Its Discontents*. Spec. issue of *English Studies in Canada* 38.2-3 (Sept./Dec. 2012): 189-205. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Johnson, David B. “The Postmodern Sublime: Presentation and Its Limits.” *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 118-134. Print.

Johnson, Galen A. *The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking Through Merleau-Ponty's Aesthetics*. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2010. Print.

Jones, Kristin M. "Childhood's End." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Mark Romanek et al. *Film Comment* (Sept. – Oct. 2010): 32-33. Print.

Josyph, Peter. *Adventures in Reading Cormac McCarthy*. Lanham, Toronto, and Plymouth: Scarecrows Press, 2010. Print.

Kafalenos, Emma. "Indeterminacy." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie Laure-Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 241-42. Print.

Kant, Immanuel. *The Critique of Judgement*. Trans. J. C. Meredith. 1790. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 29 Sep. 2014.

---. "Critique of Judgement." *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 131-160. Print. Rpt. of *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*. 1790. Trans. J. C. Meredith. 1978.

---. "From 'Critique of Judgment.'" *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Trans. J.H. Bernard. Ed. Hazard Adams. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. 377-399. Print.

Kapoor, Anish. "Interview with Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton." 1990. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 91-92. Print.

Kauer, Ute. "Narration and Gender: The Role of the First-Person Narrator in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *'I'm telling you stories': Jeanette Winterson*

and the Politics of Reading. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopoi, 1998. 41-52. Print.

Kawabata, Hideaki, and Semir Zeki. “Neural Correlates of Beauty.” *Journal of Neurophysiology* 91 (2004): 1699-1705. Web. 19 Apr. 2015.

Keen, Suzanne. *Empathy and the Novel*. Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 2007. Print.

Kelly, Michael, ed. “New Criticism.” *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. 2nd ed. 2014. *Oxford Reference*. Web. 6 Apr. 2015.

Kermode, Frank. “Outrageous Game.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *London Review of Books* (21 Apr. 2005): n. p. *London Review of Books*. Web. 16 Nov. 2014.

Kerr, Sarah. “*Never Let Me Go*: When They Were Orphans.” Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *New York Times* (17 Apr. 2005): n. p. Web. 20 May 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/17/books/review/17KERRL.html>.

Knight, Stephen. “Forms of Gloom.” *Alive Alive O’: Flann O’Brien’s* At Swim-Two-Birds. Ed. Rüdiger Imhof. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985. 86-101. Print.

Kostkowska, Justyna. *Ecocriticism and Women Writers: Environmentalist Poetics of Virginia Woolf, Jeanette Winterson, and Ali Smith*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print.

Krauss, Rosalind. “The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism.” 1981. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 164-167. Print.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. “Part I: Classic Sources. Introduction.” *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 3-15. Print.

Kushner, Rachel. “Warfare and Pleasure: The Paintings of Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe.” *Art After Deconstruction: Jeremy Gilbert Rolfe*. Ed. Rex Butler. Brisbane: Editions 3, 2011. 127-138. Print.

Langer, Susanne. *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art Developed from* Philosophy in a New Key. New York: Scriber, 1953. Print.

Lane, John. *Timeless Beauty: In the Arts and Everyday Life*. Devon: Green Books, 2003. Print.

Lanser, Susan S. “The ‘I’ of the Beholder: Equivocal Attachments and the Limits of Structuralist Narratology.” *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 206-219. Print.

LeBlanc, Marc. “Tools for Creating Dramatic Game Dynamics.” *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. Ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2006. 438-459. Print.

Lee, Joon. “Void: Mapping the Invisible in Korean Art.” 2007. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 102-105. Print.

Levy, Titus. "Human Rights Storytelling and Trauma Narrative in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Journal of Human Rights* 10 (2011):1-16. *Routledge*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Lewis, Barry. "The Concertina Effect: Unfolding Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Kazuo Ishiguro: New Critical Visions of the Novels*. Ed. Sebastian Groes and Barry Lewis. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 199-210. Print.

