Rehabilitation, Eugenics, and Institutionalization Discourses: Disability in American Literature, 1893-1941

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Rehabilitation, Eugenics, and Institutionalization Discourses: Disability in American Literature, 1893-1941 explores how certain writers challenged prominent discourses--rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization--in their respective literary works. Their stories create a larger intervention in understanding institutionalized discourses and practices in early twentieth century that advocated and reinforced the medical and scientific models, which viewed people with disabilities as needing to be fixed, cured, or institutionalized.

Chapter 1 sets the historical contexts of the post World War I era, exploring how the trauma of war, the national economic decline, the increasing number of orthopedic surgeons, and the rise of industrialization all raised the national consciousness about persons with disabilities. It also discusses how scholars such as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Alice Hall and others have contributed to the understanding of disability in literature. Chapter 2 analyzes how Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* addresses the disastrous consequences of war, and how medical and military professionals, as well as society, reacted to disabled veterans. Disabled veterans were required to overcome their disabilities, to be men, and become productive members of society to avoid stigmatizing attitudes. Trumbo's work complicates the straightforward reading of dominant cultural

narratives by challenging national concerns about reproduction, production, and disability fostered by the Rehabilitation Movement during and after WWI.

Chapter 3 examines how twentieth-century writers such as Eudora Welty, Mary Austin, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, and Eugene O'Neill resisted and countered the endorsement of popular eugenic ideologies and discourses that fostered the concepts of the "degenerate" female body and of impoverished domestic spaces as portrayals of "bad blood," and the disabled child as a burden and threat to family and state. Their respective stories, through the techniques of the gaze and setting (space), illustrate how spaces can blur the lines between what is "defective" and what is normal, and that "defective" is only in the gaze—that is, only in the eyes of the beholder. Chapter 4 investigates how people with disabilities who were institutionalized resisted the dominant narratives that attempted to label and contain them, and that reinforced and reaffirmed the local community's censure of and fears about mental disability. Stories such as Katherine Anne Porter's *Noon Wine* and Jack London's "The Drooling Ward" posit that the diagnoses of disability are too frequently inaccurate, and that normalcy and craziness are relative terms that create unnecessary social mistreatment and misjudgment.

Chapter 5 concludes how the writers in chapters 2-4 successfully dispel the connection between normality and citizenship. They employ literary techniques such as the gaze and the concept of space to resist and counter dominant institutionalized discourses, and to reflect the gaps and tension in their respective works. Jessica Benjamin's concept of "the moral third" illuminates how "the gap" can be a useful "space" for understanding the complexity by which disabled characters are represented in

literary works. This position of the moral third allows readers to comprehend how various tensions, disparities, and interpretations can co-exist (as opposed to just seeing oppositions between able-bodied and disabled individuals and their representations).

Dedication

Dedicated to Nikai Johnson, with love

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I would like to thank those who have made the process of writing this dissertation a rich experience for me. I am always reminded that the work we do is never done alone, but always with the help that we receive from others.

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Fields of Study

Major Field: English

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Society's Waste, 1893-1941

At the Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction held in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 10-17, 1916, George Bliss, Superintendent for the Indiana School for the Feebleminded Youth, told his audience:

> I should be faithless to my duty did I not point to you the great menace to the state, of leaving the 4,500 feeble-minded, now at large in our communities, to their own devices, to marry and reproduce their kind, to fill the police courts of our larger towns and cities, to augment the supply of prostitutes and paupers, as well as the other forms of vice to which a degenerate will surely turn. (44-45)

Bliss' ominous warnings echo the sentiments shared by many prominent eugenic public policy advocates at the turn of the century. While he was specifically referring to the "high-grade feeble-minded" population and his fear of their ability to appear "normal" in society and the dangers of them marrying and reproducing their own kind, his statement points to an imagined connection between moral pestilence and biological degeneration. This imagined connection illustrates how eugenicists often "conflated the 'strength' of one's intellect and morality, believing both were measurable through physiological, hereditary, and IQ testing" (Chapman, Carey, Ben-Moshe 8). Around the turn of the twentieth century, American medical practitioners, military officials, and government

policymakers began to identify disability as a public menace and an economic liability.[1] Definitions of disability in the early twentieth century often incorporated prostitutes, immigrants, people of color, poor white people, individuals with psychiatric disabilities, people with epilepsy, so-called sexual deviants, blind and deaf people, physically disabled people, unmarried women who were sexually active, effeminate men, prisoners, and cognitively and intellectual disabled individuals (Clare, "Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). To Bliss, "segregation was the only 'practical working measure' for curtailing the spread of feeblemindedness throughout Indiana and the nation" (Osgood 260). What Bliss' eugenic warnings and fears make clear is that disabled persons were a blight on American society, creating a burden that the public should not ignore. His message reflects many of the key theoretical concepts and discourse used by many early twentieth-century medical practitioners, policy makers, and government officials during the rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization movements for which disability was considered a key social problem. These institutionalized discourses and practices advocated and reinforced the medical and scientific models of disability, which viewed people with disabilities as unfit and undesirable citizens who needed to be fixed, cured, or put away.

This dissertation explores how some early twentieth-century American authors wrote a variety of fiction and drama that critiqued the three prominent discourses (rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization) employed to understand and treat

[1] Sir Francis Galton coined the term "eugenics" in 1883. His work called for methods of improving the biological make-up of the human species through selective parenthood. His work advocated restricting dysgenic marriages and curtailing the breeding of the "feeble-minded."

people with disabilities during the early twentieth century. The introduction of the field of Disability Studies has helped change many of the ways in which we study disabled characters within literature, shifting our focus from the medical/biological view of disability to a wider and more complex understanding of our society's ideology and construction of disability. My aim is to demonstrate how rehabilitation, eugenic, and institutionalization discourses were pervasive in literary works written between 1893-1941, and how some early twentieth-century American authors countered and even tried, in some cases, to reverse the negative views of disability that had gained scientific and societal traction at the time.

The "Panic of 1893" was the year of the Great New York Stock Exchange Crisis when the U.S.'s worsening economic crisis was plagued by overbuilding and risky financing of railroads. While the economic crisis was somewhat remedied by the U.S.'s participation in the two World Wars, economic fears played a part in the institutionalized discourses about disability that emerged during that time. The period after the Civil War is also roughly when the perception of disability shifted from the focus on innate or moral failings of individuals towards medicalization, with disability becoming a social problem of the state to be cured, managed, or eliminated. The rehabilitation and eugenics movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries particularly served to heightened these negative attitudes about disability. Due to the nation's economic decline, criticism of monetary value as a proxy for human worth became increasingly compelling. When eugenics fell out of favor in the United States prior to WWII, medical

superintendents pursued involuntary sterilization[2] with even greater ardor. Such a view contributed to early twentieth-century American society's deep-rooted fears and prejudice about disabilities—attitudes that are still prevalent in our society today. Due to the emergence of WWII, I chose the year of 1941 as my end date.

My purpose is thus to understand better the role of early twentieth-century literature in stigmatizing certain bodily and mental variations, which in turn set the standards for political and cultural perspectives about disability that circulated at the time. As influential as such views were and continue to be, they did not, as I have suggested, go unopposed. Together and separately, writers such as Dalton Trumbo, William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Mary Austin, Katherine Anne Porter, Jack London, and Eugene O'Neill, offered alternative understandings of disability. Their creative work questions, criticizes, and even resists the discourse of stigma associated with disability during this time and thus provides a powerful counter-discourse to the dominant perspective. To set the foundation for exploring this argument in detail in the following chapters, this introduction will provide two overviews. The first overview includes a brief discussion about the influence of the rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalizations discourses. Discourses created by these institutionalized movements were powerful in that they "owned" the lives of the disabled population. Not only did the movements/discourses set the stage for ongoing discriminatory practices against the disabled population, but the "disabled" bodies were also marked and "contained." So-

[2] Between 1946-1967, the number of intellectually disabled individuals living in institutions "rose from 116, 828 to 193, 188, an increase of 65 percent" (Trent 251). Trent writes, "Apart from the "benefits of restricting mentally disabled people from having children, sterilization became important in enlarging the authority of superintendents in ever growing institutions" (223).

called “facts” from science and “cures” through technology propagandized disabled people’s unworthiness, marking them as second-class citizens without a voice.

The second overview covers the scholarship on disability in literature, putting this dissertation in conversation with scholars like Toni Morrison, Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, Christopher Krentz, Heidi Krumland, Alison Arant, and Alice Hall. These critics all offer crucial strategies and ways of advancing our understanding of disability in literature, including the ways in which disability intersects with other social differences that have often had stigma attached to them such as gender, race, class and sexuality. This chapter will then end with an overview of the chapters to come, and how my dissertation hopes to build upon on the works of the aforementioned scholars and to fill in the gaps of our understanding in literary disability.

Rehabilitation, Eugenics, and Institutionalization Discourses: A Historical Overview

While discourses used by the rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization movements were similar in terms of their negative attitudes towards disabilities, how they went about advocating their causes were different. The rehabilitation movement was “aimed to rid the nation of ‘war’s waste,’ a turn of the phrase that referred to the human remains of war as well as to the economic cost that the nation had to endure after the battle was over” (Linker 2). That meant discontinuing the pension plan that was given to Civil War veterans and working hard to get WWI veterans with disabilities back into the work force. Beth Linker, who has studied the post WWI-rehabilitation movement in some detail, writes, “Progressive reformers believed that the government could (and should)

'rebuild war cripples,' curing them of their disabilities so that veterans . . . would make a speedy return to work and rely on their own wage-earning capacity rather than on government pensions" (2). The campaign "symbolized a dream, a hope that physical 'handicaps,' 'pauperism,' and 'defects of manhood' could all be conquered on the home front" (Linker 3). Unfortunately, the capitalist system failed to accommodate those individuals whose bodies could not fit into the infrastructure of everyday labor and success. A body that was impaired but could function in a capitalistic society had value, but a disabled body that could not was "ejected from the system altogether" (Hagood 388). Disability became negatively associated with dependency and an inability to be self-sufficient and productive. Instead of being a societal problem, disability came to be seen as the fault of the individual. In short, "state charity officials and lawmakers [and society] increasingly viewed disabled people as burdensome dependents who needed to help defray the cost of their upkeep" (Rose 2). Consequently, "capitalism slowly and fundamentally transformed social norms regarding care, disability, and dependency" (Chapman, Carey, Ben-Moshe 6).

Between 1890-1920, social rehabilitationists fostered the notion that education and work opportunity for women and children with disabilities as a "tool" for success would allow them to be less dependent on the system and to be productive citizens. However, the "social" approach to the disabled population was short-lived and was soon overpowered during and after WWI by the medical rehabilitationists who endorsed concepts such as "fixing the body" and normalization. These ideologies would later be developed into what is now currently known as the "Medical Model." The medicalization

of disability came to depend on a given (fixed) body's ability to produce. In order to produce, disabled veterans were encouraged to man up and "conquer their disability" in order to resume being a productive citizen of society and the workplace. It was undesirable for war veterans (both the disabled and the nondisabled) to show any type of weakness. The shift of rehabilitation propaganda towards the medical model served many purposes: literature aimed at wounded soldiers was designed to convince them that they should be grateful for the medical and vocational training that the government offered to them. It even became "unmanly" and "unpatriotic" to receive the pension that their forefathers had accepted (Linker 122). Furthermore, medical rehabilitationists firmly believed that after six months of medical care, "disabilities would disappear and wounded soldiers would be able once again to enjoy the rights and luxuries regularly taken for granted by able-bodied men" (Linker 8). These unrealistic goals set patterns for stigmatizations and negative attitudes towards disabled veterans. To survive the war was not heroic or manly enough; disabled veterans who could not mainstream back into society were relegated to economic dependency and second-class citizenship.

Various scholars' works such as Beth Linker's *War's Waste* (2011), Daniel Wilson's "Psychological Trauma and Its Treatment in the Polio Epidemics" (1982), and Anne Finger's *An Elegy for Disease* (2006) discuss how government and medical practitioners sought to ensure that disabled people would avoid public dependency and fulfill their civic obligations to be self-sufficient. Linker explains how The War Risk Insurance Act (WRIA) of 1917 put an end to long-term care for veterans with disabilities. Since the military's goal was to place injured WWI veterans either back into combat or

into the industrial workforce, they set up medical-based curative workshops. In these workshops, veterans with medical issues were expected to be active participants in their cures, to unrealistically "overcome" their disabilities, and to determinedly ready themselves to be self-reliant citizens. Daniel Wilson and Anne Finger, both polio survivors, illustrate how those with polio were faced with similar experiences and attitudes. Their respective works describe the polio epidemic centers and the trauma suffered by individuals who contracted polio and were taken and isolated from their families at those hospitals. The use of braces and crutches, a wheelchair, or an iron lung stigmatized the polio victim as "disabled." This meant that polio patients had to overcome both psychological and emotional resistance to using these various assistive devices before they could show the world that they had achieved the benefits of their recovery. The very nature of the normalizing process suggested that if the patients were unable to shed their assistive devices and become productive members of society, then obviously they were not working hard enough. Those who did not succeed were considered failures and "cripples."

The ideologies and negative attitudes of the rehabilitation movement about disability carried over and intersected with the eugenics movement where social reformers sought an explanation for poverty and other forms of "human failure" through scientific discussions of heredity and genetics. Respected people such as inventor Alexander Graham Bell, President Theodore Roosevelt, and birth control crusader Margaret Sanger supported eugenics. From immigration restrictions in the 1920s to genocide in Nazi Germany during the 1930s and 40s, eugenic programs first targeted

people with disabilities, later expanding to include particular ethnic, religious, and racial groups. One of the ways in which eugenicists supported their beliefs about disabled people being a "menace" to society was to make disabled children and charitable expenses the mainstay of their argument. They argued that disabled individuals were an economic cost and burden to the state, and that illegitimate children were both markers of past transgression and a signifier of future crime. Amos Butler, in his address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, published in 1901, complained that if citizens knew the truth about the enormous expense caused by this group of "degenerates," they would be amazed at what would be accumulated before them in money and they should not rest until they had sought means to prevent all these unnecessary expenditures (np).

As eugenicists broadened the definition of eugenics in the 1930s to strengthen their campaign, they began to include environmental and cultural influences on human development. In short, "not only a mother's genes but also her competence to raise a child in a proper home environment became a eugenic concern. This redefinition allowed eugenicists to pursue marriage and family counseling as an essential strategy for strengthening the race" (Kline 126). Moreover, with "this shift in targeting motherhood as an essential role in raising eugenically fit children," "sterilization could be used to weed out undesirable mothers, regardless of whether they carried any hereditary deficiency" (Kline 130). Eugenicists propagandized that raising eugenically fit children was the path to happiness and the American dream. Normalization then became synonymous with happiness or having a happy and better life. Consequently, many

families with disabled children were often advised to put "their burdens" in an institution and forget about them.

Douglas C. Baynton's "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History" (2001) and Bernadette Baker's "The Hunt for Disability: The New Eugenics and the Normalization of School Children" (2002) trace how eugenics as a discourse compounded America's negative attitude towards disability. Baker, in her comprehensive discussion of the old and new eugenics discourses, contends that eugenics is a "problematic, contentious, and emotive term" (665); what used to be considered as "civilized, European" language about eugenics was actually couched in "proactive racism "and the ambiguity of "quality citizenship" (667-668). The ideology of eugenic discourses embedded in our language is supported by Baynton who traces the evolutionary meaning of the words "natural" versus "monstrous." The word "natural" (which denoted something as meaning good and right) was replaced by "normality"; similarly, "monstrous" (which has the same root as monster, meaning to warn) was superseded by "defective." Under these new binary terms, the word "normal" then came to function more as a concept of an ideal (as opposed to meaning average, the usual, or the ordinary) and to exclude only those defined as below average (36). Those considered "below average" were stripped of their citizenship and human rights.

Rehabilitation and eugenics discourses contributed to and compounded ancient fears and prejudices about disability. Taken together, they "provided intellectual justification for more extreme discriminatory practices, notably the systematic removal of disabled people from mainstream economic and social life" (Barnes 13). According to

Sarah Frances Rose's *No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1850-1930* (2008), a new generation of professional charity reformers such as Josephine Shaw Lowell and her fellow reformers believed that by "preventing people who relied on public aid from reproducing, especially the so-called "feeble-minded," American society could "end the problem of public dependency entirely" (19). In attempts to address these issues of dependency, Lowell and her reformers helped to establish permanent, large-scale institutions for the "feeble-minded" (Rose 19). Rose states that to offset the cost of these custodial institutions, administrators had inmates do useful work such as growing produce or sewing clothes, but "since administrators feared that the 'feeble-minded would reproduce more public dependents if released, inmates' work no longer enabled them to return to their communities. Instead thousands of inmate laborers merely fulfilled the civic obligation to be self-sufficient—and, not incidentally, helped defray the cost of their public dependency" (19). Despite the fact that disabled individuals were able to work in these institutions, society at large increasingly viewed them as burdensome, unworthy, and unproductive individuals.

Discourses about disability and "fixing" the problems of disabled people's dependency on society were heavily embedded in the psychology of early twentieth-century American citizens. Disability became synonymous with dependency, which increased the depersonalization of people with disabilities. By depersonalizing people with disabilities, eugenicists could rationalize their reasons and actions for controlling what they termed as the "menace of civilization." What is often not addressed is the fear that the able-bodied population had towards the disabled individuals. In his 1916 lecture,

quoted in the beginning of this chapter, Bliss challenged physicians and school educators to look for other possible causes, especially physical defects that might cause a child's poor academic performance in school. Osgood states:

> [Bliss] argued that by doing so, this act would allow schools and doctors to concentrate their resources more efficiently and would insure that the regular classrooms would be free of the malevolent influence of mentally defective children, who 'are not only a burden to a conscientious teacher, but as they develop into puberty may be a positive menace to the disciple and morals of any schoolroom.' (260)

Ernest Van Alphen characterizes Bliss' talk as "the phenomena of uncanniness and depersonalization" where "this other is not so other after all" (12). Bill Hughes in "Fear, Pity and Disgust: Emotions and the Non-disabled Imaginary" (2012) expands on this uncanny "reflection of self." He writes, "the perfect self is fictive and the empirical self that lives in the real world with its ableist myths and abstraction will always have a small window through which—despite denial and disavowal—s/he will always be able to see, to some extent, a refracted reflection of self in the despised other" (76). Hughes makes two pertinent points: what Bliss really feared was his own possible disability and that he need not look very far to see who the real "menace" was. No one is immune to possible impairments at any age. Disability comes in all ages and sizes. Hughes explains that "Fear encourages 'flight or fight.' It has manifest (sic) itself in the segregation of disability, its enclosure behind high walls; the anthropophagic strategy of early to mid modernity which put impairment out of sight and out of mind" (70). Hughes observes

that not only do we literally segregate people with disabilities by placing them in institutions or segregating them in educational settings, but we also create "walls or barriers" based on attitudes about the different body. For instance, if a baby drools, we forgive the child because the infant is only in its infancy. There is no disgust response or, at best, it is muted. But as the child matures and becomes an adult, fluids that excrete from the mouth will indicate failures of self-control and will elicit reactions of revulsion and disgust. Hughes states:

> Drooling, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—in the wake of the medicalization of 'idiocy'—was taken as a sign of 'feeble mindedness', imbecility' or 'mental retardation'. Eugenic thinking . . . conceived of 'feeble mindedness' as a 'social evil' (Jackson 1998), thereby enhancing the contaminating and polluting aura of its outward signs and de-humanizing those who manifested? them. Idiocy was transformed into a menace, a threat to the social fabric, and became a source of moral panic exacerbating reproductive fears. In practice, this meant that the Victorian distinction between 'idiots and dangerous idiots', enshrined in a number of nineteenth century statuses, collapsed. All 'idiots' were potentially a threat to the integrity of the population and the lucidity of future generation. Droolers and dribblers were signifiers of degeneracy, of an aberrancy so contaminating that *it might potentially take us all*. (75; emphasis mine)

The understatement "it might potentially take us all" demonstrates the very base of Bliss' fears and disgust. Like fear, disgust is an act that is used to judge others and to assign people with disabilities an inferior status; it makes for a compelling case for superiority, purity, and being above the herd (Hughes 72). As Michael Davidson puts it, "disability is as much about national and cultural power differentials as it is a matter of medicine and bodies" (175). The next section will elaborate on how Disability Studies can contribute to the understanding of how disabled people are represented historically and culturally within literature.

Disability and American Literature: Working the Gap

Toni Morrison writes, "National literatures . . . do seem to end up describing and inscribing what is really on the national mind" (*Playing in the Dark* 14). Drawing upon Morrison's quote, my study will consider literary works in the context of their historical appearance, thus bringing to light the ways in which the following authors' works examine disability in the context of their historical and literary framework. The following review of disability studies approaches to American literature is critical to understanding not only the valuable work done to date but also the gaps in the scholarship that my dissertation hopes to fill.

American disability studies scholars such as Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Christopher Krentz, Alison Arant, Heidi Krumland, Alice Hall, and David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, among others, have explored ways in which the disabled Other has been represented in literature over the course of time, but they also suggest that literary authors and scholars have some power to alter negative perceptions of disability. Helen

MacMurphy's *The Almosts* (1920), a book about English and American writers who incorporated "the feeble-minded" characters into their works, poignantly reminds us, "Sometimes the poet sees more than the scientist, even when the scientific man is playing at his own game. The novelist can give a few points to the sociologist, and the dramatist to the settlement worker" (1). As Alice Hall observes, "this opening calls for communication across disciplines but also emphasizes the complexity of literary texts and their potential to deepen our understanding" (7).