Lindenmeyer, Antje. "Postmodern Concepts of the Body in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *Feminist Review* 63 (Autumn 1999): 48-63. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Litovitz, Malca. Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *Queen's Quarterly* 104.2 (Summer 1997): 332. *ProQuest*. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Lochner, Liani. "'This is supposed what we're supposed to be doing, isn't it?': Scientific discourse in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go.*" *Kazuo Ishiguro: New Critical Visions of the Novels*. Ed. Sebastian Groes and Barry Lewis. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 225-235. Print.

Longinus. "On the Sublime." *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Trans. W.R. Roberts. Ed. Hazard Adams. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971. 76-102. Print.

Lumsden, Robert. "Voidence in *The Third Policeman*." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 49-61. Print.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. 1991. Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1994. Print.

---. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Print.

---. "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde." 1988. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 27-40. Print.

Mack, Michael. *How Literature Changes the Way We Think*. London and New York: Continuum, 2011. Print.

Mackie, Penelope, and Mark Jago. "Transworld Identity." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Autumn 2013. Web. 13 Feb. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/identity-transworld/>

Maclean's. "Ishiguro's accidental sci-fi novel." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Maclean's* 118.21 (23 May 2005): n. p. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Maioli, Francesa. "Palimpsests: The Female Body as a Text in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 16.2 (2009): 143-158. Web. 13 Feb. 2015.

Makinen, Merja. *The Novels of Jeanette Winterson*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. Print.

"The Man Booker International Prize 2015 Finalists' List Announced." *The Man Booker Prizes*. The Man Booker Prize Foundation, 24 Mar. 2015. Web. 27 Mar. 2015. <http://www.themanbookerprize.com/press-releases/man-booker-international-prize-2015-finalists%E2%80%99-list-announced>.

Martin, Éva Madeleine. "The 'Prehistory' of the Sublime in Early Modern France: An Interdisciplinary Perspective." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 77-101. Print.

Masters, Joshua J. "'Witness to the Uttermost Edge of the World': Judge Holden's Textual Enterprise in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*." *Critique* 40.1 (Fall 1998): 25-37. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Mays, J. C. C. "Literalist of the Imagination." *Alive Alive O': Flann O'Brien's* At Swim-Two-Birds. Ed. Rüdiger Imhof. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985. 81-86. Print.

McCarthy, Cormac. *Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness in the West*. New York: Vintage International, 1985. Print.

McCracken-Flesher, Caroline, ed. "Introduction." *Scotland As Science Fiction*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2012. 1-14. Print.

McAvan, Em. "Ambiguity and Apophatic Bodies in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *Critique* 52.4 (2011): 434-443. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

McDonald, Keith. "Days of Past Futures: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as 'Speculative Memoir.'" *Biography* 30.1 (Winter 2007): 74-83. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. 2001. New York: Random House (Anchor Books), 2003. Print.

McHale, Brian. *The Obligation toward the Difficult Whole: Postmodernist Long Poems*. Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 2004. Print.

---. *Postmodernist Fiction*. Britain: Methuen & Co., 1987. Print.

McMahon, Cliff. "The Sublime is How: Philip Taaffe and Will Barnet." *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. Ed. Paul Crowther. London: Academy Editions, 1995. 18-33. Print.

Mellamphy, Ninian. "Aestho-Autogamy and the Anarchy of Imagination: Flann O'Brien's Theory of Fiction in *At Swim-Two-Birds*." *Alive Alive O': Flann O'Brien's* At Swim-Two-Birds. Ed. Rüdiger Imhof. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985. 140-160. Print.

Mercier, Vivian. *The Irish Comic Tradition*. 1962. London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford UP, 1969. Print.

Merritt, Melissa McBay. "The Moral Source of the Kantian Sublime." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 37-49. Print.

Messud, Claire. "Love's Body." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *The Nation* (16 May 2005): 29-31. Print.