One of the first well-known disability studies scholars to examine the rhetorical function of disability in literature was Rosemarie Garland-Thomson in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (1977). Her work has been foundational in laying the groundwork for literary criticism on disability. Garland-Thomson argues that there is a gap between disabled people and their representations in literature. She maintains that in literature disabled people are often static, one-sided, or are the receivers of pity, fear, fascination, repulsion, or merely a surprise, which is different from their lived experiences. In order to be granted "human status" in literature and life, "disabled people must often use charm, intimidation, ardor, deference, humor, or entertainment to relieve nondisabled people of their comfort" (Garland-Thomson 13). The author devotes two chapters to literature, one to nineteenth-century fiction written by white women such as Harriett Beecher Stowe, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and a second chapter to twentieth-century fiction written by black women including Ann Petry, Toni Morrison, and Audre Lorde. Garland-Thomson points out that disability is still most often seen as a bodily inadequacy

or catastrophe to be compensated for with pity, medical intervention, or good will. She contends that femininity and disability are inextricably entangled in patriarchal culture, and that "disability is a culturally fabricated narrative of the body, similar to what we understand as the fictions of race and gender" (77). Garland-Thomson provides four fundamental and overlapping domains of feminist theory – representation, the body, identity, and activism – as ways to suggest the kinds of critical inquiries that scholars should consider when studying disability within these theoretical arenas. For instance, in her analysis of Audre Lorde's biomythography[3] *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, she highlights how Lorde intensifies her subject's differences in the text such as being "'blind,' 'lesbian,' 'Black' [as well as fat and ambidextrous] to create a discursive self that . . . infuses the words with value, power, and fresh meaning" (126). Garland-Thomson praises Lorde and other black women authors such as Toni Morrison for delineating "the extraordinary body as a site of historical inscription rather than physical deviance, while simultaneously repudiating cultural master narratives such as normalcy, wholeness, and the feminine ideal in their respective works" (105). This outlook initiated the importance of doing literary disability analysis, particularly in terms of how rhetoric functions to oppress or empower readers' perceptions about disability. Garland-Thomson's work augments the need for writers and critics to help close the gap between the literary representation and the lived experiences so that disability can be understood as a varied or an individualized experience rather than as a fixed or stereotypical one that works only to oppress rather than to empower.

[3] Biomythography has elements of biography and history of myth. In short, it is fiction built from many sources.

As an extension of Garland-Thomson's view of the gap between representation and the lived experience, I draw on Slavoj Žižek's *The Parallax View* to explore the meaning of this literary gap. Žižek explains that sometimes life presents material data that appears to be opposite, but is actually the same. His point is that while our society does not want to believe the two views, and the gap between them, we must *allow* ourselves to believe both views (and again, the gap) if we are to gain true understanding. This is where it becomes philosophy. If our set "laws" of the universe are at odds with one another, our view of the universe is damaged; it casts doubt as to what is real, what is true and accurate. As human beings, we like to understand using simple boxes, and when we cannot, it destabilizes us. For Žižek the parallax gap is the space between two perspectives that cannot be reduced to either one of them (19). The space is irreducible and there is no way to resolve the tension to find a proper solution. In stretching this concept further, Žižek suggests that the more profound parallax problem is the question of what is human. When someone is human, but acts inhumane, how do we account for that gap? It is a problem of what he calls the one and the void (36). It is about being and not being, being human and not being human, or being inhuman and being not human. I believe that when we account for the gap between literary representations and the lived experiences, the approach is not to draw a cause and effect, but to understand that the *gap itself is the place of understanding*. It is that middle ground that is rich in perspectives, context, and actions, and where bodies interact providing us with insights into acts that may come across as "opposites" but are happening at the same time. For instance, we may want to learn more about Zami's identity as being blind, lesbian, black, "fat," and

ambidextrous AND the ways in which her marginalization by society simultaneously singles her out. How does the gap make her human but not human at the same time? What does this gap teach us?

David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder's *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (2000) suggests, as does Garland-Thomson, that we should not dismiss disability in literature as hopelessly mired in stereotypical imagery. However, unlike Garland-Thomson, they offer a technique (or strategy) for analyzing the rhetorical function of disability in literature called "narrative prosthesis." The authors argue that "narrative prosthesis" can be used as an additional way of calling attention to disability in a literary piece that is either highlighted or made invisible (or obliterated), and, therefore, would serve as a marker about larger narratives on normalcy and legitimacy. For example, in Chapter 5, where they discuss "the language of prosthesis in *Moby-Dick*," they describe how Ahab's repaired leg signifies a physical fact of his "prostheticized difference." Mitchell and Snyder write:

> The repaired leg signified a physical and metaphysical lack that cements the captain's identity as obsessive, overbearing, and overwrought. Yet, curiously, this static identity bequeathed to Ahab also provides the contrast which the linguistically permeable universe of *Moby-Dick* unfolds. From the moment that Captain Peleg explains to Ishmael that the source of Ahab's "desperate moody, and savage" behavior commenced with the "sharp shooting pains in his bleeding stump," the riddle of Ahab's identity is largely solved. (120)

In depicting Ahab's stump as a literary and literal prosthesis, the authors show how this representation can enable the reader to recognize that Ahab's disability is conjured of a series of associations between the pathological interior and corrupted exterior. This connection reifies the myth that disability or bodily defects are evoked as the core of the character, and that people with disabilities are deviant, to be feared, and/or one-dimensional. It is precisely this "narrative prosthesis" that the plot of *Moby-Dick* is dependent upon; the double-function of prosthesis functions as a "deterministic shorthand device for signifying the meaning of Ahab's *being*" (Mitchell and Snyder 123) and is used as the reason for his demise at the end of the novel. By obliterating the literary and literal prosthesis that Ahab stands for, fears about disability can be put to rest. Both Snyder and Mitchell and Garland-Thomson bring to the table the problematic nature of disability representation, which capitalizes on an already highlighted physical difference by exaggerating a stereotypical understanding of disabled figures and the socially conditioned real-life responses that able-bodied readers have to disabled individuals.

Another scholarship that engages complex questions about how writers often frame their stories from a stereotypical view about deafness is Christopher Krentz' *Writing Deafness: The Hearing Line in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2007). His work looks at both canonical representations of deafness in *Moby-Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn* and applies African American literary and cultural theory (including W.E. B. DuBois and Toni Morrison), which allows him to foreground questions of race in ways that Garland-Thomson and Mitchell and Snyder do not. By studying the canonical representation deaf authors, deaf characters, and a deaf presence in nineteenth-

century American literary texts, Krentz' *Writing Deafness* affords, as Toni Morrison does with her study of the "Africanist presence,"[4] specific instances of the deaf presence in nineteenth-century American literature by hearing authors. He argues that deaf presence contextualized nineteenth-century American literature under the default of hearingness (12-19). Retrospectively, the focus of literature tends to be on what is lacking—i.e., the lack of hearing in deaf characters or the depiction of deaf characters through concepts of "silence," absence of sound, and absence of speech. Sometimes silence is romanticized and associated with tranquility; other times silence is ominous. Identity can sometimes be defined through the author's fears and desires toward his/her disabled characters. The writer may exalt the characters while intrinsically fearing elements of the disability itself, thus providing a romantic, sympathetic, or misleading view of deafness.

Krentz particularly notes that there are no words such as "hearingness" as opposed to marked words like "deafness." In his definition of the "hearing line," "Krentz is careful to offer important caveats that identities are more complicated than the binary constructions implicit in W.E.B. DuBois' 'color line' and 'double consciousness'" (Bauman 241). Krentz explains that the "hearing line resides behind every speech act, every moment of silence, every gesture, and every form of human communication, whether physical deafness is present or not . . . The discourse over the hearing line pertains to all people and is ultimately as pervasive as discourse about race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability" (5). As an example, Krentz uses the "hearing line"

[4] Krentz applies Toni Morrison's concepts of absence and presence from *Playing in the Dark* as a way of understanding the notion of "able-bodied" and the forms of erasure that a discourse of normalization legitimates.

concept to explore and expand on his observations of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn.* His analysis focuses on Jim's reaction when he finds out that his daughter Lizabeth is deaf. The discovery begins when Jim yells at and strikes Lizabeth when she does not respond. Jim later finds to his horror that she is deaf, so he grabs her up in his arms and says, "Oh, de po' thing!... Oh, she was plumb deef en dumb, Huck, plum, deef en dumb—end I'd ben a-treat'n her so!"(qtd. in Krentz 117). Krentz says of this passage:

> Twain seems to trade a bit upon the growing literary tradition of using deaf children for sentimental purposes… she is a helpless, angelic victim; like all deaf characters in this sentimental vein, she appears completely passive. Lizabeth's muteness and obliviousness add to her vulnerability; they underscore the helpless deaf girl's dependence on her hearing father. Some aspects of the account seem far-fetched. She probably would not have lost her ability to speak so soon after losing her hearing, and it is somewhat difficult to believe that she could not feel the vibrations of the door slamming shut just a few feet away from her. (117-118)

Twain skillfully uses the episode to humanize Jim, for both Huck and the readers. The presence is, as Krentz points out, the bonding between Jim and Huck. In so doing, the incident makes Huck and Jim's racial differences less marked as they become more "united as hearing people" (118). The absence in the above passage has to do with Lizabeth's passivity and inability to hear, talk, and feel the vibration of the door being slammed shut. The implicit message concerns the violence that the narrative does to the scene in omitting what Lizabeth *can* do. Morrison, in her Nobel Lecture, indirectly sheds

light on the previous scene in her discussion of word-work and the looting of language, "Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge" (2). This limited knowledge of deafness in Lizabeth's case only serves to perpetuate the stereotypical view of deafness of what deaf or suddenly-deafened people cannot do. In addition, the alterity of Lizabeth's position further marginalizes her character as unspeakable and as a body that is deaf with no other identifying human qualities.

"Through tropes of deafness," writes Krentz, "antebellum hearing authors contribute to what we might call the national auditory consciousness, the way that hearing majority conceptualized and thought about individuals who were deaf as well as about their own identities as hearing, speaking people . . . by examining the deaf presence, we begin to see that hearingness is not an absolute or a given, but something subjectively imagined and formed" (66). Krentz's text makes clear that "American writers chiefly employed deaf characters in their works as a way to express their "own anxieties and desires and to attempt to demarcate their identities as hearing people" (100). Like whiteness, hearingness is unmarked and an invisible identity, "but not immune to critical inquiry" (Bauman 243). By applying Morrison's concepts of presence and absence and DuBois' color line, Krentz illustrates how disability studies has helped change many of the ways in which we study disabled people in literature, shifting our focus from the medical/biological view of deafness to a wider and more complex understanding of our society's ideological construction of disability and deafness.

Heidi Krumland's "`A big deaf-mute moron': Eugenic Traces in Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*" (2008) contributes to literary disability studies by putting literature in conversation about disability that emerged in the twentieth century American eugenics discourses. She focuses particularly on one popular writer named Carson McCullers who wrote about disabled people in her 1940 debut novel, but whose work did a great disservice to the portrayal of deaf and mental disabled people during her time. Krumland supports this observation with evidence from McCullers' historical background stating that McCullers' husband, Reeves, offered to "take McCullers to a deaf-and-dumb convention in Macon, Georgia, so that she might authenticate her concept of John Singer " (35). It was reported that McCullers refused because "she already had made her 'conception of deaf mutes and didn't want it to be disturbed'" and "she was afraid that 'too many facts' would impede her intuition" (*The Morgaged Heart*, qtd. in Krumland 35). Of this observation, Krumland maintains, "Thus, what McCullers perceived as her 'intuition' in regards to Spiros Antonapoulos can be interpreted as her unconsciously resorting to commonly accepted ideas about a cognitively different person being a mix between a burdensome child and a social menace" (35). Being a burden and a menace to society was very much the thinking of many eugenicists during the early twentieth century towards the disabled population, and as Krumland notes McCullers, in her own ideology, perpetuated those myths in her writing.

In focusing on McCullers' portrayal of Spiros Antonapoulos, Krumland argues how McCullers, by always labeling Spiros as "Antonapoulos or the Greek" brings to mind "the pseudo-scientific works like Henry H. Goddard's 'case study' *The Kalllikak*

Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness, which debased people with cognitive impairments and pronounced the racial superiority of 'the Nordic race,' (36). She also points to the author's conflation of disability, deviance, and foreign-ness, which was also very much a part of eugenicists' thinking and propaganda. For instance, when Singer invites a friend over to have dinner with him and Antonapoulous, "he [Antonapoulos] sat on his bed and began to stare repeatedly at their new friend with expression of offence and great disgust" (*Heart* 179, qtd. in Krumland 36). Antonapoulous accuses the guest of having drunk an entire bottle of gin when in fact he has secretly drunk it himself. He acts barbarously when food and alcohol are withheld from him. He becomes deviant and a menace. Later, when Antonapoulos is admitted into an asylum, McCullers creates a Greek cousin, an immigrant with a fruit and candy store who "did not know much American" to possess enough influence to get Antonapoulos admitted (Krumland 36). As Krumland remarks, due to the higher institutionalization rates at the time, prospective clients were put on a long waiting list. It would have been unrealistic for someone like Antonapoulos to be admitted so quickly and for an immigrant to have that much influence and power to make it happen. In terms of his incarceration, Antonapoulos was not only admitted once, but twice. According to Krumland, "neither one of his confinements [was] used for socio-political purposes, but instead "only as an instance of humor to stress his alleged childlike and grotesque character" (38). Furthermore, as if being cognitively impaired, deaf-mute, an immigrant, and known primarily as "the Greek" was not enough, McCullers describes Antonapoulos also as being "obese." By "making Antonapoulos obese, McCullers employs another

negatively connoted trait that has traditionally been used by writers to symbolize dullness, passiveness, and stupidity" (Krumland 37). To emphasize McCullers' ignorance, Krumland ends her article by quoting McCullers' narratological approach to her characters from *The Mortgaged Heart*:

> I become the characters I write about. I am so immersed in them that their motives are my own. When I write about a thief, I become one . . . when I write about deaf mute, I become dumb during the time of the story. I become the characters I write about and I bless the Latin poet Terence who said 'Nothing human is alien to me.' (qtd. in Krumland 40)

Krumland concludes, "Representing a cognitively impaired man realistically was a challenge that McCullers could not meet due to the typical preconceptions about cognitive impairment in her time . . . He is beyond the scope of McCullers' technique of imaginative identification and figures as a symbol of Otherness" (40). I would also add that McCullers' preconceived notions about deafness were also beyond her range of understanding. The fact that both Singer and Antonapoulos are both described as "deaf-mute" shows McCullers' ignorance, believing deaf people to be the same and very lonely when the exact opposite is true. Deafness is not a metaphor for silence and deaf people as a group can be a very noisy bunch! Krumland's analysis goes to show how our national ideologies often have a huge role in impacting how we view disability in literature, how writers like McCullers were not immune to its influence, and were detrimental to the process of perpetuating society's perceptions and myths about disability.

Alison Arant's "'A Moral Intelligence': Mental Disability and Eugenic Resistance in Welty's 'Lily Daw and the Three Ladies' and O' Connor's 'The Life You Save May Be Your Own'" (2012) builds upon Krumland's work in that she discusses eugenics and disability in literature, but explores how Welty" and O' Connor's stories, written in 1937 and 1953 respectively, resisted the eugenic rhetoric of human improvement. She discusses the theme of "dysgenic scenario" in the individual stories by Welty and O'Connor, and their responses to the topic. In early-to-mid twentieth century, marriages to intellectual disabled individuals were highly discouraged and often prevented. However, in both texts, two intellectual disabled characters, Lily and Lucynell Jr., in their respective stories, do not have a say and must consent to a marriage that has been imposed on them for the benefit of their families, guardians, and/or community. According to Arant, both stories illustrate how able-bodied persons employed eugenic rhetoric to manipulate and support their moral beliefs as a justification for their negative actions, behavior, and attitudes towards disabled individuals. For instance, in "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" Lily is forced to marry a xylophone player to save the moral reputation of her hometown, Victory. The three ladies who are Lily's guardians establish themselves as the authorities fit to decide Lily's fate. In a eugenic framework, they are the 'fit' and Lily is the 'unfit.' By overlooking Lily's desires or her happiness, their act exposes the abuses sanctioned by eugenic ideology. Arant contends, "in embracing a hierarchy in which those with moral intelligence decide the fates of those without, the ladies create a reality more disturbing than any eugenic worst-case scenario. Thus Welty

exposes the hypocritical moral intelligence of the 'fit,' which is undermined by its own claim to superiority" (79).

In a similar dysgenic scenario, O'Connor "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" subtly uses the story to attack the ideology behind eugenic thought that a person's biological information determines an individual's moral composition. In this story, when Shiftlet, a stranger, comes to the Craters' plantation where Mrs. Crater and daughter, Lucynell Jr., live, he claims to be able to fix anything on the plantation, and tells Mrs. Crater, "there ain't a broken thing on this plantation that I couldn't fix for you . . . I am a man . . . even if I ain't a whole one. I got . . . moral intelligence" (O'Connor qtd. in Arant 82). When Shiftlet makes known his desire for the family car that has not run in 15 years, the mother capitalizes on this opportunity to persuade Shiftlet to marry her intellectual disabled daughter for the car. When Shiflet agrees to marry Lucynell, he uses this as an opportunity to escape with the car. After he and Lucynell drive off together, he abandons her at a roadside. Shiftlet's claim to moral intelligence for marrying a woman with intellectual disabilities in exchange for an automobile falls short. Arant states, [Shiftlet's] separates moral character from physical and mental wholeness but proceeds to establish a new hierarchy in which his own moral intelligence is paramount. As the story's conclusion shows, however, Shiftlet's claim to moral intelligence only masks the reality of his compromised ethics" (82) . . . For O'Connor, the terror of humanity derives not from mental or physical disability, but from a spiritual one. She leaves the reader with a vision more unsettling than anything eugenics could posit, as Shiftlet resists grace to the end (Arant 84-85).

Arant's analyses demonstrates Welty and O'Connor effectively shift the locus of fear away from Lily and Lucynell and onto the eugenic values that justify the ladies', Mrs. Crater's, and Shiftlet's actions. The authors, instead of defiling or dehumanizing disabled figures as some writers did during the twentieth century, rejected the able-bodied characters' claims to moral intelligence. Arant ingeniously connects the eugenic tenets of the time with the authors' stories as a way for readers to understand the justifications able-bodied characters used to explain or rationalize their fears, attitudes, and debasement towards people with disabilities.

Another final critic who employs relevant ways for looking at disability in literature is Alice Hall in *Disability and Modern Fiction: Faulkner, Morrison, Coetzee and the Noble Prize for Literature* (2012). Hall provides a close reading of the diverse contributions to public debates about disability that Faulkner, Morrison and Coetzee have made as academics, curators, essayists and public intellectuals. She studies how their works "explore not only the sense of public discomfort in relation to disability . . . but also the shifting conceptions of health, beauty and the struggle to represent the materiality of the body in writing" (6). While each chapter provides a different lens on disability, Faulkner, Morrison, and Coetzee bring attention to the "limits" between body and language, or the dialectical relationship that we have with language about the disabled Other. The three aforementioned authors raise questions about the limitations of language, how metaphors are often beset by danger, and language is an act with consequences.

To address the concerns about language and metaphor, Hall first focuses on each of the authors, Faulkner, Morrison, and Coetzee, separately. With the Faulkner chapter, Hall investigates "the problematic status of disability as a *fiction*" (22). Hall appears to be asking how does the fictional account that Faulkner creates about impairment such as "idiocy" and "war-wounded soldiers" affect how readers see or understand disability? And what does his attempt, as an able bodied author, to create a disabled Other in his fiction do to language and its representation? Hall notes that the significance of discourses of eugenics and idiocy in Faulkner's works have been relatively unexplored and that different forms of disability such as mentally and physically impaired were often conflated during the time of his writing. She maintains that "Faulkner's novels challenge these homogenizing categories both through their representation of conditions of disability and their complex structures of narration" (23).

In the chapter on Morrison, Hall examines the ways in which Morrison discusses the intersection of disability and beauty in her fiction and criticism. Hall asks questions such as "What do disabled bodies mean in Morrison's novels? What effect does the beauty of Morrison's prose have on her representation of disability, trauma and race?" And how does Morrison's employment of disability as a critical metaphor and an embodied physical reality work in relation to her other political concerns? (49). Hall explains that Morrison as a novelist, curator, academic and cultural critic, "her aesthetic vision, and her conception of beauty and disability were interdisciplinary" (50), " not contradictory or competing forces" (52), and provided a "positive presence" (52). For instance, in her novel *Beloved*, Sethe's scarred back can be interpreted as an imaginative

redefinition of the disabled body as at once painful, pleasurable and beautiful (57). In other words, it can be read as something growing, changing, imaginatively fertile and even physically beautiful. As Hall states, "The metaphorical reading allows Sethe to reclaim agency over the wound inflicted on her, to narrate her own life story and body" (77-78).

With the Coetzee chapter, Hall turns to his work on ageing and dependency, particularly in relationships between carer and patient. Hall asks, "How do these structures [between carer and patient] shift over the course of the novels? And how do dialectics of dependency work to form identity and the narrative itself? "(93). Coetzee goes beyond the issues about care and dependency, and how disability is often synonymous with dependency. His novels "explore the irrational excessive impulses in human nature" (141-142). For example, in *Slow Man*, his protagonist, Paul, "refuses to reconcile himself to his situation, preferring to cling to the impossible ideal of his previous, undamaged body rather than accept the thoughtful care of Marijana or the possibility of mobility with a prosthetic leg. His resistance to help or to progress . . . is maintained throughout the novel" (142).