Meyer, Jürgen. "Flann O'Brien's Anti-Esotericism: *The Third Policeman* and *The Dalkey Archive*." *European Journal of English Studies* 15.3 (Dec. 2011): 267-278. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Miller, Gavin. "Literary Narrative as Soteriology in the Work of Kurt Vonnegut and Alasdair Gray." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 31.3 (Fall 2001): 299-323. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

Miner, Valerie. "At her wit's end." Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *The Women's Review of Books* 10.8 (May 1993): 21. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Mirsky, Marvin. "Notes on Reading Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 49.4 (Autumn 2006): 628-630. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Misra, Jahnavi. "Exploration of Ethical Debates through Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*, Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and Smith's *On Beauty*." *J Med Humanit* 35 (2014): 335-348. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Montella, Martha. "Novel Perspectives on Bioethics." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 51.36 (13 May 2005). Web. 17 May 2014.

Morgan, David. "Sweet Wisdom and Self-Effacement: The Spiritual in the Modern Age." 1996. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 82-85. Print.

Morgan, Edwin. "Tradition and Experiment in the Glasgow Novel." *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams*. Ed. Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994. 85-98. Print.

Morgan, Robert C. "A Sign of Beauty." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. 75-82. Print.

Morley, Simon, ed. *The Sublime*. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. Print.

Mundik, Petra. "'Striking the Fire Out of the Rock': Gnostic Theology in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. *South Central Review* 26.3 (2009): 72-97. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Murphy, Neil. "Flann O'Brien." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 25.3 (2005): 7-41. Print.

---. "Flann O'Brien's *The Hard Life* & the Gaze of the Medusa." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 148-161. Print.

Murphy, Neil, and Keith Hopper. "Editors' introduction: A(nother) bash in the tunnel." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 9-20. Print.

Murphy, Neil, and Keith Hopper, eds. *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien*. Champaign, London, and Dublin: Dalkey Archive P, 2013. Print.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. "The Sublime Offering." 1988. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 47-51. Print.

Nayar, Pramod K. "The fiction of bioethics: Posthumanism in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Notes on Contemporary Literature* 44.3 (2014): 9-12. Print.

Nehamas, Alexander. *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1985. Print.

---. *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2007. Print.

---. "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal." 1981. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 556-567. Print.

Newman, Barnett. "The Sublime is Now." 1948. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 25-26. Print.

Ngai, Sianne. *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting*. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 2012. Print.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Birth of Tragedy." *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 222-232. Print.

"The Nobel Prize in Literature 2014: Patrick Modiano." *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media, 9 Oct. 2014. Web. 27 Mar. 2015. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2014/press.html>.

Nolan, Val. "Flann, Fantasy, and Science Fiction: O'Brien's Surprising Synthesis." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 178-190. Print.

Nünning, Ansgar. "Implied Author." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie Laure-Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 239-240. Print.

O'Brien, Flann. *At Swim-Two-Birds.* 1939. *Flann O'Brien: The Complete Novels*. New York, London and Toronto: Everyman's Library (Alfred A. Knopf), 2007. Print.

---. *The Short Fiction of Flann O'Brien*. Ed. Neil Murphy and Keith Hopper. Champaign, London, and Dublin: Dalkey Archive P, 2013. Print.

---. *The Third Policeman*. 1967. Champaign: Dalkey Archive P, 2006. Print.

O'Connell, Mark. "'How to handle eternity': Infinity and the theories of J.W. Dunne in the fiction of Jorge Luis Borges and Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*." *Irish Studies Review* 17.2 (May 2009): 223-237. Web. 23 Mar. 2014.

O'Gallagher, Niall. "Alasdair Gray's *Lanark*: magic realism and the postcolonial novel." *Textual Practice* 21.3 (2007): 55-550. Web. 16 Sept. 2013.

O'Toole, Mary. "The Theory of Serialism in *The Third Policeman*." *Irish University Review* 18.2 (1988): 215-225. Web. 2 Sept. 2014.

Oblak, Mojca. "Kant and Malevich: The Possibility of the Sublime." *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. Ed. Paul Crowther. London: Academy Editions, 1995. 34-41. Print.