According to Hall, the complexity of Faulkner's, Morrison's, and Coetzee's works demonstrate their "recurring representation of disabled bodies that *endure*, that refuse to be removed from view even at the end of their novels and essays" (17).[5] Hall provides an example in Faulkner's "The Leg," where the protagonist, David, a wounded

[5] While Hall uses the word "endure," her idea sounds very similar to Zizek's parallex gap where two opposing situations, contexts, or concepts co-exist and cannot be eradicated; instead, the gap becomes an unstable category, allowing for new dimensions to unfold.

soldier lying in a hospital bed, is haunted by a sense that his amputated limb cannot be laid to rest. Hall states that the Faulkner scenario is an example of "endure," a representation of a body's on-going pain and suffering (Hall 175-176). In short, the literal prosthesis—an artificial leg—parallels with the refusal to accept a tidy ending and to be categorized by genre. According to Harriet Cooper, "The term prosthesis seems to perform itself in Hall's text, refusing to remain a stable category but continually adding to itself, bringing a new dimension to the discussion, so that as the chapter develops, the discussion is no longer simply about disabled bodies, not even about texts, but about language itself" (3).

One of the most insightful aspects of *Disability and Modern Fiction* is how Hall convincingly dispels and/or problematizes Snyder and Mitchell's argument that fictional narratives often seek to cure or obliterate disabled characters in an attempt to control their disruptive or deviant bodies (Cooper 3). For Snyder and Mitchell, "prosthesis is understood as a 'metaphor through which to explore the relation of language to reality,'" whereas for Hall, "the notion of prosthesis . . . brings us face-to-face with the gap between the hard concrete fact of the lived experience of disability, and language as a frustratingly 'disembodied' system of signs" (Cooper 3). Finally, Cooper in her review of Hall's work maintains that for Faulkner, Morrison, and Coetzee, thinking about "disability and metaphor together is a politically and ethically charged one" and must be considered "an act with consequences"; in other words, they, as writers, must be profoundly aware that metaphors offer us "ways to see things differently" and must be

used responsibly, while being constantly aware of its disabling consequences (4). This approach is beautifully exemplified in Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize Lecture (1993):

> 'Once upon a time there was an old woman. Blind. Wise.
>
> [. . .]
>
> One day the woman is visited by some young people who seem to be bent on disproving her clairvoyance and showing her up for the fraud they believe she is. Their plan is simple; they enter her house and ask the one question the answer to which rides solely on her difference from them, a difference they regard as profound disability: her blindness. They stand before her, and one of them says, 'Old woman, I hold in my hand a bird. Tell me whether it is living or dead.'
>
> [. . .]
>
> Finally [the woman] speaks and her voice is soft but stern. 'I don't know,' she says. I don't know whether the bird you are holding is dead or alive, but what I do know is that it is in your hands. It is in your hands.'

The old woman's wisdom in the story lies 'in her ability to recognize the limits of her own knowledge.' Meanwhile, the bird 'in [our] hands is read by Morrison as a metaphor for language: we must attend to language 'as an act with consequences'" (Hall 157). Hall (via Faulkner, Morrison, and Coetzee) offers a critical approach to studying disability literature and how we, as writers and readers, must learn, using Morrison's words, how the "looting of language" can do violence to our perception of people with disabilities, and when writers intervene and bring that to our attention, we become enlightened

readers. We learn the importance of celebrating, as opposed to marking, our differences. Obviously, the more we are aware, the more we can educate, and the more we can try to see disability as something we need not push to the margins in life or in literature, but to center it as a part of our lives and the stories we read. As Morrison would remind us, how we approach disability in the future is in our hands.

My dissertation makes a move similar to that of Garland-Thomson and other writers discussed here in this chapter, showing the cultural work that literature does in engaging with critical issues of the time. However, my work integrates the literature more into the conversation about disability that emerged in twentieth century around the three medical and political practices of containing, controlling, and supposedly eliminating disability to keep the nation's body healthy. In other words, Garland-Thomson, Mitchell and Snyder, and Hall seemed focused on showing how disabled characters work within texts, whereas my aim, like that of works by Krentz, Krumland, and Arant is to see literature as more directly in conversation with the medical and social movements of its time. My approach thus resembles that of Arant in presenting literature as a relevant counter discourse to eugenics and its ideology towards disability during early twentieth century. However, my work differs from hers in that I expand on additional sources such as the rehabilitation and institutionalization movements that contested the concepts of citizenship and normativity.

Chapters Two, Three, and Four will discuss how certain writers *countered and complicated* the prominent discourses--rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization--in their respective literary works. Their act of intervention brings the concept of disability

in literature to a whole new level. As Morrison would say, they are using words responsibly. By placing disability at the center rather than at the margins of their stories, they turn our gaze to the able-bodied characters' negative actions, beliefs, and perspectives about the disabled population. Many of them integrate subtle humor to counter disability in their respective works, some ascribe animalistic or negative descriptions to their able-bodied characters, and others employ language in such a way that often exposes their able-bodied characters' ignorance, unjust actions, and malevolent intentions. As such, we are left wondering who is really disabled? Furthermore, how does the complexity of their literary texts work to deepen our understanding of disability? These very questions will be addressed in the ensuing chapters.

Chapter 2, "Disability Heroic and Rehabilitation Discourses: Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*," sets the historical contexts of the post World War I era, exploring how the trauma of war, the rise of disability-focused institutions, the increasing number of orthopedic surgeons, and the polio epidemic all raised the national consciousness about persons with disabilities. My close reading of the novel shows how the protagonist, Joe Bonham's, first-person narrative reveals that he tries to figure out not only when it is night versus day and the time of year, but also how to communicate his thoughts to the nurses and doctors via Morse code. When they refuse to let him integrate back into society, I demonstrate how the dominant discourses employed by the medical and military professionals deny Bonham's humanity.

Chapter 3, "Eugenic Themes, Myths, and Disability in American Fiction," points to a congruous theme of how disability, disdained under America's capitalist economy

and the rising industrialization of the early twentieth century, was postulated in direct contrast to America's ideals about independence and autonomy. Disability became synonymous with dependency and stigmatization. In this chapter, I examine how twentieth-century writers such as Eudora Welty, Mary Austin, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, and Eugene O'Neill used eugenic themes and myths to resist the endorsement of popular eugenic ideologies and discourses. By focusing on the myths of eugenic thinking in reference to women's sexuality and reproduction, and by critically questioning the concept of the "degenerate" child as a burden and a threat to family and state, these writers effectively emphasize how myths and social biases converged in popular literature to designate how disability (both imagined and real) posed significant threats to Anglo-Americans' concepts of able-bodiedness and personhood. They maintain that the key to able-bodied dominance as identity or ideology lies precisely in its ability to go uncommented. My treatment of works by Welty, Austin, Faulkner, Porter, and O'Neill illustrates how these authors directed the gaze toward able-bodied characters in an attempt to develop such a eugenic conversation.

Chapter 4, "Institutionalization Discourse and Disability," investigates how people with disabilities who were institutionalized resisted the dominant narratives that attempted to label and contain them, and to reinforce and reaffirm the local community's censure of and fears about mental disability. This chapter illustrates how Katherine Anne Porter's *Noon Wine* and Jack London's "The Drooling Ward" portray the diagnoses of disability as being too frequently inaccurate. In addition, both authors suggest that normalcy and mental disability are relative terms that create unnecessary social

mistreatment and misjudgment. For example, in London's "The Drooling Ward" the main character has been labeled with an intellectual disability. This character plays along with the system that institutionalizes him to his own advantage while simultaneously showing the flaws and misconceptions that his medical team and society have of those with cognitive, intellectual, or mental disabilities. In *Noon Wine*, Porter ingeniously creates an asylum in the façade of the farmstead. What appears to be a "normal" farm environment is actually inhabited by a dysfunctional family--Mrs. Thompson, an invalid, Mr. Thompson, an ineffectual farmer and disciplinarian, and their two under-disciplined and unruly sons. It takes Mr. Helton, an escaped "lunatic," who works for the Thompsons, to create order on their farm. When Mr. Hatch, a bounty hunter and a liminal figure, comes for Mr. Helton, he upsets the order of the farm-like asylum due to his evil-like intentions despite the fact that he is working within the law. Porter's story disrupts and complicates society's view of citizens with disabilities who were labeled as inferior individuals and positioned in direct contrast to American ideals of independence and autonomy. Porter seems to be asking her readers, "What makes one person's deficiency a disability and another person's not?" Both London and Porter frame their stories to allow us to see the ambiguities that lie behind our social construct of disability.

Finally, Chapter 5, "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who is the Fairest of Them All?," will conclude how the writers in these various chapters successfully shatter the mirror of normality. By dispelling the connection between normality and citizenship, they encourage readers to shift their gaze from the disabled characters towards the actions, fears, and motives of the able-bodied characters. By urging one to question "what is

normal?" and how America's concept of citizenship is based on myths created by the rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization movements, one can learn the importance of how the "looting of language" does violence to one's perceptions, dialogue, and understanding of the disabled population in literature. The mythical mirror in "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" parallels the many ways in which our society's dominant discourses have marked disability by trying to make it go away, whether it is in the context of a cure, institutionalization, "overcoming" one's disability, ableism, and more.

Relating Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and Jessica Benjamin's concept of the "moral third," I discuss how the writers' (from Chapters 2-4) employed literary techniques such as the gaze and the concept of space in their literary representations of disabled and the able bodied individuals (and their interactions) to: 1) resist and counter dominant institutionalized discourses, and to 2) reflect the gaps and tension in their respective works. The gap often refers to the disparity in knowledge either between the disabled and able-bodied characters, or between the reader and the characters themselves. Benjamin's work in particular illuminates the complexity of understanding not only the gaps that exist between the disabled and able-bodied persons and how the disabled characters are Othered, but also how the reader's interpretations of those tensions come into play. This position of the moral third allows the reader to comprehend how various tensions, disparities, and interpretations can co-exist (as opposed to just seeing oppositions or differences between able-bodied and disabled individuals and their representations). The gap then allows for rich and various

interpretations of literary texts and for greater understanding about the complex representations of disabled characters in literature.

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Chapter 2: Disability Heroic and Rehabilitation Discourses: Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*

After 1910, rehabilitation focused on correcting the physical limitations by providing many wounded World War I veterans with medical treatment and/or employment services. Disabled veterans had to put near-impossible efforts into compensating for their disabilities, as the burden of adaptation rested solely on their shoulders. Writers, in turn, represented these cultural tensions in their stories. Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* effectively portrays how the powerful (military and medical professionals) helped to create an ideology of Otherness. By highlighting how the goals of rehabilitation were bent on fixing the body, Trumbo underscores the various tensions that existed towards disability during the early twentieth century. His work also serves to deepen our understanding of the WWI period, the stigmatization towards those with disability, and how heroism was conflated with masculinity, able-bodiedness, and productivity. To be a man and a citizen of society, one had to be productive and independent. With irony, he effectively demonstrates that the medical rehabilitationists' act of objectifying (or masking) pity and thrusting failed manhood onto the disabled veterans reflects their own unstable positions and their need to be secured as able-bodied citizens. By using literary work to show the unfairness of the medical and military establishments toward WWI disabled veterans, Trumbo advances important cultural and

literary work. The thrust of this chapter argues that Trumbo's novel offers a powerful resistance to the heroic/medicalized discourses that the Rehabilitation Movement fostered towards disabled veterans.

The Rehabilitation Movement and Its Representation in American Fiction

Before turning toward my close reading of Trumbo's novel, I want to examine the importance of the Rehabilitation Movement in early twentieth century and how its ideology influenced the way American writers wrote about disabled characters. The Rehabilitation Movement impacted how WWI disabled veterans were supposed to "overcome" their disabilities, to assimilate back into society, and how society (negatively) responded to disabled veterans and to disability in general. As an act of intervention towards the movement and its ideologies, writers like Dalton Trumbo and William Faulkner's respective stories showcase how they responded and resisted the Rehabilitation's principles and attitudes about disabilities.

Beginning with the outbreak of the Civil War, the US government created and enacted a set of laws that generously provided for the welfare of disabled soldiers. Provisions for disabled soldiers included pensions, subsidized house, and for those who needed it, artificial limbs. By the time of WWI, however, the nation was in an economic decline. The pension plan, which accounted for nearly half of the federal expenditures, could no longer be supported. As a result, rehabilitationists, more generally known as Progressive reformers, sought to eliminate the Civil War pension plan by providing disabled soldiers returning from war with tools to help seamlessly integrate them back into society. Their goal was "to restore social order after the chaos of war by (re) making

men into producers of capital" (Linker 3-4). Orthopedic surgeons who had begun their practice prior to WWI with disabled children saw an opportunity to apply their work to injured WWI soldiers, a move that helped them share a common vision with the Progressive reformers. The U.S. government, in return, recognized that orthopedic surgeons could assist by mainstreaming wounded veterans back into the workforce, and by the same token, terminate wounded veterans' need for long-term governmental assistance. With the economy steeped in an economic crisis and technology on the rise, the government began to view orthopedic surgery as a profession and a modality of cure (Linker 29-33).

The government's attempts at "quick fixes" to get war veterans back into society had an overall detrimental effect on many American men. Marginalization occurred as permanently wounded soldiers found themselves unable to assimilate back into society due their communities' rejection of their physical and/or mental limitations. Brad Byrom, in his discussion of hospitals and schools in the early 1920's, states, "To rehabilitationists, dependent cripples symbolized the antithesis of American citizen" (135). For a disabled WWI veteran to be fully accepted and re-integrated into society, he had to be rehabilitated to demonstrate his manly ability to be a model and productive citizen (Linker 1-4). These manly efforts and productive objectives often involved a disabled veteran "overcoming" or masking his disability. To reveal any type of disability was to be instantly labeled as unproductive and un-manly. In short, war wounds were not enough to be a hero; the soldier had to "overcome" his disability where he no longer appeared disabled in the public eye. This appearance included being physically and

financially independent. In *A Disability History of the United States* (2012), Kim Nielsen explains there was a dividing line between "the successful cripples" and "the begging type of cripples" – rehabilitation experts argued that a "manly cripple, successful cripple, and a grateful disabled veteran could find and attain success if only they would cheerfully seek it" (128). In essence, rehabilitation became not only a physical activity where bodies were "fixed," but also an ideological space where disability, war, and masculinity intersected.

This growing shift of the nation's consciousness forged new representations and definitions of disability[6] in American fiction. Highly-publicized works dealt with war, masculinity, and disability, such as Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1936); John Dos Passos's *The 42nd Parallel* (1930); William Faulkner's "The Leg" (1925), *Soldier's Pay* (1926), and "Barn Burning" (1939); and Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* (1939), to name a few. These writers engaged with contemporary cultural anxieties in their fictional representations of American soldiers and civilians with disabilities. Out of many of the war and disability stories, Dalton Trumbo's novel has remained largely unexamined until recently. Published during the same era with other well-known authors such as Faulkner, Hemingway, and Dos Passos, Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun's* demonstrates that American literature was an important site of resistance to the rehabilitation campaign and

[6] In writing about disability in twentieth century, I had to make decisions about terminology and scope. First, possible terms such as "cripples," "defectives," "idiots," "the feeble-minded," are not used here to describe disabled people, except when I am quoting other authors. I use "disabled people" and "people with disabilities" interchangeably, mostly for linguistic variation, influenced in large part by Simi Linton's concept of claiming disability. Kim Neilsen also points out that sometimes "disability" is absent in historical books and does not show up in book indexes or as database keywords, which makes it difficult to determine what words were actually used to describe disability during the rehabilitation period.

the narratives about masculinity and disability it promoted. Furthermore, Trumbo's critiqued the rehabilitation ideology, especially for WWI veterans, by putting disability at the center of his fiction and criticism. The novel is plotted around Trumbo's protagonist, Joe Bonham's, growing sense of contradiction about what it means to be a hero and a man with disabilities. Bonham struggles as he strives to communicate with the medical and military establishments despite not having arms, legs, sight, hearing, and part of his nose and lower jaw. Furthermore, he is cared for by a very limited medical staff and completely barred from assimilating back into society.

This chapter showcases how disability heroic and rehabilitative ideology in Trumbo's *Johnny Got Your Gun* were often in conflict and in opposition to each other. The overarching concept of the heroic narrative was that "overcoming one's disability" (i.e., regaining the "ideal" body) was the path to the American dream, to being a productive citizen, and to regaining membership in American society; however, it also conveyed an important resistant perspective to post WWI's rehabilitation's focus on disability and masculinity. Alice Hall, in her most recent book, *Disability and Modern Fiction: Faulkner, Morrison, Coetzee and the Nobel Prize for Literature* (2012), sets the stage for understanding the connection between disability and masculinity. First, she states:

> . . . the First World War threw abstract idealized notions of heroic masculinity into doubt. Men who were incapacitated, incapable of work, of sexual relations or of controlling their own bodies disrupted

> conceptions of the figure at the heart of the American dream as a white male, heroic in war . . . (27)

Second, she extracts a scene from Faulkner's *Soldier's Pay* that describes Mrs. Saunders, who is raging at her husband about his support for their daughter's "ex-soldier" boyfriend:

> The idea of you driving your own daughter into marriage with a man who has nothing . . . may be half dead, and who probably won't work anyway. You know yourself how these ex-soldiers are. (qtd. in Hall 27)

Hall highlights two key points in this discussion: first, the relationship between failed heroic masculinity in everyday life and its negative representation in literary fiction; as with Trumbo's novel, Faulkner, too, was critical of the rehabilitation campaign and used literature to critique and resist such ideology. Second, Hall points out how disability, instead of being represented as a badge of honor acquired through wartime engagement, came to symbolize a fault in one's character. Thus, the concept that men had to put near-impossible effort into compensating for their disability created a sense that the American dream was not only under attack on the battlefield and in its own national boundaries but also within their wounded bodies.

Changing Views of Disability, 1890-1920: From Social Rehabilitation to Medical Rehabilitation

To understand the motives behind the rehabilitation movement and its goals, this section explores how the period between 1890-1920 constituted a distinctive period in disability history where "the elimination of dependency among cripples became the focus

of the rehabilitation movement" (Byrom 133). Behind this movement were two different groups of reformers-- the "social rehabilitationists" and the "medical rehabilitationists." The social rehabilitationists saw "a need for social and cultural change" in the lives of people with disabilities where as the medical rehabilitationists attended to the repair or cure of the disabled individual (Byrom 134). Both movements were "part of a larger trend away from explanations of personal fate "that focused on innate or moral failings of individuals, toward one that focused on social, environmental, and epidemiological factors" (Seth Koven qtd in Hickel 241). The irony is that while both movements had different approaches to disability, neither rejected the other. Byrom writes, "Instead, many [reformers], if not most, blurred the lines between the social and medical perspectives in their own writings, expressing elements of both approaches in their calls for reform" (134). However, Byrom is careful to point out that the approach taken by medical rehabilitationists form the core of what is defined today by scholars in the fields of disability studies as the "medical model" (134). The medical rehabilitationists defined disability in the language of medicine, with the additional belief that "physical and mental abnormalities were at the root of all problems encountered by disabled individuals" (134). In other words, disability was not a social problem, but one that rested solely on the shoulders of the disabled individual.

Not all rehabilationists embraced these negative attitudes about disability. In fact, Brad Byrom states that prior to 1920, social reformers were active in the lives of people with disabilities, particularly the well-known educators Douglas C. McMurtrie and Joseph F. Sullivan. Both educators believed that the greatest handicap a person could

suffer was not the loss of limb or other physical disability but "the weight of public opinion" (138), and that education and opportunity were the only tools for the success of disabled children and women. Their top priority was convincing the public to employ disabled individuals, especially women and children. Since women with disabilities were considered "unattractive" and "unfit for marriage," social rehabilitationists encouraged disabled women to be educated and to work in traditional caregiving jobs such as in education or in hospital settings caring for "crippled children" (Byrom 142-143, 147). In fact, as of 1914, statistics reveal that women directed twenty-one out of twenty-three institutions (Byrom 146-147).[7] Hospitals that housed children with disabilities combined varying degrees of education (moral, vocational, and academic) so that the medical and surgical treatment of the physical ills of the body would always be supplemented by a similar effort to educate the minds of the children. Byrom maintains that this mindset was the backbone of the social rehabilitation era (145).

After World War I, when a greater number of wounded veterans were coming home, attitudes toward disability in rehabilitation changed to a more predominately medical approach. Its ideological and political configuration became the archetype of twentieth-century approach to disability. As opposed to prioritizing education for those with disabilities as a "tool" for success, the medical reform focused on the disabled body that needed to be "fixed." The shift of rehabilitation propaganda towards the medical approach served many social and economic purposes. For example, literature aimed at

[7] Byrom does not make the distinction between able-bodied and disabled women in his discussion here. My understanding is that while most able-bodied women, particularly those who were married were persuaded to be stay-at-home mothers, those who were not married or disabled were urged to seek work.

wounded soldiers was designed to convince them that they should be grateful for the medical treatment and vocational training that the government offered to them. It even became "unmanly" and "unpatriotic" to receive the pension that their forefathers had accepted (Linker 122). Moreover, "if a disabled soldier refused rehabilitation, he faced being dishonorably discharged and thus forced to relinquish all other benefits that come with military service" (Linker 9). Accepting charity or handouts was discouraged.

To achieve the objective of getting injured WWI veterans into the industrial workforce, the government set up medical-based curative workshops. In these workshops, veterans with medical issues were expected to be active participants in their cures, to overcome their disabilities, and to determinedly prepare themselves to be self-reliant citizens. Special prosthetic limbs were made for amputees to allow them to function "normally" and assimilate back into civilian life and the workforce. Interestingly, Beth Linker discusses how limbs were often made for utility purposes only. For instance, a Chicago-based Dorrance Artificial Limb Company designed "utility arms" for upper limb amputees. It was often advertised as "The Arm that Arms You for Work or Play" and the limb acted more as a tool than a real human arm and hand (Linker 116-117). Furthermore, by masking the disability through mandatory limb wear, rehabilitators could aim to delegitimize the disabled veterans' claim to federal assistance once their rehabilitation was complete (Linker 101).

Hall states that such prostheses were the symbols of the culture of rehabilitation "which figure[ed] disability as an anomaly to be made to disappear" (11). For example, William Faulkner's "The Leg" "exemplifies how rehabilitation concentrated on "fixing"

the body, but not the mind which has been traumatized by war and loss. In this short story, the protagonist, David, is a wounded WWI soldier who is lying in his hospital bed nursing what is left of his leg that has been amputated. He has been fitted with a wood and leather leg, an example of a prosthesis that was developed by orthopedic physicians of the time. As David moves in and out of consciousness, he imagines that his dead friend George is at his bedside. He asks George to find and kill his amputated/lost leg. David's fears hinge upon (as they did for many WWI soldiers of the time) loss, trauma, and disability. Hall argues that his prosthetic leg signifies as a metaphor for his missing dead friend and "fails to fill the gap in David's consciousness, or the blank in his memory" (11). David's mind and body have not made the connection that his physical limb is gone. Similarly, David feels the loss of his friend, George, yet imagines that he sees his friend's apparition. Neither his friend nor his leg can ever be truly replaced. The prosthesis (the wooden leg) then becomes a larger cultural metaphor for the disabling wound (i.e., disability caused by war and trauma) that must be covered, buried, and fixed.

The meaning of productivity in the name of rehabilitation varied from person to person. With Trumbo's protagonist, the medical professionals did not try to fit him with various prostheses, but instead chose to enclose/imprison him in a hospital room where he would be at the mercy of their care. For those who were fitted with prostheses, David Serlin points out the irony of their application: "For doctors and patients, prosthetics were powerful anthropomorphic tools that reflected contemporary fantasies about ability and employment, heterosexual masculinity, and American citizenship, but they also "fail[ed] to give agency to the people who use prosthetic technology every day without glamour or

fanfare" (Serlin 6). Too often, this "glamour" was geared towards making able-bodied people more comfortable with their fears and innate biases about their disabled peers.

To serve and help men with amputated limbs to recover, rehabilitation relied upon women as inexpensive physical therapists to keep military men on the front lines. Linker writes, "Orthopedists never made their rationale for hiring female physiotherapists explicit . . . They also knew that women were cheap" (64). Female physiotherapists received $50.00 per month without military benefits, such as life insurance; furthermore, "orthopedic surgeons knew that female assistants would pose less of a threat to their male-dominated professional authority than male physiotherapist would" (64). However, not every woman fulfilled the requirements of physiotherapist; the "ideal" woman was someone who had a background in physical education, had a four-year university degree, and was more of a "drill sergeant than a bedside nurturer" (Linker 64). In other words, they wanted someone who could physically stretch and manipulate heavy limbs rather than being someone who provided kind and womanly care or often lent a gentle, sympathetic ear. Linker states, "Rehabilitators worried that a soldier, when showered by acts of womanly kindness and care, would lose the will to get well, failing to overcome his disabled state" (65). Hospital rehabilitation programs were geared towards returning the disabled male veterans to society looking (to use a common catchphrase) "as normal as possible." They were taught to "overcome" their physical and mental limitations. Linkage between citizenship, manhood, and economic self-sufficiency became at least an underlying, if not an overarching, theme in the rehabilitation movement.

Rehabilitation was extended to African-American veterans with disabilities, but they were more often cheated out of full vocational training and medical care compared to their white compatriots. Kim Nielsen writes about the chilling power of the medical establishment to assign value to bodies and lives, "Medical determinations increasingly justified inequalities... [and] determined citizen status" (66). African-Americans represented 13% of the army at a time when they made up 10% of the population (Linker 135). Blacks and whites were not segregated in the military due to operational chaos and financial demands; this information was kept from the public eye to keep expected hostility at bay. Tension between whites and blacks within the military was high, and racism did not end with the war or with blacks receiving full or complete comparative rehabilitative care as whites.

The aftermath of WWI changed ideas about disability as it intersected with masculinity. The term "masculinity" developed to mean "aggressiveness, physical force, and male sexuality"; these twentieth-century characteristics of male power highly contrasted earlier Victorian ideas about manliness which included sexual self-restraint, a powerful will, and a strong character (Bederman 18-19). Anthony Rotundo maintains that war, which bred men for manhood, was similarly applied to the concept that "athletics, too, fostered the new form of manhood" (241). The early twentieth century was a time when physical sports such as boxing, baseball, rowing, and football became popular, allowing boys and men to assert a powerful form of masculinity. While sports involved a primal virility that Rotundo calls the "masculine primitive," it also included a belief that all males were primitive in many ways and drawn to "savage" (i.e., sports) activities.

Paradoxically, while manliness was associated with primitivism (which was prejudicially connected with race), manhood was also linked with whiteness and white men's reasons for asserting their power over women and ethnic minorities. Gail Bederman describes how in 1910, Black boxing champion Jack Johnson stepped into the ring to challenge Jim Jeffries, who was white. Johnson won, but the outcome of his victory created a race riot in which several people across the nation were killed from the violence. Bederman states that white Americans were obsessed with the power connection between manhood and racial dominance (4). These hegemonic ideologies of whiteness and masculine ideals typified many of the underlying ways in which male power and mainstream notions of masculinity contributed to the rehabilitation movement and its principles and beliefs. Trumbo's novel connects the reader to a myriad of issues that the rehabilitation movement represented. The novel affords the reader with multiple voicing, an important tool for resisting dominant/authoritative discourses. In the following section, I illustrate how the narrator colludes with the reader in knowing things that other characters in the novel do not know. Placing the reader in this position makes for a powerful literary tool because it allows the reader to understand the tension that exists between Trumbo's protagonist and the medical staff and military officials, while simultaneously exposing the medical/military team's incompetence and ignorance.

Contextualizing Trumbo's Novel: Disability, the Body, and the Instability of the Category

Johnny Got His Gun is divided into two parts-- Book I "The Dead" (Chapters 1-X) and Book II "The Living" (Chapters XI-XX). "The Dead" begins with Bonham who,

after serving in WWI, awakens in a hospital bed. He has lost his arms, legs, and sense of taste, hearing, and sight due to an exploding artillery shell. He is contained within his hospital bed by a mask that stretches from his nose to his collarbone. The mask covers what used to be a mouth and accommodates a feeding tube. Another hole is for a ventilator so that he can breathe. Because he is unable to communicate, Bonham becomes an inanimate spectacle and a medical mystery for medical interns who are learning about the physical world of medicine.

While stories about severely disabled veterans who did not assimilate back into society were rarely made public, Trumbo's literary piece is loosely based on an article about the Prince of Wales' visit to a Canadian Veterans hospital. The article, which became the basis for Trumbo's inspiration, drew upon the experience of how the Prince met with a Canadian soldier who had lost all his limbs in World War I. Trumbo's novel won one of the early National Book Awards in 1939. After 1941, Trumbo's book was banned from the market due to the book becoming a rallying point for the political left activists who were using his book to oppose the war. He was unable to issue any reprints of *Johnny Got His Gun* until after WWII. In the midst of his successful writing career, Trumbo was summoned before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in 1947. He was found guilty of being a member of the Communist Party and sent to a federal penitentiary for a year. Unable to publish, Trumbo wrote under a variety of pseudonyms for a much-reduced rate. Tim Blackmore (1998) writes, "Trumbo's novel has been wrongly forgotten, that it sits at the edge of postmodernism, hailing it" (2). Despite the fact that *Johnny Got His Gun* has received little attention in peer-review

journals since its publication (and re-publication), the novel itself still has a huge following and sells well in today's market.

At the story's introduction, Joe Bonham is unable to separate the present from his hallucinations and remembrance of the past. The nurses' hands, the vibrations of people walking around in his room, and the pain of the sheets rubbing against his wounds are his only contact with the outside world. When he becomes aware of his surroundings and tries to stay awake in his present condition, he tells himself, "He was alive alive. He was nothing but a piece of meat like the chunks of cartilage old Prof Vogel used to have in biology . . . He couldn't live like this because he would go crazy. But he couldn't die because he couldn't kill himself" (63). Bonham recognizes the irony of his liminal state: if he had to breathe on his own he would die, but since the machines are pumping air for him, he cannot live or die. He has no control over his body; pumps, tubes, and machines have taken agency. Bonham says of the doctors: "The doctors were getting pretty smart especially now that they had three or four years in the army with plenty of raw material to experiment on. If they got to you quickly enough so you didn't bleed to death they could save you from almost any kind of injury. Evidently they had got to him quickly enough" (82). This last sentence is Trumbo's tongue-in-cheek challenge to twentieth-century technology and the nation's ideology about "fixing" disabilities. Trumbo's flippant yet serious undertone allows the reader to see the irony of the situation; while the doctors have "saved" Bonham, he is contained and made a nonperson who, upon his hospital bed, is unable to live or die. Trumbo's language is unequivocal; this interconnected, politically

informed conception of the medical model is at the center of his own position as a critic and an author.

By centering the "disabled" body, Trumbo opens up alternative ways of comprehending Bonham's ironic situation. Bonham's narrative blurs the boundaries between mind and body but at the same time paradoxically highlights the artificiality of rehabilitation and its conventional goals of "fixing" the body, all the while ignoring the mind, soul, spirit and trauma of war. For example, when Bonham realizes the severity of his situation, he eventually learns that the medical/military personnel have no interest in understanding or communicating with him beyond his wounded body. The profoundness of his physical injuries cannot be fixed; therefore, he is placed under the care of physicians/nurses, but shut away from the world in a coffin-like hospital room. Bonham discusses his paradoxical situation:

> Maybe if he concentrated on thinking he would know he was awake just like he knew he was awake now . . . He had a mind left by god and that was all . . .
>
> It made him nothing and less than nothing. It robbed him of the only thing that distinguished a normal person from a crazy one . . . It robbed him of any respect for his own thoughts and that was the worst thing that could happen to anybody . . . (99-100)

"It" for Bonham refers to his limiting situation based on the patronizing attitudes set by the hospital/military personnel. The novel's major irony is reflected in the rehabilitation officers' inability to get past Bonham's disability. By refusing to acknowledge what

Bonham can do, they cannot see that they are sabotaging the very act of rehabilitation. Bonham believes that he has achieved his breakthrough by "communicating" with them in Morse code and telling them how he can be of help to them, but all they can see is his "disabled" body and how displaying it would discourage men from fighting more wars.

Despite their low expectations, in Book II, "The Living," Bonham is able to figure out the time of day according to the nurses' coming and going, who the various nurses are based on their vibrations and touch, and when it is daytime versus nighttime by the heat (or lack of it) he feels on his body. His sensitivity to touch, vibration, and his narrative challenge the widespread assumptions that equate impairment of sensory and sound with mental disability and inhumanness. When Bonham communicates in Morse code, the medical and military professionals do not try to continue communicating with him. Instead, they put their hands on his forehead to keep him from "speaking" and dope him when he does not stop tapping. To them, his actions (the rocking of his body back and forth in order to tap and communicate in Morse Code) are unruly and must be kept under wraps. Their actions parallel that of ignorant able-bodied people's reaction to disability; "unruliness" to them becomes a sign of a disabled person not being in control of his/her disability and therefore, must be "silenced." With the doctors refusing to continue their communication with Bonham and with their desire to keep him hidden from public view, they deny Bonham's humanity.

One of the best examples of empowerment/disempowerment in Book II is where Bonham pinpoints a happiness he had never known. This experience is the result of a breakthrough with his substitute nurse, someone who recognized that there was a

thinking human trapped within a body that had been disconnected from the world. Until Chapter 18, Bonham has been "locked up" in his own inner world. For almost four years he has been living a life in limbo, in a purgatory "no man's land," unable to live or die. When he is finally able to communicate with a nurse, his first conversation with a person in four years, he is jubilant. Of the experience, he says,

> It was as if all the people in the world the whole two billion of them had been against him pushing the lid of the coffin down on him tamping the dirt solid against the lid rearing great stones above the dirt to keep him in the earth. Yet he had risen. He had lifted the lid he had thrown away the dirt head tossed the granite aside like a snowball and now he was above the surface he was standing in the air he was leaping with every step miles above the earth. He was like nobody else who had ever lived. He had done so much he was like god. (214)

Like Christ, Bonham has risen from the dead. He has "accomplished the impossible" (215), and he imagines that the doctors and military officers will now think of him as a miracle patient, someone who has defeated all odds. He also then creates an imaginary scenario of how the doctors will react to his news once the nurse comes back and reports to them:

> The doctors who brought their friends in to see him would no longer say here is a man who has lived without arms legs ears eyes nose mouth isn't it wonderful? They would say here is a man who can think here is a man who

> lay in his bed with only a cut of meat to hold him together and yet he thought of a way to talk. (214)

Sadly, none of these things occur. Only one man comes back with the nurse, much to Bonham's disappointment. The man's hand is described as heavy when tapping the Morse code on Bonham's forehead. Bonham becomes indignant when the man asks him what he wants. To Bonham, the answer is "obvious"—he wants "out," recognition for achieving this breakthrough, and the opportunity to experience life as a fully human being again. When he tells them how he can become a productive American citizen (being paraded in a glass box), the doctors shut him down by drugging him once again.

The medical/military team's actions are to stultify Bonham's wishes at all cost—he is an ex-soldier who has not succeeded at the responsibilities and expectations of a solider or of rehabilitation. To them, he is a physical "chunk of cartilage," a subhuman problem to be dealt with, a nonproductive human being, and an embarrassment to be examined only in the name of medicine. In contrast, for Bonham, he has achieved an incalculable feat; he has figured out how to communicate despite his severe limitations and perhaps even more importantly, has himself imagined a viable way to be of service to them. He has recreated (rehabilitated) himself as a "productive member" of society.

The reader is left with the final irony of knowing what Bonham is capable of achieving. After being in the hospital for four years and finally learning how to communicate, he is "silenced" and his final request to be paraded in a glass box is rejected. The story's ending implies that Bonham will sadly live the rest of his natural life in isolation. Bonham becomes a living example of the war's "waste." However, not all is

"silent," for the reader becomes Bonham's desired audience and listener and the doctors' incompetence is exposed. The powerful ending of Trumbo's novel allows us to read his work in terms of the "ability" of his protagonist's different body and to understand how the silences surrounding his situation are deafening, and in some way, a dimension of — or perhaps a refusal of — that embodiment.

Disability, Masculinity, and Heroism in *Johnny Got His Gun*

Trumbo's novel comments on the tension and unease about disability and its connection with masculinity and heroism in the post WWI era. Heroism was an ideology that impacted the daily lives and beliefs of disabled WWI veterans. To be a hero was to be willing and able to fight their disability as much as they had fought their enemy on the front lines. Disabled men who were unable to pass as able-bodied or overcome their disability incorporated their own community's negative reactions towards them. Serlin discusses American communities' lack of respect towards returning home veteran amputees:

> Physicians, therapists, psychologists, and ordinary citizens alike often regarded veterans as men whose recent amputations were physical proof of emasculation or general incompetence, or else a kind of monstrous defamiliarization of the normal male body. Social policy advocates recommended that families and therapists apply positive psychological approaches to rehabilitating amputees. Too often, however, such approaches were geared toward making able-bodied people more comfortable with their innate biases so they could 'deal' with the disabled.

> This seemed to be a more familiar strategy than empowering the disabled themselves. (27-28)

Dana Fore makes a similar argument in her in-depth analysis of *The Sun Also Rises*, in relationship to Jake Barnes:

> Jake could 'pass' as one of the most heroic of heroes. He has suffered the all-important amputation of a 'part'—one which most men would probably consider the most vital 'limb' of all. And yet the injury cannot be paraded in front of the public for acclaim. Because his wound must remain hidden and unknown, it must also remain 'shameful'. (84)

Both Trumbo and Hemingway point to how the war polarized the connections between disability, emasculation, and incompetence. To escape the taboos that were connected with disability and being thought of as "less of a man," it was important for disabled soldiers to hide (or "overcome") their disabilities in order to assert their white masculinity and normativity. To be "less of a man" was to be associated with femininity and incompetence. While both authors wrote about societal attitudes towards white masculinity and normality, their works highlight different aspects of disability. Hemingway's novel shows a wide and unacknowledged range of social ideas that can be attached to physical impairment (Fore 85). For instance, in *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake is "feminized" by his mutilated penis and resulting impotence by war. His character stands in contrast to Brett, who has her short hair done in a manly fashion and is considered as one of the "chaps." Her body, while described as being strong, is said to be built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht. She responds negatively to Pedro Romero when he

tries to feminize her by asking her to grow her hair long. She is promiscuous and tells Jake that she cannot help it because that it is part of who she is. Yet, it is Jake that Brett keeps coming back to when she is in trouble, or has a falling out with another guy. Jake tells her "it's a lot fun, too, to be in love" (35) and is the one who makes her "turn into jelly when he touches her," yet she refuses his advances. He is submissive and does not take charge when they go someplace, often doing what Brett asks him to do whether it is kissing her, joining her on a walk, or meeting her somewhere. The question becomes, if Brett is almost like his "mirror," do we consider her "disabled" too? Can she really help it? David Blackmore argues that (in contrast to Brett) Jake's emasculation functions as a metaphor for the whole complex of his anxieties about masculinity and sexuality, and that the "wound literalizes his inability to perform the traditional masculine role" (53). In connecting masculinity and war wounds particularly with social anxieties, androgynous personalities, and stigmatization, Hemingway advances an important observation about white masculinity and normality in the U.S. after WWI.

Trumbo, in comparison, focuses on how the rehabilitation's ideology affected the way disabled veterans reacted to their own disabilities. He is more interested in what is going on inside Bonham's head rather than how his protagonist's disability compares with others who have also been traumatized by war. In *Johnny Got Your Gun*, Bonham at first acknowledges the overall belief that soldiers like him must overcome their disabilities, but then becomes resentful and resistant. For instance, when reminiscing about his past, Bonham compares himself to "the man" he once was: "He was twenty years old and he couldn't even summon enough strength to turn over in bed. He had

never been sick a day in his life. He had always been strong. He had been able to lift a box packed with sixty loaves of bread with each loaf weighing a pound and a half" (89). Bonham later berates himself when he is unable to determine whether it is night or day. He knows that soldiers like him are expected to overcompensate for their disabilities. Bonham says, "Maybe there wasn't any way. Maybe for the rest of his life he would just have to guess whether he was awake or asleep . . . Guys were supposed to develop extra powers when they lost parts of themselves" (99). When three visitors come to visit Bonham and one of them kisses his temple, he is puzzled by their presence. Then when it finally dawns on him that they are there to present him a medal, he becomes angry:

> They had given him a medal. Three or four big guys famous guys who still had arms and legs and who could see and talk and smell and taste had come into his room and they had pinned a medal on him. They could afford to couldn't they the dirty bastards? That was all they ever had time to do just run around putting medals on guys and feeling important and smug about it . . . They had a lot of guts coming around and giving medals. (160)

Bonham is disgusted by what he perceives as their pompous act of presenting him with a war medal. He knows his "heroic" acts are *for them* and how *his heroism reflects them*. In the heat of the moment, he tries to reach for the medal and to blow his mask off, but then realizes his arms are not there and the air from his lungs is simply escaping into the tube. When he tries to roll and dislodge his mask, one of the men puts a stop to it by laying his hand on Bonham's forehead. Bonham states, "A hand came to rest on his forehead. He

quieted down because it was the hand of a man heavy and warm . . .” (154). Later his nurse does the same: “He realized that she was trying by the weight of her hand to make him tired so he’d quit tapping . . . The nurse’s hand grew heavier and heavier on his head” (164). When he tries to rebel by tapping some more, the nurse masturbates him (166-167). When he perseveres with his tapping, the medical staff medicates him.

The heaviness of their hands is crucial because their acts do not allow Bonham to move and, therefore, to “speak.” Losing parts of him has not given him power, but instead has made him powerless. Toni Morrison, in her acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for literature, states that “metaphor [can] create new meaning, create similarities, and thereby define a new reality” (Nobel Lecture 1993). Trumbo uses the metaphor of “heaviness of the hands” in the aforementioned scenarios to signify oppression and silence. Bonham’s refusal of heroism is also a post-modern move, a deliberate act that shatters the medical/military’s supposedly altruistic motive for fixing and curing the disabled body. The masturbation scene is another form of deliberate refusal of what Bonham wants and a metaphor for the medical establishment’s inability to look beyond the wounded body. Ironically, this masturbation scene demonstrates that Bonham still has male parts that work, yet in the eyes of the rehabilitationists, his disability reduces his “manhood” and ability to be a “normal” and productive citizen. When they dope him, they remove his ability to think. Bonham says, “They had tried every way on earth to make him be still but he had out-fought them he had kept right on tapping. So now they were doping him. They were forcing him to be silent” (185). The fact that Trumbo purposely describes the act of the visitor’s hand pressing down on Bonham’s forehead as

being similar to that of the doctors' and nurses' establishes a common thread in the reader's mind; the act paradoxically heightens the reader's sensibilities to Bonham's disabilities and the oppressive reign (the "heavy hand") of the military/medical establishment that he so vainly struggles against.