Owens, Barcley. *Cormac McCarthy's Western Novels*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2000. Print.

Palmquist, Stephen. "Glossary of Kant's Technical Terms." Hong Kong Baptist University, n.d. Web. 2 Oct. 2014. <http://staffweb.hkbu.edu.hk/ppp/ksp1/KSPglos.html>

Parrish, Timothy. *From Civil War to the Apocalypse: Postmodern History and American Fiction*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 2008. Print.

---. "History and the Problem of Evil in McCarthy's Western Novels." *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Steven Frye. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. 67-78. Print.

Pater, Walter Horatio. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. London: The Library Edition, 1910. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 12 Mar. 2013.

Pavel, Thomas G. *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1986. Print.

Pearce, Lynne. "The Emotional Politics of Reading Winterson." *'I'm telling you stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopoi, 1998. 29-40. Print.

Peebles, Stacey. "Yuman Belief Systems and Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 45.2 (Summer 2003): 231-244. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Petro, Pamela. "A British Original." Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *Atlantic* (Feb. 1993): 112-115. Print.

Phelan, James. "Implausibilities, Crossovers, and Impossibilities: A Rhetorical Approach to Breaks in the Code of Mimetic Character Narration." *A Poetics of Unnatural Narrative*. Ed. Jan Alber, Henrik Skov Nielsen, and Brian Richardson. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 2013. 167-184. Print.

---. *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2005. Print.

---. *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology*. 1996. Web. 8 Dec. 2011. <https://ohiostatepress.org/index.htm?/books/book%20pages/phelan%20narrative.htm>

---. "Redundant Telling, Preserving the Mimetic, and the Functions of Character Narration." *Contemporary Narratology*. *Narrative* 9.2 (May 2001): 210-216. Web. 4 May 2012.

---. "Rhetorical Approaches to Narrative." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie Laure-Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 500-504. Print.

Phelan, James, and Mary Patricia Martin. "The Lessons of 'Weymouth': Homodiegesis, Unreliability, Ethics, and *The Remains of the Day*." *Narratologies*. Ed. David Herman. Columbus: The Ohio State UP, 1999. 88-109. Print.

Phillips, Dana. "History and the Ugly Facts of *Blood Meridian*." *Cormac McCarthy: New Directions*. Ed. James D. Lilley. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2014. 17-46. Print.

Pier, John. "Metalepsis." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 303-305. Print.

Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. New York: Penguin Books, 2011. Print.

Pittin, Marie Odile. "Alasdair Gray: A Strategy of Ambiguity." *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*. Ed. Susan Hagemann. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996. 199-216. Print.

Plotinus. "Ennead I, iv." *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 57-63. Print.

Pontynen, Arthur. *For the Love of Beauty: Art History and the Moral Foundations of Aesthetic Judgment*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006. Print.

Potkay, Adam. "The British Romantic Sublime." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 203-216. Print.

Power, Mary. "The Figure of the Magician in *The Third Policeman* and *The Hard Life*." *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 8.1 (Jun. 1982): 55-63. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Prager, Brad. *Aesthetic Vision and German Romanticism: Writing Images.* Rochester: Camden House, 2007. Print.

Publishers Weekly. Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Publishers Weekly* (31 Jan. 2005): 46. Print.

Puchner, Martin. "When We Were Clones." *Raritan* 27.4 (Spring 2008): 34-49. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

"The 2014 Pulitzer Prize Winners: Fiction." *The Pulitzer Prizes*. Columbia University, n.d. Web. 27 Mar. 2015. <http://www.pulitzer.org/citation/2014-Fiction>.

Pykett, Lyn. "A New Way With Words? Jeanette Winterson's Post-Modernism." *'I'm telling you stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopoi, 1998. 53-60. Print.

Rabinowitz, Peter J. "Audience." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 29-30. Print.

---. *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation*. Foreword by James Phelan. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1987. Print.