Only a substitute day nurse takes the time to communicate with Bonham by "writing" with her finger on Bonham's chest and getting the attention of a medical/military staff doctor to communicate with him in Morse code. But as a woman of the early twentieth century, she has no power within her position to refute her superiors' decision to keep Bonham hidden. Linker comments on the position of women's status in the years immediately following WWI. She states that many of the rehabilitation officials found women to be "meddlesome" and propagandists illustrated women as "dangerous dimwits" who kept honest men from finding jobs, or wanting to get well (132). One female high school teacher from Rutherford, New Jersey, counteracted these officials' accusations by condemning the military rehabilitation hospital for being a "place that promoted inactivity rather than productivity" and claimed that they had little interest in making productive citizens (Linker 131). While it is hard to surmise what Bonham's substitute nurse's thoughts/positions were as the novel ends shortly after this scene, one can guess that she had kind insight into his situation but her "inferior" position did not allow her to take action against her superiors. When the doctor dopes Bonham for the second time, she soothes his forehead. Touching his forehead lightly may be her way of truly reaching out even though she is powerless to help him.

To the doctors and military officers Bonham represents a body that cannot be "fixed" and therefore must remain hidden as an unacknowledged failure. Similar to Hemingway's Jake, who must always remain ashamed of his disability, Bonham is a hero but his recognition must come through closed doors. While Bonham acknowledges that war destroys men and that he has lost his chance at life as a person of worth and recognition in their eyes (85), he criticizes the rehabilitation efforts:

> There weren't many guys the doctors could point to and say here is the last word here is our triumph here is the greatest thing we ever did and we did plenty. Here is a man without legs or arms or ears or eyes or nose or mouth who breathes and eats and is just as alive as you or me. The war had been a wonderful thing for the doctors and he was the lucky guy who had profited by everything they learned. But there was one thing they couldn't do. They might be perfectly able to put a guy back into the womb but they couldn't get him out again . . . He was the guy who had lost. (85)

Here Trumbo successfully paints a complex picture of interdependence between individual and national bodies, and how all soldiers who were incapacitated, incapable of work or sexual relations or of controlling their own bodies, ruptured the abstract and idealized notions of heroic masculinity. His protagonist not only speaks of himself as a guy who had lost, but also satirically pokes fun of society's view of sacrifice, honor, and heroism:

> You can always hear the people who are willing to sacrifice somebody else's life. They're plenty loud and they talk all the time. You can find

> them in churches and schools and newspapers and legislatures and congress. That's their business. They sound wonderful. Death before dishonor. This ground sanctified by blood. These men who died so gloriously. They shall not have died in vain. Our noble dead. Hmmmm. But what do the dead say? (114-115)

Bonham ironically points to the idea that those noble dead cannot even enjoy their medals or the honor; the medals are not for the dead, but for the living. Bonham also dispels the myths about heroism pointing out that men were not heroic, that they were human and cried too:

> So all those kids die thinking of democracy and freedom and liberty and honor and safety of the home and the stars and stripes forever? You're goddam right they didn't. They died crying in their minds like little babies. They forgot the thing they were fighting for the things they were dying for. They thought about things a man can understand. They died yearning for a face of a friend . . . He could speak for the dead because he was one of them. (117)

That Bonham situates himself as one of the dead is vital to understanding how Trumbo's novel challenges the stereotypical understanding of masculinity and disability heroics, and the ironic use of him as a "living example." He is locked up not only inside in own head but in the hospital as well. The medals and heroism are not for him but for those who control his life. Bonham's body and mind are inseparable from the decimated historical and political landscape that he inhabits. Even the namelessness of the hospital

location invites a symbolic reading of Purgatory and suggests national parallels with the violence and voicelessness that have been imposed on Bonham.

Unmasking the Unspeakable: Trumbo and the Necessity of a Metaphor

Although Bonham is unable to fight back against the military people who are giving him a medal as described in the last section, Trumbo makes use of Bonham's interior thoughts to position the reader towards understanding his protagonist's resistance to the medical/military team's oppressive attitudes as an "ethically charged act." As a case in point, Alice Hall states that some critics believe that literature, more than any other art form, allows for a more subtle engagement with the complexities of disabled people's perspectives (5). She adds that Snyder and Mitchell make a strong case for showing that "literature by definition 'makes disability a social, rather than a medical phenomenon' [suggesting] a privileging of the literary over any other modes of accessing interior, personal experiences" (5). She supports Derek Attridge's claims "'that inventive literary work . . . should be thought of as an ethically charged act,'" adding that disability need not restrict itself to activism but can equally be effective as a concern in the critical genre of disability studies in literature (5). To apply Hall's argument, Bonham's "voicelessness" paradoxically acts as an intervention in understanding the tension and the gap that exist between Bonham and his medical team. Once again, the narrator, the protagonist, and the reader become collusive in sharing Bonham's knowledge while the other characters remain unaware.

As an equally "charged act," Trumbo employs the "mask" as a metaphor to reveal the establishment's unethical behaviors, ignorance, and fears about disabilities. Trumbo

depicts “mask” as a literal term for Bonham’s head covering as well as a metaphor for the military and medical professionals’ desire to keep him “concealed” from society. In considering the political and ethical action of metaphors, Alice Hall points to Pinter’s Nobel Prize lecture:

> When we look into a mirror we think the image that confronts us is accurate. But move a millimeter and the image changes. We are actually looking at a never-ending range of reflections. But sometimes a writer has to smash the mirror—for it’s on the other side of the mirror that the truth stares at us. (163)

Pinter’s message opens up the way to understand Trumbo’s ingenious and repetitive use of the word “mask” in the novel. Not only is “mask” use as a noun and a verb to mean “a covering” and “to conceal,” respectively, but it also metaphorically signifies the stifling condition of oppression and the abuse of power. Below are examples of how Trumbo indirectly applies Pinter’s ideology to his work. Bonham’s “mask” becomes a political statement midway through Trumbo’s novel:

> They had put a **mask** over his face and it was tied at the top around his forehead. The **mask** was evidently some sort of soft cloth and the lower part of it had stuck to the raw mucus of his face wound. That explained the whole thing. The **mask** was just a square cloth tied securely and pulled down towards his throat so that the nurse in her comings and goings wouldn’t vomit at the sight of her patient. It was a thoughtful arrangement. (87; emphasis added)

In just one short paragraph, Trumbo carefully emphasizes the word "mask" three times. The description of the square mask *stuck* to the raw mucus and *securely tied down* towards his throat illustrates how the Bonham's disability must remain hidden. The mask, which is "*just* a square cloth" (emphasis added), is an ironic undertone to illustrate that the mask is not for Bonham's welfare but for the benefit of the nurses, interns, and possible visitors. The description parallels Trumbo's final dry humor, as he claims, "It was a thoughtful arrangement" (87), and it completes his final tongue-in-cheek commentary. The masked narration with its overt political message then becomes a metaphor for Trumbo's critique of the rehabilitation movement and their desire to keep him silenced.

Bonham makes clear how the doctors and military officers' oppressive attitudes and ignorance lie within their cruelty:

> He kept on tapping . . . He didn't dare stop he didn't dare think . . . There were times when he knew he was stark raving crazy only from the outside he realized he must seem as he always had seemed. Anyone looking down at him would have no way of suspecting that beneath the **mask** and the mucus there lay insanity as naked and cruel and desperate as insanity could ever be. He understood insanity he knew all about it now. (180; emphasis added)

By describing and connecting the mask with Bonham's feelings of insanity, Trumbo demonstrates that he is refusing to conform to this movement toward social or literary erasure of Bonham's disability. Instead, the reader is left to imagine the degradation of

the coffin-like situation and to struggle with Bonham as he tries to "rise from the dead" in Book I to the "living" in Book II. Both actions of "masking" (cover and conceal) are ingeniously conflated when Bonham realizes he has visitors for the first time in three years:

> He jerked his head convulsively away from his visitors. He knew this dislodged his **mask** but he was beyond thinking of **masks**. He only wanted to hide his face to turn his blind sockets away from them to keep them away from seeing the chewed up hole that used to be a nose and mouth that used to be a living human face. He got so frantic that he began to thrash from side to side . . . (157-158; emphasis added)

Feeling self-conscious, Bonham frantically tries to "hide" from his visitors, but he is unable to get away from their prying eyes. He cannot stare back. When one of the visitors pacifies him by pressing his hand very heavily on Bonham's forehead, Bonham quiets down, but realizes later with anger that they are there to present him with a medal. Again, the political overture of the hand on Bonham's forehead and the medal both demonstrate the visitors' gestures as one of curiosity and pity. A former poster child for Jerry Lewis' telethons, Laura Hershey emphasizes how pity is a complex and deceptive emotion. She says, "It pretends to care, to have an interest in another human being. But if you look at pity up close, you notice that it also wants to distance itself from its object . . . pity is very close to—sometimes indistinguishable from—contempt and fear, which are uncomfortably near to hatred ("From Poster Child to Protester"). Because it is

indistinguishable from hatred and fear, the reaction causes separation and a sense of inequality. Pity becomes the "mask" for the acts of benevolence.

Later when Bonham reveals his desperate plea to be paraded in a glass box for public view, Bonham makes known that the rehabilitation officials' are masking a secret of the future:

> That was **it** he had **it** he understood **it** now he had told them his secret and in denying him they had told him theirs. He was the **future** he was a perfect picture of the **future** and they were afraid to let anyone see what the **future** was like. Already they were looking ahead they were figuring the **future** and somewhere in the **future** they saw war. To fight that war they would need men and if men saw the **future** they wouldn't fight. So they were *masking* the **future** they were keeping the **future** a soft quiet deadly secret. (240; emphasis added)

Trumbo's repetition of pronouns is important to note. In this case, each "it" is purposely ambiguous and is written in a rapid succession without the use of commas or other punctuation in the sentence. I have separated them for the purpose of discussion:

> That was **it**
>
> he had **it**
>
> he understood **it** now

Each meaning of "it" is not clear until the end of the paragraph when Trumbo refers to the rehabilitative officers' "future secret." The first use of the word "it" indicates that an implied idea has been recognized. The second and third "it" shift the power from the

rehabilitative officers and the oppressive system to Bonham who now has the implied "it" within his grasp of understanding. In a moment of victory and triumph, Bonham demonstrates the power to see through the patronizing officers' attitudes and to see himself as the new kind of Christ, a Messiah of the battlefield, and one who carries within himself a new symbolic order of things. This reading is crucial because the repetition of the word "future" leaves an impression of impotent violence and a sense of unreality to the whole scene. The protagonist does not have a stable relationship with the symbolic order that the doctors and military officers represent. Bonham is unable to obtain his freedom, but he does make progress toward self-identity and recognition of his own worth. Describing himself as a "chunk of cartilage" in the beginning of the novel but then calling himself a "Messiah" at the end represents an enormous transformation. Bonham spiritually frees and empowers himself because he told "them his secret and in denying him they had told him theirs" (240). At the end of the novel, Bonham demonstrates that the medical/military professionals may hide and disempower him, but they cannot *conceal* every war-wounded soldier. Their desire to keep him hidden becomes the "mirror" by which their unethical behavior and attitudes are revealed. Bonham's breakthrough suggests that, although his personal future is bleak, his message encourages hope for a better future.

Johnny Got His Gun **and the Literary Canon**

To date, Disability Studies has not introduced this novel into its own developing canon. This omission raises questions: Why does the canon contain certain works but not others? What is its future? Like the works of Hemingway and Faulkner, Trumbo's novel

deserves a re-examination. His language use, perceptions, his social message and more, reflect a turning point in history where disability became a medical model and the burden of disability shifted to rest on the individual. The novel is a "looking-glass," a window to understanding disability as a social as well as an individual act. The novel's message pushes the literary envelope to help us understand how literature itself can be an important rhetorical and cultural tool for learning about the rehabilitation's heroic and medicalized discourses that were so pervasive in formulating early twentieth century's society attitudes about disabilities. Trumbo, in his use of narrative techniques of interior thoughts, positions the reader to understand the importance of the underlying tension, conflict, and the gap that existed between the rehabilitation establishment and those disabled by war. Beth Linker offers a valid point as to why we *must* continue to study disability and the rehabilitation's influence—"Because the ethic of rehabilitation, established almost a century ago, lives on" (181). By incorporating Trumbo's novel into the canon, we can learn in new ways in which his work points to a pivotal time in history, and how society's need to fix and cure disability continues to inform the many stigmatizing attitudes that we have about the disabled population today. Kim Nielsen writes in *A Disability History of the United States,* "Disability is not the story of someone else. It is our story, the story of someone we love, the story of who we are or may become, and it is undoubtedly the story of our nation" (xiii). To ignore disability is to disregard the bulk of humankind. As a literary piece, Trumbo's work is our collective story.

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Chapter 3: Subverting the Eugenic Gaze in Works by Mary Austin, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, and Eudora Welty

Early twentieth-century U.S. writers such as Eudora Welty, Mary Austin, William Faulkner, Katherine Anne Porter, and Eugene O'Neill used eugenic themes and myths to counter the concept of the disabled child being an antithesis to the nation's health and recovery. In the first half of this chapter, I compare Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* (1923) with three stories: Eudora Welty's "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies"(1941) to discuss common and erroneous eugenic assumptions about the "degenerate" female body and domestic space; Mary Austin's "The House of Offence" (1909) on the concerns and anxieties about "bad blood" and motherhood; and Katherine Anne Porter's "He" (1927) on the topic of "happiness" often used in eugenic rhetoric. In the second half of the chapter, I examine William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and Katherine Anne Porter's "Holiday" (1920; 1960) to demonstrate how they provide astute observations about family dynamics that complicate the concept of "dependency" and the disabled child. While O'Neill, Porter, Austin, Faulkner, and Welty approach the topic of eugenics from different angles, their stories (together and separately) create a larger intervention into the early twentieth-century eugenic discourse that fostered the concepts of the "degenerate" female body and of impoverished domestic spaces as portrayals of "bad blood," and the disabled child as a burden and threat to family and state. Thus, their

respective stories, through the techniques of the gaze and setting (space), illustrate how spaces can blur the lines between what is "defective" and what is normal, and that "defective" is only in the gaze—that is, only in the eyes of the beholder.

Brief History on Eugenics: Targeting Motherhood and the Disabled Child

Not long after Sir Francis Galton coined the term "eugenics" in 1883, the concept began appearing in American Literature. Galton defined eugenics as the science of improving human stock by giving more suitable races or bloodlines a "better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable" (Kline 13). As a result of Galton's work, the American eugenic movement enjoyed a period of popularity between 1900 and 1930, with some twentieth-century supporters describing "eugenics" as "the science of human improvement through programs of controlled breeding" (Selden, *Inheriting Shame* viii). Others similarly referred to it as "remaking womanhood in racial and millennial terms" (Kline 12). This meant encouraging the "eugenically fit" (usually white middle- or upper-class women) to have more children ("positive eugenics") while discouraging the "unfit" ("feeble-minded," working women and immigrants, the disabled, and prostitutes) to have fewer or none ("negative eugenics").

In the early twentieth-century, when many white men felt threatened by the social and economic changes that were altering racial and gender hierarchies, the eugenic campaign targeted disabled or/and working women, disabled children, and various ethnic groups. In 1900, President Theodore Roosevelt linked war to fertility, which was later dubbed by Edward Ross as "race suicide" declaring that the white race risked losing power and facing eventual extinction "if women did not heed [Charlotte Perkins

Gilman's] call to 'social responsibility . . . as makers of men'" (Kline 11). By presenting the call specifically to motherhood in terms of race progress, eugenicists hoped that the "new middle-class white women," who had moved to the city for a new life and a better job, would "see the error of their ways" and return to home and hearth to "ensure that the white race would once again be healthy and prolific" (Kline 12-14). According to Kline, in 1915 the white woman was considered a central (as opposed to a marginal) figure; as the "mother of tomorrow," she represented the procreative potential of white middle-class womanhood to control the "racial makeup of future generations" (8).

In contrast, —women who were working-class, immigrants, black, an ethnic minority, and/or disabled signified the danger of female sexuality unleashed. Eugenicists argued that these women would bear only disabled or feeble-minded children. As part of negative eugenics, the word "feebleminded" became a catchall term for the "aesthetic undesirables." Eli Clare states that many lives hung precariously on the word "feebleminded" because sex workers, immigrants, people of color, poor white people, people with psychiatric disabilities, people with epilepsy, so-called sexual deviants, blind and deaf people, physically disabled people, unmarried women who were sexually active, effeminate men, prisoners, and cognitively disabled people were all deemed "feebleminded" at one time or another ("Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). The list kept shifting, but the meaning of "feebleminded" remained as being undesirable, inferior and immoral (Clare, "Yearning Towards Carrie Buck").

While "feeblemindedness" "had virtually no clinical meaning," its significance drew power from the hatred and fear of disability and race. Clare states that

eugenicists within their white, Western, and able-bodied cultural framework drew rigid distinctions between body and mind by defining humanness through the mind ("Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). Consequently, intellectually disabled people became the metaphor, measure, and justification for sterilization, immigration quotas, imprisonment, and long-term surveillance. According to Jay Watson, anxiety about feeble-mindedness emerged from studies by Henry Goddard and other eugenicists on the topic of single-gene recessive traits; the "conclusion was that recessive traits do not always express themselves in the offspring of carriers but are capable of skipping a generation (or more) and thus going undetected by eugenics reformers eager to prevent their spread in the general population" (24).

Eugenicists' primary concern was then to discourage reproduction by persons who had known genetic defects or who were presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits. They upheld the belief that pauperism, disability, prostitution, and criminality within the family resulted primarily from heredity and bad blood, not from one's social environment or from a sudden stroke of bad luck. Their followers firmly declared the material conditions of poverty and violence to be hereditary defects. Furthermore, supporters widely believed that having a disabled child was a moral failure of the parents in the same manner as having a child out of wedlock. Eugenicists contended that an illegitimate or disabled child would lead to further "problems" down the hereditary or family line. If "problems" already existed, proponents argued that sterilization, a method of birth control, was the better solution to prevent long-term institutionalization for children and adults with disabilities (Nielsen 115).

In 1870, William Lee Howard, a prominent physician and author of parental books, expanded the concept of "degenerates" to women who did not fit the gender norms of society, which included "women who sexually desired other women, women who lived as gender nonconformists, and the mother 'quick with children who spends her mornings at the club, discussing social statistics'" (Nielsen 116). He called these women a "menace to civilization" who existed "as a true class of degenerates" (Nielsen 116). He argued that these mothers would deliver children with "weak, plastic, developing cells of the brain" that would result in "a twisted, distorted, and a perverted psychic growth" (Nielsen 116). Therefore, mandated sterilization was the key to eradicating this "problem."

The policing of sterilization laws represented the main motivation and strategies for targeting the female body, both in the upper and lower class. In 1920, Virginia, California, and twenty-two other states passed laws legalizing sterilization (Cuddy and Roche 14). Eugenicists like Henry Goddard and William Lee Howard argued that one of the main signs of behavior taken to indicate feeble-mindedness was sexual waywardness. Goddard claimed that "The weaker the *Intellect* . . . the greater the strength of the reproductive facilities" and Charles Davenport upheld that the licentious behavior of "wayward girls" was genetic and innate (Doyle 17). One well-known case was that of a white woman, Carrie Buck, between 1913 and 1927. Prior to the case, Carrie's mother, Emma, was arrested and deemed feeble-minded, and institutionalized for promiscuity. In 1924, when Carrie was 18, she was raped by a nephew of her foster family, Clarence Garland, and became pregnant. When Carrie told others about the incident, the nephew's

family reacted by declaring Carrie "feebleminded." Because her mother was declared an imbecile, and both she and her mother had given birth out of wedlock, Carrie was erroneously labeled "feebleminded" and committed to the same state institution as her mother to prevent shame to her foster family. Men such as Albert Priddy, John Bell, Aubrey Strode and Irving Whitehead engineered the case against Carrie (Clare, "Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). In 1927, the Supreme Court upheld a Virginia statute that allowed for the involuntary sterilization of Carrie Buck who was institutionalized at the State Colony for Epileptics and Feebleminded.

During her lock-up period, Carrie gave birth to a baby girl named Vivian. Her daughter was declared "feebleminded" at just seven months of age, and, consequently, Carrie herself was given ordered to be sterilized (Brueggemann 144). Vivian was then given up for adoption. Research later would show a copy of Vivian's first report card in 1931, which refuted that claim. The report showed that she had one "A," three B's and one C (Clare, "Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). Carrie was later freed, but her mother, Emma, unfortunately was never released and she died in the mental institution.

The ideology behind the sterilization laws also permeated the domestic space. Pristine home environments were symbolic signs of wholesomeness and good heredity; in contrast, unnatural and unwholesome environments were evidence of race degeneracy. Wolff states that between 1911 and 1914 many exhibitions across the country displayed settings that illustrated "a housekeeper's predetermined biological bent towards unsanitary living conditions, or towards salubrious ones" (224). She adds, "The aim of these exhibits was to alarm spectators about the proximate, menacing presence of

'persons with bad heredity,'" and the terrifying implication of the layout of the living demonstrations is that these defectives live right alongside (even under the same roof as) normal people" (224). This collapse of women and domestic space becomes equivalent to what Wolff describes as "a profound depersonalization, a generalized, powerless, yet defining absence" (224). Wolff's account affords insights into the minds and imagination of eugenicists who believed that downtrodden home environments reflected the irrefutable visibility of bad heredity, and that female sexuality needed to be contained and controlled. Continuing in this line of analysis, Steven Selden explains that not only did eugenicists emphasize normalization of the Other (including women and their domestic environments), but their "policies of state-mandated sterilization (negative eugenics) served as prime examples of the 'disciplining gaze'" ("Eugenics and the Social Construction of Merit, Race, and Disability" 236).