---. "End Sinister: Neat Closure as Disruptive Force." *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology*. Ed. James Phelan. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1989. 120-131. Print.

---. "Truth in Fiction: A Re-examination of Audiences." *Critical Inquiry* 4 (1977): 121-141. Web. 26 Jun. 2015.

Rader, Ralph K. *Fact, Fiction, and Form: Selected Essays*. Ed. James Phelan and David H. Richter. Columbus, The Ohio State UP, 2011. Print.

Ramachandran V. S. *The Tell-Tale Brain: A Neuroscientist's Quest for What Makes Us Human*. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2011. Print.

Rancière, Jacques. "The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes." *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 67-71. Print.

Ratcliff, Carter. "The Sublime Was Then: The Art of Barnett Newman." *Sticky Sublime*. Ed. Bill Beckley. New York: Allworth Press, 2001. 211-239. Print.

Ramazani, R. Jahan. "Yeats: Tragic Joy and the Sublime." *PMLA* 104.2 (Mar. 1989): 163-177. Web. 6 Sep. 2014.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2009. Print.

Redfield, Marc W. "Pynchon's Postmodern Sublime." *PMLA* 104.2 (Mar. 1989): 152-162. Web. 6 Sep. 2014.

Rescher, Nicholas. "Possible Individuals, Trans-World Identity, and Quantified Modal Logic." *Nous* 7 (1973): 330-350. Web. 13 Feb. 2014.

Rhind, Neil. "'Life's easy when you're a robot': Exploring reification through the dual narratives of *Lanark*." *Scottish Literary Review* 3.2 (Autumn-Winter 2011): 101-120. Web. 15 Sept. 2013.

Rizq, Rosemary. "Copying, Cloning and Creativity: Reading Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 30.4 (2014): 517-532. Print.

Robbins, Bruce. "Cruelty Is Bad: Banality and Proximity in *Never Let Me Go*." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 40.3 (Summer 2007): 289-302. Print.

Robin, Thierry. "Flann O'Brien and the Concept of Ideology." *Political Ideology in Ireland: From the Enlightenment to the Present*. Ed. by Olivier Coquelin, Patrick Galliou, and Thierry Robin. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. 162-179. Print.

---. "Representation as a Hollow Form, or the Paradoxical Magic of Idiocy and Skepticism in Flann O'Brien's Works." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 31.3 (Fall 2011): 33-48. Print.

Robinson, Marilynne. "On 'Beauty.'" 19 Jan. 2006. *The World Split Open: Great Authors on How and Why We Write*. Portland and Brooklyn: Tin House Books, 2014. 121-140. Print.

Rosenblum, Robert. "The Abstract Sublime." 1961. *The Sublime*. Ed. Simon Morley. London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010. 108-112. Print.

Roy, G. Ross. Rev. of *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* by Alasdair Gray. *World Literature Today* 56.3 (Summer 1982): 557-558. Web. 15 Sept. 2013.

Rubinson, Gregory J. "Body Language: Scientific and Aesthetic Discourses in Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*." *Critique* 42.2 (Winter 2001): 218-232. Print.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. “Narrative, Games, and Play.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 354-356. Print.

---. *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.

---. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1991. Print.

---. “Possible-Worlds Theory.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory.* Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 446-450. Print.

Salen, Katie and Eric Zimmerman, eds. *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2006. Print.

Sansom, Dennis. “Learning from Art: Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian* as a Critique of Divine Determinism.” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 41.1 (Spring 2007): 1-19. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Santayana, George. *The Life of Reason*. Vol 1. 1905. New York: Dover Publications, 1980. Web. 6 Oct. 2014. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15000/15000-h/vol1.html>

Santayana, George. *The Sense of Beauty*. New York, Chicago, and Boston: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 7 Jan. 2015.

Sante, Luc. "Introduction." *The New York Trilogy: City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986), and *The Locked Room* (1986). By Paul Auster. London and New York: Penguin, 2006. ix-xi. Print.

Sawyer, Andy. "Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and 'Outsider Science Fiction.'" *Kazuo Ishiguro: New Critical Visions of the Novels*. Ed. Sebastian Groes and Barry Lewis. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 236-246. Print.

Sayers, Valerie. "Spare Parts." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Commonweal* (15 Jul. 2005): 27-28. Print.

Scarry, Elaine. *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1999. Print.

Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von. "Philosophy of Art." 1802-1803. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 170-179. Print.

Schapiro, Meyer. "On Perfection, Coherence, and Unity of Form and Content." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. 3-14. Print.

Schiller, Friedrich. *Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*. Vol. 7. Ed. Nathan Haskell Dole. Boston: F. A. Niccolls & Co., 1902. Web. 9 Jun. 2015.

Schjeldahl, Peter. "Notes on Beauty." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. 53-59. Print.

Schopen, Bernard. "'They Rode On': *Blood Meridian* and the Art of Narrative." *Western American Literature* 30.2 (1995): 179-194. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Scurr, Ruth. "The facts of life." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *Times Literary Supplement* (25 Feb. 2005): 21-22. Print.

Seaman, Myra J. "Becoming More (than) Human: Affective Posthumanisms, Past and Future." *Journal of Narrative Theory* 37.2 (Summer 2007): 246-275. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Sepich, John. *Notes on* Blood Meridian. 1993. Austin: U of Texas P, 2008. Print.

Shaddox, Karl. "Generic Considerations in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Human Rights Quarterly* 35 (2013): 448-469. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Shaffer, Brian W. and Cynthia F. Wong, eds. *Conversations with Kazuo Ishiguro*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2008. Print.

Shaviro, Steven. "'The Very Life of Darkness': A Reading of *Blood Meridian*." *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Edwin T. Arnold and Dianne C. Luce. Jackson: U of Mississippi P, 1999. 145-158. Print.

Shaw, Jonathan Imber. "Evil Empires: *Blood Meridian*, War in El Salvador, and the Burdens of Omniscience." *Southern Literary Journal* 40.2 (Spring 2008): 207-231. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Shaw, Patrick W. "The Kid's Fate, the Judge's Guilt: Ramifications of Closure in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*. *Southern Literary Journal* 30.1 (Fall 1997): 102-119. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Shaw, Philip. *The Sublime*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Shea, Thomas F. *Flann O'Brien's Exorbitant Novels*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1992. Print.

Shen, Dan. "Unreliability." *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg UP, 2011. Web. 31 Jan. 2014. <http://wikis.sub.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/index.php/Unreliability>

Shusterman, Richard. *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. Print.

Sim, Wai-chew. *Kazuo Ishiguro*. London and New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Simon, Bart. "Introduction: Toward a Critique of Posthuman Futures." *Posthumanism*. *Cultural Critique* 53 (Winter 2003): 1-9. Web. 9 May 2015.

Slade, Andrew. *Lyotard, Beckett, Duras, and the Postmodern Sublime*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007. Print.

---. "Violence and Beauty: Jacques Lacan's *Antigone*." *Beauty, Violence, Representation*. Ed. Lisa Dickson and Maryna Romanets. New York and London: Routledge, 2014. 87-99. Print.

Smethurst, Paul. *The Postmodern Chronotype: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction*. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000. Print.

Smith, Jennifer A. "'We Shall Pass Imperceptibly through Every Barrier': Reading Jeanette Winterson's Trans-formative Romance." *Critique* 52.4 (2011): 412-433. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Smith, Penny. “Hell innit: the millennium in Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark*, Martin Amis’s *London Fields*, and Shena Mackay’s *Dunedin*.” *The Endings of Epochs*. Spec. issue of *English Association: Essays and Studies* 48 (1995): 115-128. Print.

Snyder, Phillip. “Disappearance in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.” *Western American Literature* 44.2 (Summer 2009): 127-139. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Snyder, Phillip A. and Delys W. Snyder. “Modernism, Postmodernism, and Language: McCarthy’s Style.” *The Cambridge Companion to Cormac McCarthy*. Ed. Steven Frye. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013. 27-40. Print.