The Female Body and the Domestic Space through the Gaze: Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* and Eudora Welty's "Lily Daw & the Three Ladies"

Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* (1923) and Welty's "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" (1941) resist and counter the concepts of sexuality, reproduction, and disability as a eugenic threat. Both authors reveal family and caretakers' acts of immoral deceptions and unethical motives through their disciplining and medical gaze due to their fears about disability and heredity, and the damage this genetic information would have on their family's (or caretakers') reputation. Using literary techniques such as gaze and setting, the authors effectively provide the readers with knowledge about the characters, insights that the characters themselves do not have. This literary approach acts as a powerful

intervention tool that allows the authors to express their resistance to eugenics and its ideologies. Furthermore, by playing off the eugenicists' ideas about the fit and the unfit or between savory and unsavory environments, both authors ingeniously shift the reader's gaze to the able-bodied characters' so-called charitable ways that mask their true motivations.

O'Neill's plot focuses on Nina Leeds, the daughter of an Ivy League professor, who is devastated after fiancé, Gordon Shaw, dies in combat. When Nina embarks on a series of sordid affairs with injured soldiers at the hospital where she works, Charles Marsden and Ned Darrell feel threatened by her promiscuity. As a "scientific" solution and way of "curing" Nina's behavior, they persuade her to marry a healthy, amiable but clueless man named Sam Evans. In a similar vein, Welty's short story focuses on three elderly ladies and their anxiety about an intellectually disabled woman, Lily Daw, who has been in their care since her mother's death. From the perspective of the three ladies, Lily's sexual maturation and recent interest in a man poses a threat to the entire community. They must find a way to resolve the situation by sending Lily to the Mississippi School and Colony for the Feebleminded (later renamed as the Ellisville State School) in Ellisville. Both O'Neill and Welty reveal the length that families, or caretakers, will go to contain or remove what they perceive as the impending threat of disability.

Eugene O' Neill's *Strange Interlude* uses nine long acts to present the hereditary scope of the story with the time frame spanning from 1919-1945. The three central male characters-- Charlie Marsden, Ned Darrell, and Sam Evans--all revolve their lives around

the main female character, Nina Leeds. Gordon Shaw represents Nina's former fiancé, a WWI aviation hero who died in combat before they could marry and consummate their passion, and who later becomes the namesake for Nina's son, Gordon Jr. The play involves two techniques in the dialogue—one is the regular speech between characters and the other is the "voiceover." In the "voiceover," the characters are enunciating their thoughts, which are heard by the audience but not by the other characters (Murphy 140). The voiceover (as with gaze and setting) allows the reader to obtain "extra' information about the characters, their drama and interactions, and their ignorant incorporation of eugenics beliefs into their own lives.

Through the use of the gaze, O'Neill infuses a collection of ideas and terminology common to eugenic rhetoric to point out the play's "uneasiness about [sexuality] and reproduction" (Wolff 221). For instance, in the beginning, the play demonstrates tension between the healthy body and the not-so-healthy body. Three men—Nina's father, Professor Leeds, Charlie, and Ned--describe Nina as being "sick" seventeen times by the end of the second act. While her sickness is never clearly specified, the agreed remedy between Ned and Charlie for her "sickness" is marriage and maternity. This paternalistic attitude towards women was very much a part of the eugenic rhetoric that was directed at white middle-to-upper class women to keep them in line.

O'Neill's gender and social critique within the play illuminates the power of the gaze between individual bodies (healthy and not so healthy) and the influence of the larger community and social context. How Sam, Charlie, and Ned view Nina disclose their own fears and anxieties. Nina, who is in mourning at the beginning of the play, is

depicted as "totally at variance with her healthy outdoor physique. She is delineated as being strained nerve-racked, hectic . . ." (1.1. 69). Later when Nina comes home again due to the death of her father, Ned describes her as a "corking girl" (I.2. 87), because she has been promiscuous with injured World War I vets during her time as a nurse and prior to coming home. Ned and Charlie anxiously discuss her future. For them, her promiscuity has compounded the problems of her ongoing sickness: her actions must be kept a secret and remedied. Ned convinces Charlie that if Nina marries Sam, who has no knowledge of her marked past, the marriage will "cure" her. When Charlie questions Ned about Sam's family background, Ned tells him, "I'm not acquainted with their social qualifications, if that's what you mean! They're upstate country folks—fruit growers and farmers, well off, I believe. Simple, healthy people, I'm sure of that although I've never met them" (I.2.89). Ned's comment is one of many of O'Neill's tongue-in-cheek statements. Having a "healthy man to breed" was analogous to breeding stock, which was common to eugenicist strategy.

Ned is the main diagnostician; he is the scientist, the biologist, the general physician, and psychoanalyst in the play. Charlie construes him as having the "diagnosing eye they practice at school" (1.2.86). Nina discovers him as possessing a "diagnosing stare," such that his "professional look" amounts to his "watching symptoms… without seeing me" (I. 4. 124). Yet when Ned recommends Sam as a cure-all for Nina's social ills, he is unable to verify Sam's background, yet his perceptions/opinions are taken seriously as "facts" (I. 4.124). These scenes undermine the medical gaze and illustrate the characters' constant need for diagnosis and cure; both Ned

and Charlie identify with and respond to hereditary traits as if heredity was something visible and controllable, as in this case, with Nina's future.

Interestingly, Nina supports Ned and Charlie's viewpoint by placing the blame of her sickness onto herself. When confessing to Charlie that she had been "playing the silly slut," she admits, "Men are difficult to please . . . I was the blindest! I would not see! I knew it was a stupid, morbid business, that I was more maimed than they were, really, that the war had blown my heart and insides out" (I.2.95). Drowsing off to sleep, she provides Charlie (who is a father figure and friend) with her own self-cure, "I want children. I must become a mother so I can give myself. I am sick of sickness" (I.2.96). Laura Doyle indirectly provides insights into Nina's position. She says, "If the woman was white, any hint of 'sexual deviancy' on her part (that is, sex outside marriage) indicated her unfitness to be a mother, while the policing of 'good' women's sexuality and motherhood inescapably took on a racial meaning in the early twentieth century"(18). Kline points to an additional observation, "Implicit even in the negative eugenic campaigns was the idea that [white middle-class] motherhood should be a celebrated but exclusive privilege—one that had to be earned through a woman's moral reputation" (30). These eugenic ideologies served to heighten the anxiety within middle- to upper-class white families with reputations to maintain; O'Neill effectively illustrates under the eugenic paradigm how Nina's sexuality needs to be contained/cured for the protection of not only her family, but also for her race.

By pathologizing white promiscuous women (Nina, in this particular case) as possibly dangerous biological contaminants to the white male able-bodied race, O'Neill

effectively makes clear how eugenic rhetoric racialized women as a way to define the "weak stock, the strain of 'bad germ-plasm'" that rendered its carriers not fit for participation in a highly organized society. Nina must be reined in as not to fall into the eugenic trap of those who were labeled as "evil" social delinquents (paupers, prostitutes, drunkards, etc.). The concept of the gaze in this sense becomes a larger part of understanding the intensity of the characters' anxiety regarding Nina's future. Both Ned and Charlie, who care for and are in love with Nina, anxiously want to make sure that her future needs are in good hands. By marrying her to Sam, who is "a fine healthy boy, clean and unspoiled" and from a healthy family of fruit growers and farmers (I.2.89), they believe this will rectify Nina's precarious situation. Ned persuasively tells Charlie, "She needs normal love objects for the emotional life Gordon's death blocked up in her. Now marrying Sam ought to do the trick… and once she got that, she'll be saved" (1.2.89). Ned's vision of the future reflects "scientific motherhood" and O'Neill's sardonic humor about eugenic advocates who believed "that maternal instinct needed to be supplemented with scientific education and training" (Kline 30).

Over the course of the play, O'Neill also ingeniously directs the reader's gaze to the play's setting to show how eugenicists often connected bad heredity to unsavory environments. In the first two acts when Ned and Charlie are trying to contain the threat of Nina's promiscuity, they are in Professor Leeds' study. The professor's office represents the patriarchal domain (the "Law of the Father") that will be used to persuade Nina to enter the respectable institution of marriage. By the third act when Nina is pregnant with Sam's child, they are living in Evans' ancestral home. The dining room is

described as big, misproportioned, and an ugly brown. Here is where Nina discovers via Mrs. Evans that Sam is the "defective carrier" of mental insanity in the family. As a result, the "hereditary" environment becomes literally unstable and unsavory. After Nina aborts Sam's baby and is carrying Ned's, she and Sam have moved to a new rented apartment in upstate New York. When Gordon Jr. becomes 11 years old, they are living with expensive furniture on Park Avenue. By the play's ending, they are residing on Long Island with their property overlooking the water and the ocean beyond. Each upgrade coincides with Gordon Jr.'s maturity and growth as the "Eugenic Poster Boy" and the upscale environments reflect Evans' material wealth and success.

Again, we are met with O'Neill's sardonic humor as he overlays this upward development with the Gatsby myth. Like Gatsby, who is unable to reclaim the past with Daisy, Nina is unable to recapture her memories of Gordon Shaw in her son Gordon Jr. In a similar vein, Gatsby and Sam die with their illusions and innocence intact. The gaze across Long Island towards the "green light" is just that---mythical and deceptive. Of this visual deceptiveness, Wolff pinpoints the eugenicist's true and underlying anxiety, "What is living in the living demonstrations (and perpetuated in eugenic studies) is the fearsome possibility of an endless, anonymous procession of reproductive women united by bad genes, a kind of sinister, fecund sisterhood. The defining absence in the Living Demonstrations' domestic space is the "horror of uncontrolled female sexuality" (224). While Ned and Charlie try to put a "lid" on Nina's "waywardness," and later Nina and Ned attempt to best biological fate by circumventing the problem of Sam's bad genes, the rest of the play reveals that their efforts "to direct their lives and the lives of others are at

most illusory, and even an impossible enterprise" (Wolff 230). By utilizing the men's gazes to reveal their preoccupation and anxiety with Nina's female sexuality and the play's setting (contrasting savory and unsavory environments as "proof" of family genetics), O'Neill's play rejects and ridicules the eugenicists' goals which were propagandized to prevent families from giving birth to a disabled child.

In contrast, Eudora Welty's "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" illustrates the eugenicists' beliefs about dysgenic marriages. While there was an increased concern about "degenerate" women giving birth, there was also an even greater apprehension about disabled mothers (as expressed earlier with the Carrie Buck story) giving birth. The general reaction among eugenicists and believers in eugenics was to sterilize and/or institutionalize disabled women as a way to contain and control what they believed would be later "generations of imbeciles."

In "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies," the main focus of the story are the concerns of three eponymous ladies about Lily's sexual maturation and her sudden desire to marry a xylophone player she has just met at the fair the night before. Because Lily is a young woman with an intellectual disability, they are convinced that the xylophone player has taken advantage of Lily's virginity. As Lily's main caretakers, their plan all along has been to send Lily to an institution in Ellisville, but due to Lily's recent conviviality with the xylophone player, they feel that they must expedite their plan more urgently than before. In this scenario, Lily becomes a victim as well as a threat to the small community of Victory. As the center of their attention, Lily's sexual maturation and disability pose a

"two-fold risk, being both endangered and dangerous" (Arant 74). Lily is the object of gaze and anxiety for the white, able-bodied establishment in Victory.

Mrs. Carson, Aimee Slocum and Mrs. Watts, and the southern community of Victory, Mississippi, have been taking care of Lily. Mrs. Carson is the wife of a preacher, Mrs. Watts is a fat widow, and Aimee Slocum is the spinster postmistress. Due to her mother's death and her father's abusive behavior, Lily has relied on the town for food, kindling, and clothes. They send her to church where she is baptized as a Baptist. Alison Arant makes clear that it is the three able-bodied ladies, not Lily, whom the readers should fear:

> The three ladies demonstrate the dangers inherent in claiming moral intelligence since their confidence in their own ethical superiority functions as a justification of their morally compromised treatment of the mentally disabled Lily Daw. In this way, the eugenic concept of moral intelligence self-destructs because its hierarchies between the 'fit' and 'unfit' sanction instances of abuse. (72)

This assessment by Arant (and implied critique by Welty) directs the reader's gaze towards the ladies and their sense of superior propriety as they decide Lily's fate. For example, when Lily tells the ladies that she is not going to Ellisville and is instead getting married, the ladies feel morally entitled to override her decision. They apply for Lily's institutionalization without consulting her or broaching the subject with her beforehand; they assume she is unable to make her own decisions about her future. When one unnamed lady mentions earlier that "Lily lets people walk over her so," this observation

reveals Lily as someone who has been violently "walked over," first by her physically abusive father, and then by the three ladies who have been exerting their moral authority over her affairs for some time. The remark also foreshadows Lily's future. This act of oppression is symbolized when the three women enter Lily's house; "they climb over the dusty zinnias" (5) and enter the house without knocking. Instead of greeting her, they chide and question her. Lily responds to their line of questioning by sucking on the stem of a zinnia in her mouth. Zinnias are known to attract hummingbirds and butterflies. In this scene, Welty illustrates that the three ladies will exert not only their control *over Lily* but they will also deny her the ability to transform into her own person, to be free to flit, flee, and fly. When the graceful Lily with her "milky-yellow hair" stares "meditatively" at Aimee Slocum's face and tells her "You've got bumps on your face" (6), this is one of Welty's wonderful ironies. The ladies are so focused on Lily's "imperfections" that they are unable to see their own.

When Lily continues to resist their desire to send her to Ellisville, Mrs. Carson tells Lily, "We've all asked God, Lily . . . and God seemed to tell us—and Mr. Carson too—that the place where you ought be, so as to be happy, is Ellisville." Of this particular scene, Arant states, "[Mrs. Carson's] appeal to God functions more as a eugenic alibi than as an articulation of sincere moral concerns. In employing religious rhetoric toward manipulative ends, Welty shows how the ladies' belief in their superior moral intelligence has actually enabled their morally questionable treatment of Lily" (75). In this sense, the ladies' paternalistic "gaze" that is directed towards Lily is re-directed

towards them. Their gaze ironically undermines their claim to their own moral superiority while serving to heighten the reader's awareness of the ladies' not-so-altruistic motives.

By showcasing how these hierarchies of the fit and unfit are set up in the disguise of moral propriety and control, Welty ingeniously expounds on the concept of the gaze through her descriptions of spatiality and containment. Welty's extraordinary critical attention to the spatial dimensions of her fiction points the way to our understanding of the story's "inner and outer *surfaces*" (Weston 11). One example is Lily's home:

> [Lily Daw's] paintless frame house with all the weather vanes was three stories high in places and had yellow and violet stained-glass windows in front and gingerbread around the porch. It leaned steeply to one side, toward the railroad, and the front steps were gone. (5)

The structure represents the eugenic view that unwholesome and unnatural environments are evidence of race degeneracy. When the ladies enter Lily's home, Aimee Slocum says, "There is always a funny smell in this house. I say it every time I come" (5). Aimee Slocum also sits on "the wire chair donated from the drugstore that burned" (6). The decrepit scene contrasts with Lily who is on the floor arranging two bars of soap and a green washcloth into her hope chest. Her name is also that of a flower that symbolizes innocence, purity, and beauty. Her graceful figure contrasts with Aimee Slocum's acne/moles, and Mrs. Carson's and Mrs. Watts's overweight figures (6). Of the scene, Weston points out that the house resembles "a vaguely unreal, off-center house," a structure that reflects "the incongruity and illogic that the ladies and Lily see in each other's actions and speeches" (9). When Lily claims that she is going to be married,

neither of the women takes her seriously. Mrs. Watt replies, "Why she is not. She is going to Ellisville." When Mrs. Watt asks her to whom, Lily responds, "A man last night." Shocked, the women become alarmed that Lily's virginity might be at stake. At this point, Lily poses a threat to their community, because at first, Lily's burgeoning sexuality had been the main reason for sending her to Ellisville, but now they are imagining a worse case scenario and fixating on Lily's possible sexual liaison that may have further implications for the ladies and the town.

Furthermore, instead of asking Lily in a more direct way that she would understand, they use euphemisms of propriety to get their answer. "Did he—did he do anything to you?" Mrs. Watts asks. When Lily replies in the affirmative, Aimee Slocum demands to know what. Mrs. Carson chides Aimee not to be so direct and asks Lily, "Tell me, Lily—just yes or no—are you the same as you were?" When Lily tells them, "He had a red coat… He took little sticks and went *ping pong! ding-dong!"* This reply alarms the ladies and Aimee screams in response, "We've really got to get her there—now! . . . Suppose--! She can't stay here!" This technique, using the ladies' point of view rather than Lily's, accentuates their paternalistic gaze and allows the reader to see how the ladies have jumped to conclusions about Lily's loss of virginity and how they are unable to see the situation from her perspective.

The ladies' responses are also, as Weston writes, examples of "…stereotypical roles . . . forced on women by other women who have become rigid in their assigned roles that they do not realize they are performing" (12-13). Mrs. Carson carries a tape measure on her bosom (3). Mrs. Watts knows how to "pin people down" (6). Aimee

Slocum makes her living stamping and bundling mail; she even observes the then-word limit in her telegram to Ellisville (9). Mrs. Watts is confined in a tight corset from which she plans to free herself as soon as the train starts moving (9). Lily is wearing a "petticoat for a dress, one of the things Mrs. Carson kept after her about" (6). Mrs. Watts says of Lily needing a pink crepe de Chine brassiere, "Well, she needs it. What would they think if she ran all over Ellisville in a petticoat looking like a Fiji?" These are all examples of eugenic and racist themes—tenets that measure, control, and contain. Weston states, "In the process, the ladies themselves are shown as limited and confined in many ways. Their obsession with restraint and big-sister watchfulness perhaps betrays an ulterior wish to see that others are likewise restrained…" (11). Lily has become the vessel into which both their sexual repressions and fears/contempt towards disabilities are channeled. Arant describes the ladies' unethical behavior during Lily's departure scene:

> The ladies' approach to Lily's departure demonstrates how the moral ideals of eugenics in fact become a justification for unethical behavior. Eventually Lily agrees to go to Ellisville only after the women promise her that she can take her hope chest . . . However, it becomes an ironic symbol in Welty's critique of the eugenic goal of human improvement. The women take Lily to the train station that same day, and their very limited arrangements for her departure suggest that their actions are primarily motivated by their conception of Lily as a moral menace. Mrs. Watt and Mrs. Carson plan to accompany Lily as far as Jackson . . . [but Lily] will

> finally arrive in Ellisville alone . . . suggesting . . . her safe arrival is finally not as important as their need to remove the threats that Lily poses. (77-78)

Arrant successfully suggests the affect of the dehumanizing gaze—the ladies' charitable ways mask their true motivations and reasons for getting rid of Lily and justifying their actions. They manipulate her in ways that deny her humanity. The ladies' desire to contain Lily demonstrate a critique of male power and eugenic thinking on Welty's part, particularly in regard to the assumption that women, especially those who are "feebleminded," who are not useful to the patriarchal order or not marriageable, are best placed out of sight at an institution, or sterilized.

In describing other images of containment and spatiality in the story, Weston says, "The circle is one of Welty's favorite images of the power to contain, to include or exclude; and it functions in 'Lily Daw' as part of a larger symbolic network of images of mental and physical limitations, of the small-town society that sees fit to confine Lily, as they see it, for her own good" (11). This circling image occurs twice in the story. The first occurs when the ladies confront Lily in her home. They sit in chairs that circle Lily who is on the floor with her hope chest. In this scenario, the ladies' fat bodies dominate and hover over Lily's frail one. The description of Lily's neck as having a "wavy scar" (from her father) foreshadows how the ladies will coerce Lily. They tell her that Ellisville is a lovely place. When Lily refuses to budge, the ladies then begin their bribes with items that are reminiscent of wedding gifts—hemstitched pillowcases, the big caramel cake, and the toy bank—each respectively evokes images of the marriage bed, the wedding feast, and financial autonomy (Arant 77). When Lily still refuses to go to

Ellisville, the women in their second round of bribes "use devices of religious and physical restraint—the Bible and the bra, respectively—to control Lily's behavior" (Arant 77). When Lily is told that she can bring her hope chest to Ellisville, she finally acquiesces to their demands. Amy Slocom whispers to the other ladies, "All the time it was just her hope chest" (8), reinforcing her perspective of Lily as an inferior being.

The second scene depicts the ladies "in a circle around the xylophone player [with Lily beside him], all going into the white waiting room" where the young couple will get married, despite Lily's protest. She tells the ladies, "But I don't want to git married. I'm going to Ellisville" (11). Lily is not given a voice and is instead treated like a child. As she hangs her head, the ladies make decisions as to what *they* think is best for her. All Lily really wants is her hope chest, which is now lost and on its way to Ellisville, symbolizing not only her loss of hope for the future, but also that she is being made the victim of her circumstances.

These two circle scenes are Welty's satire at its best, for while the ladies' offerings on the surface are meant to persuade Lily that they have her best interest in mind, they are instead trying to protect their own ideal of sexual morality and proper breeding and to contain Lily's further actions and decisions. Arant says, "In embracing a hierarchy in which those with moral intelligence decide the fates of those without, the ladies create a reality more disturbing than any eugenic worse-case scenario. Thus Welty exposes the hypocritical moral intelligence of the "fit," which is undermined by its own claim to superiority" (79). Lily poses not only a threat to the community from the ladies' perspective, but she is also a burden that the ladies want to dispose of in the name of

charity. The ladies' actions exemplify how eugenic rhetoric can justify a moral corruption that may or may not be so easily recognized and identified (Arant 86). While the story is about Lily, Welty fittingly places the reader's gaze towards the ladies and their "unethical" moral underpinnings.