Sørensen, Bent. “Katabasis in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*.” *Orbis Litterarum* 60 (2005): 16-25. Web. 24 Mar. 2014.

Spolsky, Ellen. “Why and How to Take the Fruit and Leave the Chaff.” *On the Origin of Fictions: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Spec. issue of *SubStance* 30.1/2 (2001): 177-198. Web. 1 June 2012.

Spurgeon, Sara. “The Sacred Hunter and the Eucharist of the Wilderness.” *Cormac McCarthy: New Directions*. Ed. James D. Lilley. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 2014. 75-101. Print.

Steiner, Wendy. “Venus in Exile: The Rejection of Beauty in Twentieth-Century Art.” 2001. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 45-49. Print.

Stevenson, Randall. “Greenwich Meanings: Clocks and Things in Modernist and Postmodernist Fiction.” *Yearbook of English Studies* (2000): 124. Web. 15 Sept. 2013.

Stewart, Susan. *Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1978. Print.

Stowers, Cath. "The Erupting Lesbian Body: Reading *Written on the Body* as a Lesbian Text." *'I'm telling you stories': Jeanette Winterson and the Politics of Reading*. Ed. Helena Grice and Tim Woods. Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopoi, 1998. Print.

Stuart, Andrea. "Terms of endearment." Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *New Statesman & Society* (18 Sept. 1992): 37-38 Print.

Sutton-Smith, Brian. "Play and Ambiguity." *The Game Design Reader: A Rules of Play Anthology*. Ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2006. 296-313. Print.

Tabbi, Joseph. *Postmodern Sublime: Technology and American Writing from Mailer to Cyberpunk*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1995. Print.

Taaffe, Carol. *Ireland Through the Looking-Glass: Flann O'Brien, Myles na gCopaleen and Irish Cultural Debate*. Cork: Cork UP, 2008. Print.

Teo, Yugin. "Testimony and the Affirmation of Memory in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Critique* 55 (2014): 127-137. Print.

Third Earl of Shaftesbury. "Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times." 1711. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 77-86. Print.

Tooby, John and Leda Cosmides. "Conceptual Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology." *The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*. Ed. David M. Buss. Hoboken: Wiley,

2005. 5-67. Web. 26 Mar. 2015.

<http://www.cep.ucsb.edu/papers/bussconceptual05.pdf>.

---. "Does Beauty Build Adapted Minds? Toward an Evolutionary Theory of Aesthetics, Fiction and the Arts." *On the Origin of Fictions: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Spec. issue of *SubStance* 30.1/2 (2001): 6-27. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Jun. 2012.

Tsao, Tiffany. "The Tyranny of Purpose: Religion and Biotechnology in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Literature & Theology* 26.2 (June 2012): 214-232. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Turner, Frederick. *Beauty: The Value of Values.* Charlottesville and London: UP of Virginia, 1991. Print.

Ulmer, Gregory L. "The Object of Post-Criticism." *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. New York: New Press, 2002. 83-110. Print.

Van de Vall, Renée. "Silent Visions: Lyotard on the Sublime." *The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*. Ed. Paul Crowther. London: Academy Editions, 1995. 68-75. Print.

Vaux, Anna. "Body Language." Rev. of *Written on the Body*, by Jeanette Winterson. *Times Literary Supplement* 4666 (4 Sept. 1992): 20. Print.

Vieth, Ronja. "A Frontier Myth Turns Gothic: *Blood Meridian: Or, the Evening Redness in the West*." *Cormac McCarthy Journal* 8.1 (2010): 47-62. Print.

Vorhaus, Daniel. Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *American Journal of Bioethics* 7.2 (Feb. 2007): 99-100. *Routledge*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Vygotsky, L. S. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Ed. Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 1978. Print.

Wallace, Jeff. "Literature and Posthumanism." *Literature Compass* 7/8 (2010): 692-701. *Blackwell Publishing*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Wallace, Gavin. "Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity." *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams*. Ed. Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1994. 217–231. Print.

Walkowitz, Rebecca L. "Unimaginable Largeness: Kazuo Ishiguro, Translation, and the New World Literature." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 40.3 (Summer 2007): 216-239. *JSTOR*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Walton, Kendall. "Categories of Art." 1970. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 521-537. Print.

---. "Fearing Fictions." 1978. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 637-650. Print.

Warhol, Robyn. "Unnarratable, The." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 623. Print.

Waters, Maureen. *The Comic Irishman*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1984. Print.

Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London and New York: Methuen, 1984. Print.

Weiskel, Thomas. *The Romantic Sublime*. 1976. Foreword by Harold Bloom. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986. Print.

Welish, Marjorie. "Contratemplates." *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics*. Ed. Bill Beckley and David Shapiro. New York: Allworth Press, 1998. 61-73. Print.

Wertz, Jr., William F. "A Reader's Guide to *Letters on the Aesthetical*." *Fidelio* 14.1/2 (Spring/Summer 2005): 80-104. Web. 21 Mar. 2015. <http://schillerinstitute.org/fidelio_archive/2005/fidv14n01-02-2005SpSu/fidv14n01-02-2005SpSu_080-a_readers_guide_to_schillers_let.pdf>.

White, Glyn. "The critic in the text: footnotes and marginalia in the Epilogue to Alasdair Gray's *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*." *Ma(r)king the Text: The presentation of meaning on the literary page.* Ed. Joe Bray, Miriam Handley, and Anne C. Henry. English and Burlington: Ashgate, 2000. 55-70. Print.

Whitehead, Anne. "Writing with Care: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*." *Contemporary Literature* 52.1 (2011): 54-83. *U of Wisconsin*. Web. 17 Nov. 2014.

Wickman, Matthew. "Alba Newton and Alasdair Gray." *Scotland As Science Fiction*. Ed. Caroline McCracken-Flesher. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2012. 171-184. Print.

Wimsatt, W. K. and Monroe Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." 1954. *Aesthetics: A Comprehensive Anthology*. Ed. Steven M. Cahn and Aaron Meskin. Malden, Oxford, and Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 547-555. Print.

Winterson, Jeanette. *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*. 1995. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996. Print.

---. "Criticism and Contexts: Author Interview." Interview with Sonya Andermahr. *Jeanette Winterson*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 125-131. Print.

---. "Jeanette Winterson: 'I Fear Insincerity.'" Interview with Michele Field. *Publishers Weekly* 242.12 (20 Mar. 1995): 38-39. Print.

---. "What Is Art For?" 9 Nov. 2000. *The World Split Open: Great Authors on How and Why We Write*. Portland and Brooklyn: Tin House Books, 2014. 121-140. Print.

---. *Written on the Body*. 1992. New York: Vintage International, 1994. Print.

Wisecup, Kelly. "'The Skin is Composed of Two Main Parts': Subverting Quarantine, Translating Difference in the SARS Epidemic and Jeanette Winterson's 1993 *Written on the Body*." *Women and Language* 29.1 (2006): 43-49. Web. 14 Feb. 2015.

Wood, James. "The Human Difference." Rev. of *Never Let Me Go*, by Kazuo Ishiguro. *The New Republic* (16 May 2005): 36-39. Web. 17 Nov. 2015.

Wood, Paul. "Truth and Beauty: The Ruined Abstraction of Gerhard Richter." 1994. *Beauty*. Ed. Dave Beech. London and Cambridge: White Chapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2009. 183-189. Print.

Woodward, Richard B. "Cormac McCarthy's Venomous Fiction." *New York Times* 19 Apr. 1992. Web. 11 Aug. 2014.

Zeki, Semir. *Splendors and Miseries of the Brain: Love, Creativity, and the Quest for Human Happiness*. Malden, Oxford, and West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Print.

Zuckert, Rachel. "The Associative Sublime: Gerard, Kames, Alison, and Stewart." *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*. Ed. Timothy Costelloe. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 64-76. Print.