Weston applies Michel Foucault's *Discipline* to expand on the insights of the "circle" scenes. She explains,

> Lily symbolizes the victim of such limitation as well as the hope of escape; and the circling, threatening talking ladies reveal woman's own complicity in what Michel Foucault has called a 'carceral society,' one that not only supervises criminal incarceration but also incorporates a series of enclosing devices, a network of forces, including 'walls, space, intuition, rules, discourse,' all intended to normalize human beings in accord with the prevailing cultural mythos. (13)

Foucault's position highlights how eugenic rhetoric brings to the text a whole set of cultural assumptions/myths about disability and the ladies' socially centric attitudes about their own privileged position. This analysis also illuminates Aimee Slocum's disconcerting reaction over Lily's fate as to which is more terrible, "the man [or] the hissing train?" (10). Aimee Slocum's ominous comparison between two worst-case scenarios reinscribes the above concepts about white, able-bodied, privileged positions, the need to normalize and control, and the eugenic belief that disabled people's lives are not worth living.

At the story's end, Welty makes clear the high stakes of the ladies' involvement in Lily's fate. They deny that their choices for Lily—at first, the mental institution and then the institution of marriage—are unsatisfactory. The fact that neither of the ladies knows the xylophone man with the red coat or his name speaks volumes about their level of care for Lily. The red headed xylophone man's earlier reaction to Aimee when she tells him that Lily is on her way to Ellisville foreshadows Lily's future with him with eugenic undertones. He laughingly tells Aimee, "Well, if we play anywhere near Ellisville, Miss., in the future I may look her up and I may not." Then in his red notebook titled "Permanent Facts and Data," he writes, "Ellis-Ville Miss" underlining it twice for emphasis. The xylophone player's notes are analogous to eugenicists who would base their ideology on facts and the imaginary future, as if the future could be predicted and foretold. His act of accessing his notes is not merely a sign of innocent scientific information gathering, but also a method of compulsion and control.

Heredity, for Welty, as it was for O'Neill, was frequently a "metaphor for fate" (Wolff 218). Readers come away with the knowledge that Nina, who is the object of the three men in her life and their gaze, will be constrained to follow her wife and motherhood roles to their perfection, but will not find the happiness she seeks. Likewise, readers learn that Lily's life, under the gaze of the three ladies, is also limited and controlled. The xylophone man with the red coat, red hat, and red notebook is limited too and confesses that he does not hear well. Welty's description of Ed Newton's earlier actions of "stringing Redbirds school tablet on the wire across the store" and telling the ladies "More power to you, ladies" (Welty 4) symbolically suggest that while xylophone

man's life will be controlled by the ladies, he may also impose his own limitations on Lily. Once he follows through the proper channels (or propriety) of marriage, he may easily dump her much like the ladies who were only willing to go partway to Ellisville with her; Lily's safety and well being are not of utmost concern to any of them. In the end, Lily hangs her head. Her hope chest is gone on the train to Ellisville, while she herself is trapped like the hat thrown in the electric wires. The hat symbolizes her being caught in the web of her society's eugenic mindset and beliefs.

Secrets of Paternity and Bad Blood: Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* and Mary Austin's "The House of Offence"

As a reminder and to ensure fitter families, eugenicists set up "Fitter Families Contests" in state exhibitions throughout the United States. These fairs supported racist and nativist views and fueled anxieties about "bad blood. The eugenic belief posited that if a family member had "bad blood," his/her genes would exert a detrimental affect on later generations. "Bad blood" denoted a wide range of "undesirable characteristics" that included mental and physical disabilities and the notion of degeneracy (i.e., promiscuity, having a child born out of wedlock, criminality, racial minority, and low-economic class). For some eugenicists of the time, criminal behavior, sexual deviancy, ethnicity, low-economic status, and illiteracy were hereditary. For instance, the Kansas Free Fair held in Topeka in 1929 featured a chart that displayed different literacy rates to teach fairgoers about the meaning of race and ethnicity in the USA (Selden, "Eugenics and the Social Construction of Merit, Race, and Disability" 239-240). While these views had no basis in facts, many families took this "factual data" to heart.

In this section, I examine Mary Austin's "The House of Offence" and additional parts of O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* to elucidate how eugenicists helped to fuel anxieties about "bad blood" and created the need for some families to keep secrets about their own family genetic inheritances. The protagonists of both stories keep secrets of their child's biological parent from the non-biological father figure of the household. O'Neill's play centers on an upper and well-to-do family, and the extreme attempt to regulate the reproduction of whiteness and health, while Austin concentrates on a working-class, childless, married woman who has misgivings about a neighboring prostitute who wants to give away her young child to her; she worries that the little girl may have inherited her mother's bad blood. Through the use of secrecy and the gaze, O'Neill dispels the eugenic concept of hereditary inheritance as a "measure" of "bad blood" while Austin discounts the idea of the impoverished environment as being connected with "bad blood."

In *Strange Interlude*, the deceased Gordon Shaw is a popular, athletic golden boy and aviation hero who haunts the whole play. He is highly remembered for his manly physique and prowess. He is viewed differently by various characters, and his mythical status is even contested by some who were not so enamored by his persona. Nina talks about Gordon Shaw both publicly and privately, names her son after him, and even writes a book about him. Nina grieves for him while Sam, who was a former classmate of Gordon Shaw's, supports Nina's grief.

In contrast, Professor Leeds, Charlie, and Ned, who were not so charmed by Gordon Shaw, target his background and heredity. Professor Leeds alleges that Gordon "for all his good looks and prowess in sport and his courses, really came of common

people" (I. 1. 66). Not knowing Gordon Shaw at the time, Charlie tries to defend Gordon Shaw's honor. Years later he comes to support Professor Leeds' assessment when he tells Sam, "Did I tell you I once looked up Gordon's family in Beachampton? A truly deplorable lot! When I remembered Gordon and looked at his father I had either to suspect a lover in the woodpile or to believe in an immaculate conception . . . that is, until I saw his mother! Then a stork became the only conceivable explanation" (I. 4. 120). Ned goes a bit further than Professor Leeds and Charlie in downplaying the Gordon myth. He declares to Nina, "Romantic imagination! It ruined more lives than all the diseases! Other diseases, I should say! It's a form of insanity! (I. 5. 141-142).

Since all three men are responding in some form of jealousy, Tamsen Wolff points out that their assessment of Gordon Shaw and the Gordon myth is somewhat clouded by their love for Nina and "is no more reliable than the halo provided by Nina and Sam" (233). Professor Leeds professes to be looking out for Nina's best interest when in reality he wants his daughter to take care of him in his old age; he believes that Gordon Shaw is not worthy, coming from a low-income family. Ned applies his own rationality to keep his emotional distance from Nina. He tells Charlie, "In my mind she always belongs to Gordon. It's probably a reflection of her own silly fixed idea about him . . . I couldn't share a woman—even with a ghost! (I. 2.90). Charlie shares Nina's father's attitude towards Gordon Shaw; he tells himself, ". . . Nina writes of Gordon as if he had been a demi-god! . . . when actually he came from the commonest people . . . " (I. 4. 120).

Wolff states, “O’Neill heightens the confusion surrounding the golden myth of Gordon Shaw by making Nina’s son Gordon Jr.—who is biologically Darrell’s son but is raised by Sam—able to suggest the memory of Gordon Shaw” (233). When Gordon Jr. is 11 years old, he is described as “having the figure of an athlete. He does not noticeably resemble his mother. He looks nothing at all like his father. He seems to have sprung from a line distinct from any of the people we have seen” (II. 7. 170). All three men “perceive” Gordon Jr. as their son at some point in the play. Charlie keenly understands that because all three men (Sam, Ned, and Charlie) are in love with Nina, Gordon Jr. has become their “collective son.” He says, “[Nina’s] child is the child of our three loves for her (II. 6.168). As Gordon Jr. grows older, he comes to resemble the original, mythical, handsome, athletic, all-American Gordon Shaw. Wolff says of this scene, “That they [the men] imagine the Gordon Jr. as collectively produced and strongly reminiscent of the original Gordon indicates that the powers of desire and imagination can outweigh heredity” (233).

Ironically, Nina who “originated” the Gordon myth becomes disillusioned and desperate at the play’s end. She believes that Gordon Jr. takes after Sam, not Gordon Shaw. When Nina shares her thoughts with her husband, he tells her, “You flatter me, Nina. I wish I thought that. But he isn’t a bit like me, luckily for him. He’s a dead ringer for Gordon Shaw at his best” (II. 8. 191). When Nina laments to Ned, “I’ve lost my son, Ned! Sam has made him all his,” Ned replies, “Oh, come now, Nina, you know you’ve always longed for him to be like Gordon Shaw.” Nina retorts, “He’s not like Gordon! He’s forgotten me for that--!” (II. 8. 194). Nina, in her desperation to relive Gordon Shaw

through her son's devotion tries to convince Ned to tell Sam the truth about who is the biological father of Gordon. Ned, who is no longer in love with her, rebuffs her pleas and informs her that he is not interested in meddling anymore in human lives.

While Nina masterminds her affair with Ned and gives birth to the "perfect" eugenic child, she does not find happiness in her son, Gordon, or in her role as a wife and mother. Instead, she experiences weariness and the knowledge that she has "lost" Gordon Jr. first to Sam, and then to Madeline. The secrets of her and Ned's affair serve only to put a wedge between her relationship with Gordon Jr. and Ned. Gordon Jr. becomes fervently protective of his father, Sam. Ned and Gordon Jr. end up disliking each other despite their biological connection. Instead, Ned discovers the "perfect son" in Preston who works in his science lab. These are all examples of O'Neill's ironies. By presenting different versions of the past, and challenging and re-imagining them in the future, O'Neill unpacks eugenics (and inheritance, more generally) by elucidating how we cannot always mastermind our futures.

In contrast to O'Neill's play, Austin's "The House of Offence" shows the shift in eugenic thinking from heredity to environment. Austin makes use of setting/place to describe how boundaries, often porous boundaries are transgressed. Austin employs the concept of "bad blood" to describe the divide between the domestic households: the ideal (but nondescript) household where Mrs. Henby lives and the non-domestic, business-run brothel (known as the "House") where Hard Mag resides. Mrs. Henby is a 40-year-old church-going, childless married woman with a large waist. Her hair is still black and her cheeks are smooth and bright. Her husband works as a blast foreman at the mines and

comes home regularly every other Sunday. To find consolation in his absence, Mrs. Henby keeps an orderly house by washing on Mondays, ironing on Tuesdays, and baking on Wednesdays. In contrast, Hard Mag is a prostitute with hard, red lips, bright, un-glinting canary-colored hair, and dark rings under her eyes. She once bore a child out of wedlock, and the child, now ten to eleven years old, lives with an aunt. Hard Mag is portrayed as being inept at her domestic duties (as narrated by busybody Mrs. Henby who watches her and her girls through a crack in the fence). A fence separates the two neighbors. These physical descriptors with eugenic undertones establish the story's setting between the "fit" and the "unfit."

In the story, Austin, as an author, personifies her own struggles with motherhood and the idea of "bad blood" by splitting attributes of herself between Hard Mag and Mrs. Henby (Richards 152). Richards explains how Austin, first in an anonymous article and then in her autobiography, chronicled her own anguished experience in giving birth to a baby girl whose severe disability might today be identified as autism. Austin blamed her husband's deceptiveness about his own inheritance and decried how women were often victimized when eugenic protections were not enforced (Richards 150). Interestingly, in one of her short stories, "The Readjustment" (1908), she writes about the ghost of a dead mother who will not leave the house until the husband admits that it was his genes that caused their child's disability. While Austin advocated certain strains of eugenic policies and was angry about her own situation as a mother of a disabled child, "The House of Offence" particularly challenges some of the tenets of eugenic thinking in reference to "bad blood," a topic she tightly weaves in with her ambivalence about the female

domestic space (from what the eugenicists believed to be ideal versus not ideal) and the need for family secrets about maternity.

A relationship between Mrs. Henby and Hard Mag develops when Mag falls sick and there is no doctor available to assist her. Mrs. Henby is able to provide a few remedies and helps Mag get better. This leads to "several conferences" and her making some food for Hard Mag and the girls in secret— "Mrs. Henby would hand them out after nightfall, and find the dishes on her side of the fence in the morning" (249). Due to Mrs. Henby's sense of shame, the town and her husband are kept unaware of her charitable contributions to Hard Mag and the girls of the House. When Hard Mag is informed that her aunt has died and that her child will be returned to her, she begs her churchgoing, childless neighbor to claim her daughter in order to save the child from brothel life. When Mrs. Henby rejects her pleas repeatedly, Hard Mag crosses the yard that divides them and beats on her neighbor's door. At the threshold, she verbally pinpoints Mrs. Henby's underlying fear:

> I know what you are thinking, Mrs. Henby. You think there's bad blood, and she will turn out like me maybe, but I tell you it's no such thing. Look here—if it's any satisfaction to you to know—I was good when I had her, and her father was good—only we were young and didn't know any better—we hadn't any feelings except that we'd have had if we had been married –only we didn't happen to—It's the truth, Mrs. Henby, if I die for it. Bad blood! . . . How many a man comes to the House and goes away to raise a family, and not a word is said about bad blood . . . if it's any

> question of what she'll come to, you know well enough if I have to take her with me. *Me!* . . . That's what she will come to unless you save her from it. It's up to you, Mrs. Henby. (253)

As Richards identifies, "Hard Mag's speech simultaneously ridicules eugenic thinking and submits to its logic" (152-153). Eugenicists believed sexual deviancy counted as evidence of low intelligence, and therefore, of racial unfitness that would be passed on from mother to child. Yukins, who focuses on how eugenicists sought ways to protect and maintain the superiority of "white blood," states that politicians and social scientists tried to prove that single white mothers and their progeny were not simply transgressors of societal moral codes, but they were also distinctly different in their biological composition from "fit" women (165). Women who had children out of wedlock were believed to carry a flawed blood type and were responsible for the downfall of the moral fabric of society. Eugenicists, in seeking white racial superiority, sought to reify dominant class and race hierarchies by placing blame for sexual and social transgression onto the reproductive bodies of impoverished women (Yukins 181).

When Mag crosses the fence that divides the two domestic spheres, Austin symbolically blurs the physical and metaphorical boundaries that separate Hard Mag's environment from Mrs. Henby's while exposing the eugenic myths about wholesome environments equaling good heredity. Mag, who owns and operates a brothel, gave birth to a healthy child out of wedlock, while Mrs. Henby, who lives in a spotless, pristine environment, is childless. Kline recounts how in the late 1920s and early 1930s, eugenicists shifted their emphasis from heredity to environment (130). This transition

allowed them to continue targeting motherhood as an essential role in raising eugenically fit children. Not only did a mother's genes become important, but her competence in raising a child in a proper home environment also became a eugenic concern (Kline 126, 130). With Mrs. Henby raising Mag's daughter, Marietta, as her own, Austin exposes how eugenicists' political and social agendas were often misleading, yet conveys ambivalence about the parameters by which eugenics played a role in her own life.

The scenario between Mrs. Henby and Hard Mag establish how the arbitrary (and ridiculous) separation between "good" and "bad" domestic environments and/or blood in the family is a form of mythmaking. Mrs. Henby, who has incorporated this "bad blood" belief system into her own life, is afraid that Mag's daughter will grow up to be a sexual deviant, or otherwise "unfit" in some way like her mother. Yet Hard Mag's speech declares there is no such thing as "bad blood" and that the child's conception was initiated by two foolish young people, not by sexual deviants. Mag tries to encourage Mrs. Henby to believe that she is rescuing a truly good child, not an "unfit" woman's tainted offspring. This scene is similar to the illogical thinking of the feeble-minded girl's family line in Goddard's work where the girl and her family were denied familial legitimacy and excluded from access to social power, despite that her/their blood connection to the "good" family continued to exist (Yukins 181).

Austin's story ends on several observations. Mag makes a promise to Mrs. Henby to never come back or to let her daughter know the truth about her biological family heritage; Mrs. Henby expresses relief that Marietta looks nothing like Mag and has dark hair just like her own; and Mrs. Henby keeps Marietta's maternity a secret from the town.

This "perfect" ending which seems to fall back on the tenets of eugenic thinking is somewhat ambivalent and confusing, which may be due to Austin's conflicting attitudes, doubts, and beliefs about eugenics, disability and motherhood. As a mother, Austin put her only disabled child, Ruth, who was age 12 at the time, in a small private hospital in 1904 where she remained until her death in 1918 (Richards 150). Providing insights into Austin's life and fiction writing, Richards writes, "As a mother, Austin lived this tension, though she found neither the guiltless escape she presented to Hard Mag, nor the fulfilling motherhood she granted Mrs. Henby" (152-153).

Both Austin and O'Neill deal with the negative impact of keeping secrets due to the fear of "bad blood" or having a disabled child. Mrs. Henby hides her connection with Hard Mag and the women of the House as well as Marietta's true blood heritage, and O'Neill's characters, Nina and Ned, conceal their sexual affair and Gordon Jr.'s paternity from others. Both works reveal the false connection between environment and "good breeding," and secrets of paternity to influence (imaginary) future actions portray eugenic control as being illusory at best.

The Promise of Happiness and Normalization: Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* and Katherine Anne Porter's "He"

The disarray in inheritance and the efforts to remediate it through eugenics often came through in the name of achieving happiness. This link was often connected to shame and having a disabled child in the family. Nielsen points out that "family members of those with cognitive disabilities, once admired for their devotion and care, now experienced shame. With increased shame came increased institutionalization" (72).

Many families were encouraged to place their disabled child in an institution and forget about them as a way to achieve economic happiness.

Porter and O'Neill were both hyper-aware of the ways in which eugenicists often capitalized on the implied rhetoric of the "happy'" and "the good life" in their propaganda and how they reinforced the idea that having a disabled child would bring shame, dependency, and a life of unhappiness. Porter's "He" (1927) presents one of the most clarifying examples of how unhappiness was associated with raising a disabled child in early twentieth-century America and O'Neill (1923) showcases how early twentieth-century families were encouraged to avoid giving birth to a disabled child at all cost. Having a disabled child often meant shame and dependency, and one who presented an impediment to the family's path to financial success and normalization.

To keep the image of the "perfect, successful American family" intact as well as reaffirming white male dominance in the public sphere, eugenicists' goal was to eradicate disability (via sterilization or institutionalization) and the fear that it represented. World War I had particularly traumatized America and crippled its economy; while America and its allies won the war, America "was faced with the devastating reality of 120,000 Americans killed. Americans wanted something that would instill hope with some form of stability for a better and happier future.

Porter's "He" exemplifies the story of a mother who believes that if her disabled son is sent away to a mental institution, the family will achieve economic stability and happiness. "He" a young male with an intellectual disability and no name. While His mother, Mrs. Whipple, talks about Him when visitors come to visit, and claims that He is

her favorite child, she contradicts herself by putting Him in harm's way. She has Him take care of the bees despite the risk of being stung, makes Him climb the peach tree when He does not have proper balance, has Him grab a little pig from a very angry and charging sow, uses His blankets for a younger sibling during cold winter nights regardless of His own precarious health, and has Him lead a bull back into the pen despite the danger to His life. When He becomes sickly and the money becomes scarce, she has Him institutionalized at a group home. Mrs. Whipple rationalizes that once He is institutionalized everything will change for the family, and they will all be happy and prosperous: "All at once she saw it full summer again, with the garden going fine, and new white roller shades up all over the house, and Adna and Emly home, so full of life; all of them happy together" (57-58). In other words, the loss of the child with a disability is what creates the potential for happiness and a happy family.

In a similar vein, *Strange Interlude* reveals the length that families will go to hide their "tainted bloodlines" and to produce a "healthy" heir. Happiness is equated with normalization and success. O'Neill presents 85 instances of "happy" and "happiness" throughout the play. His examples are often associated with "Nina will not be happy and cured if she does not have a healthy baby" or "Sam will not be successful and happy if he is unable to give Nina a baby." O'Neill makes known in *Strange Interlude* that one of the ways in which eugenicists were able to promote their propaganda was through "the promise of happiness."

Sara Ahmed's *The Promise of Happiness* holds that happiness functions as a disciplinary mechanism to push people toward a particular idea of "the good life." While

Ahmed does not deal explicitly with disability and her home base is Great Britain, not America, her in-depth research on happiness provides insights into O'Neill's and Porter's critique of eugenics propaganda regarding happiness and disability. On what happiness means, Ahmed quotes Simone de Beauvoir-- "it is not clear what happy really means and still less what true values that it may mask" (2). To further her discussion on the ambiguity of happiness, she points to Richard Layard's work which suggests that happiness is the only way to measure growth and economic advancement. If we choose to believe this, then the science of happiness presumes that happiness is "out there." Ahmed challenges Layard's idea stating that if "happiness is 'feeling good' which means that we can measure happiness because we can measure how we feel, then 'out there' really becomes 'in here'" (5).

Ahmed's approach points to happiness as a specific model of subjectivity. In short, she argues that happiness research does not simply measure feelings, it also interprets what they measure (6). To interpret the "science of happiness" is to describe happiness as being performative. Ahmed says, "by finding happiness in certain places, it generates those places as being good, as being what should be promoted as goods" (6). For instance, we have set up marriage to be the predictor of happiness. If you get married, you will be happy. Furthermore, "what is at stake is a belief that we can know 'in advance' what will improve people's lives. The very 'thing' we aim to achieve is the 'thing' that will get us there" (8). The methods and pathways by which we understand happiness parallel the many ways in eugenic patterns of thinking. That is, if you can plan and have the "perfect child," you and your family will be happy and will be saved from

the misery of having a disabled child. The stigma of having a disabled child and connecting it to unhappiness was very much alive as early as the late nineteenth century as Kim Nielsen notes, "In 1873, business woman, advocate for women's rights, and 1872 presidential candidate Victoria Woodhull spoke of parenting her teenage son Byron: 'I am cursed with this living death'" (72).

The topic of Nina's unhappiness at having lost the opportunity to have Gordon Shaw's child is constructed at the play's beginning. Nina accuses her father of undermining her marriage to Gordon Shaw before he went off to war and died in combat, because she is now unable to produce Gordon's children. She tells her father angrily, "I'm still Gordon's silly virgin! And Gordon is muddy ashes! And I have lost my happiness forever" (I. 1. 74). After the war and Gordon's death, Nina loses herself through empty amusement and promiscuity. When Ned, the play's diagnostician, later tries to intervene and "cure" Nina of her "sickness," he approaches Charlie to convince him to speak with Nina—"You're the last link connecting her with the girl she used to be before Gordon's death. You're closely associated in her mind with that period of happy security, of health and peace of mind" (I. 2. 88). Nina later calls them on their actions with a sharp rejoinder, "How we poor monkeys hide from ourselves behind the sounds called words" (I.2. 91). Nina's retort frightens Charlie and Ned. They must now find ways to prescribe marriage/motherhood for Nina because in their minds she needs to "find normal outlets for her craving for sacrifice" (I.2.89). In short, they need to contain and control her "wayward" behaviors. Her promiscuity reflects them and they must put a

stop to it. Their need for control parallels the many ways of the ladies who tried to control Lily.

Nina's reprisal cleverly foreshadows how the concepts of Darwin's evolution and the Evans family secrets will intersect and influence the characters' future actions for the "science of happiness." Under Darwin's evolution, expertise and scientific diagnosis increasingly dominated evaluations of bodies and mind, centering on the concept of "normal." The meaning of "normal" denoted the average, the usual or the ordinary. It "functioned as an ideal and excluded only those who were defined as *below* average"; in contrast, the opposite of the normal meant defective (Baynton 36). Consequently, normality was intricately and intimately tied in with the western's notion of progress (Baynton 36) and future happiness (Nielsen 142).

Normalization and happiness are similar to what Ahmed refers to as the "science of happiness" or the "happiness script." The happiness script works to impel a person to stay in line; "to deviate from the line is to be threatened with unhappiness" (Ahmed 91). By appealing to Nina's emotions of happier times, Ned and Charlie hope to "cure" Nina of her "sickness" by "scripting" her to be the eugenic ideal of domestic wife and mother for Sam, whose outward physical appearances "signify" that of a healthy male breeder. This so-called cure for happiness for the good of the race came to be seen not only as an act that needed to be contained/controlled, but also as a woman's trait that required "fixing." Theoretically, once "fixed" under the rules of the patriarchal system, the marginalized woman is restored back into the white female domestic sphere that relies on

the view that a white woman who has *departed* from normalcy can return, conform and "be happy."

Later in the play, Mrs. Evans ironically presents this "Happiness Script" to Nina and their exchange becomes riddled with eugenic contradictions. When Nina meets Mrs. Evans for the first time, she observes, "How her face changes . . . what sad eyes" (I. 3. 105). Nina later finds out that Mrs. Evans' sad eyes are due to "secrets" about congenital insanity that runs in the Evans' family line. Mrs. Evans tells Nina that after Sam was born they lived in fear (I. 3. 107). When Mrs. Evans insists that Nina abort her baby, she informs Nina, "It's because I want Sammy—and you, too, child—to be happy . . . you just can't" (I. 3. 106). She explains that her life has been an "awful torment" (I. 3. 108). She persuades Nina to abort Sam's baby and expresses ways by which Nina can accomplish this: "I used to wish that I'd gone out deliberate in our first year, without my husband knowing, and picked a man, a healthy male to breed by, same's we do with stock, to give the man I loved a healthy child" (I. 3. 110-111). Wolff explains, "The analogy of breeding stock was a common eugenicist strategy to explain what eugenics was to the uninitiated" (226-227). When Nina exclaims, "And how about Sam? You want him to be happy, don't you? It's just as important for him as it is for me that I should have a baby" (I.3.110). Mrs. Evans replies in the affirmative, "You've got to have a healthy baby-- . . . So's you can both be happy! It's your rightful duty! (I.3.111). Ahmed states, "if we have a duty to promote what causes happiness, then happiness itself becomes a duty" (7), which is exactly what Mrs. Evans is scripting Nina to do. Nina, who is constrained under the patriarchal system (and her mother-in-law), is being scripted for

the perfect motherhood role and the belief that it will lead to her happiness. She is unable to distinguish between her own needs and the expectations that society has placed upon her.

As another prescription for "a happy life" and to safeguard Sam's "mental health," Mrs. Evans warns Nina not to tell Sam their family secret because her husband's fear for Sam triggered his own madness. She tells Nina, "Only remember it's a family secret and now you are one of the family. It's the curses of the Evanses" (I. 3. 107). When Nina bitterly blames Sam for not letting her know, Mrs. Evans replies, "Who said Sammy knew? He don't know a single thing about it" (1. 3. 108). When Nina threatens to leave Sam, Mrs. Evans counteracts, "You know what'll happen to him if you leave him—after all I have told you! . . . Oh, I'd get down on my knees to you, don't make my boy run that risk! You got to give one Evans, the last one, a chance to live in this world! And you'll learn to love him, if you give up enough for him! (I. 3. 109-110). Wolff observes, "For all [Mrs. Evans'] insistence on the terrifying inevitability of insanity, [she] argues paradoxically that telling Sam about the problem, or allowing him to witness it, will condemn him to madness" (228). From her conversation with Mrs. Evans, Nina comes to believe that it is her duty to keep Sam from being insane, thereby keeping happiness intact by being the "devoted" wife and keeping with the family secret.

In pursuing happiness, Nina follows Mrs. Evans' advice and aborts Sam's baby. She then seeks Ned's counsel. Nina and Ned agree to a "scientific experiment" (a sexual affair) to help Nina produce a "healthy heir" in the guise of keeping Sam happy as well as doing it "for the race." "Ned's superior mind" and the repeated use of the happiness

factor are used to rationalize their sexual arrangement. Nina's fear of genetic abnormality, which has been heightened by the potential hidden madness in Sam, and her subsequent actions to control the genetic outcome of her unborn child by having sexual relations with Ned, emerges as a mythmaking process. Below are excerpts from their dialogue (emphasis added):

1) Nina: I've promised Sam's mother to make him **happy**! He's **unhappy** because he thinks he isn't able to give me a child. And I'm **unhappy** because I've lost my child, so I must have another baby—somehow—don't you think, Doctor? –to make us both **happy**? (I.4.127)

2) Ned: (to himself) That look in her eyes . . . what does she want me to think? . . . why does she talk so much about being **happy**? . . . am I **happy**? . . . I don't know . . . What is **happiness**? . . . (I.4. 127-128)

3) Ned: (to himself) . . . this was all my fault . . . I owe Sam something . . . I owe them **happiness**! . . . (I.4. 128)

4) Nina: Then you agree with Sam's mother? She said: "Being **happy** is the nearest we can ever come to knowing what good is! (I.4. 129)

5) Ned: (to himself) Have I ever been **happy**? . . . this talk of **happiness** seems to me extraneous . . . (I.4. 129)

6) Ned: **Happiness** hates the timid! So does science! Certainly Sam's wife must conceal her actions! To let Sam know would be insanely cruel for her—and stupid, for then no one could be **happier** for her act! (I.4.129)

7) Ned: I kissed her once . . . her lips were cold . . . now they would burn with **happiness** for me! . . . (I.4. 130)

8) Ned: "I desire **happiness**" (I.4.131)

9) Ned: "Yes—yes, Nina—yes—for your **happiness**—in that spirit!" (Thinking—fiercely triumphant) I shall be **happy** for a while! . . . (I.4.131)

10) Nina: "I shall be **happy**! . . . I shall make my husband **happy**" (I.4.131)

In five short pages, happiness, or the pursuit of it, becomes a warrant for certain kinds of acts that are otherwise deceitful. Nina and Ned see their arrangement as an act that will result in future happiness. While Nina and Ned rationalize that their sexual affair is for Sam's happiness and "for the good of the race," their tenuously balanced relationship inevitably breaks down and their "ideal arrangement" does not bring future happiness. Nina has a "healthy baby" and Sam is happy, but Ned is taken aback by the emotional effect of his sexual relationship with Nina. He is relegated to an ancillary role and is unable to assert his paternity of the child. During this interim, Nina and Ned want to marry each other and to have Nina divorce Sam, but due to guilt and timing, their plans fall apart. After Sam dies and Gordon Jr. is a young adult, Nina and Ned go their separate ways—Nina marries Charlie and Ned goes back to science.

Sam, who is the most clueless of all the characters, achieves happiness through his successful business ventures. When he first marries Nina, he feels unsuccessful due to Nina not getting pregnant. Sam berates himself, "God, if we'd only have a kid! . . . then I'd show them all what I could do . . . Cole always used to say I had the stuff, and Ned certainly thought so" (I. 4.114). Murphy states, "In the Twenties, America was so

enamored of business, and especially the 'success myth' of the 'self-made man,' that the romance of science and the arts had pretty much been displaced in the nation's affections by businessmen . . ." (145). I argue that eugenics and business success were entwined, not completely separate as Murphy suggests. Sam thinks of himself as "weak" in terms of his masculinity and poor skills in sports. When Nina does become pregnant, Ned announces to Sam, "And now for your secret! It ought to make you very happy, Sam . . . You're going to be a father, old scout, that's the secret! . . . Good luck! Buckle down to work now! You've got the stuff in you! . . . (I.5.145). Upon hearing the good news, Sam tells Nina he will not be afraid of anything again (I.5.146). The happiness script re-plays itself in Sam's interaction with Nina:

> Sam: Don't you want me to be happy, Nina?
>
> Nina: Yes—yes, I do, Sammy.
>
> Sam: And I'm going to make you happy from now on, Nina.
>
> Nina: I'll try to make you happy, Sam. (1.5.146)

Nina's pregnancy becomes the "green light" that helps to boost his white male dominance and confidence. Another conversation between Sam and Charlie reflects a bit more of Sam's state of happiness:

> (Sam to Charlie): Since the baby was born, I've felt as if I had a shot of dynamite in each arm. They can't pile on the work fast enough . . . I'm not afraid of my own shadow any more."
>
> (Charlie, thinking strangely to himself): "Not to be afraid of one's shadow! . . . that must be the highest happiness of heaven! (II. 6. 157)

Charlie's introspection is another one of O'Neill's ironies. Charlie, who is afraid of life's depth and writes fairy tale-like novels for adults, is the play's seer. Sam, as a result of his own mindset and improving what he believes to be his own manly weaknesses, becomes a successful businessman, a self-made Gatsby. He convinces Ned and Charlie to invest in his business, making them wealthy to the point where Ned complains, "our backing Sam has made Marsden and me so wealthy that we're forced to take up hobbies. Marsden goes in for his old one of dashing off genteel novels, while I play biology" (II. 7. 173). However, through Charlie's eyes, Sam represents "the typical terrible child of the age . . . universal slogan, keep moving . . . moving where? . . . never mind that . . . don't think of ends . . . the means are the end" (II. 6.158). As Sam becomes more wealthy and successful, his love for Nina dies. He cares only for Gordon Jr. who he successfully raises not only to justify the name of Gordon Shaw, but also to have his "son" be a "bigger star than Gordon [Shaw] ever was" (II.6. 56). With his influence over Gordon, Ned, and even Charlie, Sam begins to appear larger than life, an almost mythical figure of himself, even after death when he bequeaths Ned with a half million dollars to be utilized for scientific research. His life comes to embody many of the eugenic (mythical) paradigms for the "good life."

In contrast to Sam, Ned becomes disillusioned about his own pursuit of happiness. After his relationship with Nina is over, he realizes that the "joke" of eugenics and future happiness is on Nina and him. He tells himself:

> Sam . . . happy and wealthy . . . and healthy! . . . I used to hope he would break down . . . I'd watch him and read symptoms of insanity into every

> move he made . . . he only grew healthier . . . now I've given up watching him . . . almost entirely . . . now I watch him grow fat and I laugh! . . . The huge joke has dawned on me! . . . Sam is the normal one! . . . we lunatics . . . Nina and I . . . have made a sane life for him out of our madness! . . . (II.7.172)

Ned realizes that both he and Nina have created a lot of needless suffering on behalf of trying to "spare" Sam, and this becomes the play's emphatic turning point and irony. The reader becomes aware of the "gaps" in the eugenicists' arguments about heredity. There is no equation between normality and happiness. Ahmed states that "The experience of a gap between the promise of happiness and how you are affected by objects that promise happiness does not always lead to corrections that close this gap" (42). Unlike Ned, Nina is unable to "close the gap" between what she saw as her right to happiness and what actually occurred. The "gap" in this equation becomes even more apparent through Ned's realization when Nina cries out to Gordon Jr. to be happy as he flies away to meet Madeline, "Fly up to heaven, Gordon! Fly with your love to heaven! . . . Never crash to earth like my old Gordon! Be happy, dear! You've got to be happy! (II.9.221). To this Icarus allusion, Ned responds sardonically, "I've heard that cry for happiness before, Nina! I remember hearing myself cry it—once—it must have been long ago! I'll get back to my cells—sensible unicellular life that floats in the sea and has never learned the cry for happiness! I am going, Nina" (II.9.221).

Murphy states, "The allusion to Icarus, falling from the sky as he tried to reach the sun, is telling in conjunction with the personification of America's myth of innocence

in the Gordons. Like all romantic fantasies, this one," O'Neill implies, "is headed for ultimate destruction, no matter how much America may still want to believe in it" (146). Murphy refers to America's loss of innocence that can never be recovered, and that its re-creation of the ideal past will only lead to pain and grief. In this scene, O'Neill also takes advantage of Nina's fantasies to mock the eugenicists' mythical vision of racial progress and family happiness. Nina is desperately holding on to Gordon Jr., whose namesake represents her past connection to Gordon Shaw and her "sacrifice" at masterminding his birth. Ned understands this and no longer wants to participate in Nina's fantasies and meddlesome ways. When Nina tries earlier to intervene in the relationship between Gordon Jr. and his girlfriend Madeline by enlisting Ned's help, Ned resists her: "I swore I'd never again meddle with human lives, Nina! . . . You've got to give up owning people, meddling in their lives as if you were God and had created them!" (II.8. 196). For Nina, Gordon Shaw was the ideal of male perfection and happiness, one that none of the other men in her life were able to match. Charlie, Ned, and Sam perceive Gordon Jr. as strongly reminiscent of the original Gordon; only Nina sees him as fully "Sam's son" (despite the fact that Gordon is not Sam's biological son) and one who is "distant" from her, and will be even more so after he marries Madeline. After Sam's death, Nina asks Charlie with some resignation, "My having a son was a failure, wasn't it? He couldn't give me happiness. Sons are always their fathers" (II.9.222).

O'Neill provides further clues in Act II about Nina's relationship with Gordon Jr. and her unhappiness. When Gordon Jr. was 11 years old, he witnessed his mother kissing Ned, and as a result formed a stronger bond with Sam. Later when Gordon Jr. is older and

Nina recognizes that she has lost her "connection" with Gordon to Sam, she expresses how weary she is: "I want to rot away in peace . . . I'm sick of the fight for happiness" (II.7.171). Later, Nina becomes introspective and doubtful about her own happiness: "Am I the ideal of a happy mother, Ned?" (II.8.194). After Sam's death, Nina's weariness re-surfaces again when she tells Charlie, whom she has agreed to marry, "It will be a comfort to get home—to be old and to be home again at last—to be in love with peace together—to love each other's peace—to sleep with peace together . . . to die in peace! I'm so contentedly weary of life! (II.0.222). Her associations with the Gordons have been a mythical ride under the modern science God. Good old Charlie saves the day and tells Nina:

> You had best forget the whole affair of your associations with the Gordons. After all, dear Nina, there was something unreal in all that has happened since you first met Gordon Shaw, something extravagant and fantastic, the sort of thing that isn't done, really, in our afternoons. So let's you and me forget the whole distressing episode, regard it as an interlude, of trial and preparation, say, in which our souls have been scraped clean of impure flesh and made worthy to bleach in peace. (II.9.222)

At which Nina replies, "Strange interlude! Yes, our lives are merely strange dark interludes in the electrical display of God the Father" (II.9.221). Nina's allusion to the modern science God is crucial to her characterization, and to the structure and choices of her life decisions and how they impacted her. Her life with Sam and Ned was structured by eugenic ideologies—with Sam she was creating the ideal family life that included

financial comfort and being the docile wife and mother, and with Ned she was begetting the "perfect" child. Through her escape from the subjugation of the twentieth century's false gods of money and science, Nina finds peace with Charlie (Murphy 146). But as Murphy points out, "Nina's movement from the influence of her father, the union of classical Western civilization and New England puritanism, to that of Charlie, the repressed writer of fairy tales for adults, implies a decadence that suggests little hope for the future" (146).

While Nina's future continuation under America's patriarchal system and a sexless marriage may appear somewhat hopeless, peace may be as close to happiness as Nina will ever come. Before Gordon Jr. flies away, Nina asks her son, "Do you think I was ever unfaithful to your father, Gordon?" Gordon Jr. replies, "Mother, what do you think I am—as rotten-minded as that! . . . I know you're the best woman that ever lived—the best of all! I don't even [sic] except Madeline!" (II.9. 218). The need to be the ideal wife and mother (regardless of its untruth) and to create the "perfect" eugenic child has been entrenched in Nina's psychology and life. While Nina may continue to hold on to some of her fantasies, Charlie, as the writer of his own mythical fairytales, will be at least the most forgiving of hers.

The Disabled Child as an Economic Burden: William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and Katherine Anne Porter's "Holiday"

Just as O'Neill, Welty, Austin, and Porter exemplify how disabled children were often viewed as a burden and as noncitizens, my investigation into William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and another short story by Katherine Anne Porter titled

"Holiday," written in the 1920s but published in 1960, will help us further understand the linkage between economic self-sufficiency and citizenship, and how that very concept became an underlying, if not an overarching, theme in modernist's texts. This link is exemplified in an essay written in 1930 by Julian Huxley, a secretary of the London Zoological Society and chairman of the Eugenics Society. He complained that disabled people's dependency was wasting America's dollars:

> What are we going to do? Every defective man, woman and child is a burden. Every defective is an extra body for the nation to feed and clothe, but produces little or nothing in return. (English Heritage)[8]

Many British and American eugenicists[9] echoed Huxley's chilling opinions and beliefs. Englishman Charles Darwin warned his readers about the reproduction of the poor and unfit who would take food and land from those who were genetically the fittest for survival (Cuddy and Roche 29). Furthermore, Amos Butler from Indiana argued that if American citizens would only look at the expenses caused by the "degenerates," they would be "amazed." Therefore, Americans should "not rest" from working to prevent this "accumulating cost" of the "succeeding generations of defectives" (Yukins 164). Huxley's and Amos' alarming messages show not only how eugenicists often thought

[8] http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/people-and-places/disability-history/1914-1945/

[9] Secretary of the Indiana Board of State Charities, Amos Butler, in his address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which he published in 1901, spoke of "degenerates" as an economic cost/burden to the state and referenced them as lives not worth living: "Comparatively few persons yet realize the suffering, the moral degredation [sic], and not least, the increasing expense entailed upon the public by the progeny, often illegitimate, of feeble-minded women. Could our citizens know the truth, the enormous expense, and the depth of degredation [sic] caused by this group of degenerates, they would be amazed. Could they look into the future and see what would be the accumulated cost piled up before them in money, in immorality, in succeeding generations of defectives, they would not rest until they had sought means to prevent all this."

about disabled people being a burden to society, but also how they employed and exploited the word "defectives." By using "defectives" as a noun in their propaganda, they strip disabled people of their personhood, thus depersonalizing them of their rightful identities and citizenship.

These ableist beliefs did not stop with the eugenicists. The empowering claim to families that "the future of the race is up to you" shaped how various American households reacted to disability. Furthermore, in the late 1920s, Kline states, eugenicists lobbying for sterilization laws had adapted their definition of eugenics by considering how environmental factors also significantly contributed to family life (100-101). Subsequently, "as the family and the home became their unit of discussion, eugenic thinkers crafted a complementary relationship between heredity and home life" (Slavishak 106). Because the home environment was as important a consideration as heredity, active sterilization advocates embarked on marriage and family studies while others remained focused on sterilization and/or institutionalization, but emphasized the benefits of each to children and families (Kline 101). Nielsen notes, "Doctors routinely encouraged parents to institutionalize their children with mental retardation in the postwar period, and at their encouragement many parents never mentioned or acknowledged such children again" (142). Interestingly, "the famed child psychoanalyst Erik Erickson and his wife, Joan, institutionalized their child after he was born, telling their other children that he had died at birth" (Nielsen 142). Thus, the value of a person was determined by economics, and people, especially disabled people, who were

excluded from the work force and dependent on the care of others, were viewed as "waste humanity" (Nibert 75).

William Faulkner was very aware of eugenics and its negative influence and worked to incorporate those themes in his novels. Faulkner published *The Sound and the Fury* in 1929 after social Darwinism and eugenics had been developed in the late 1800s, and devotes an entire chapter to Benjamin "Benjy" Compson, an intellectually disabled 33-year-old man. To establish Benjy's position within the Compson family, I turn first to Jay Watson's insightful chapter, "Genealogies of White Deviance: The Eugenic Family Studies, Buck vs. Bell, and William Faulkner, 1926-1931," which points out several astute observations about the family and the application of eugenics in the novel:

> The Compson sibling cohort perfectly accommodates this one-in four structure—a case study in Mendelian mathematics . . . One out of four is an imbecile. One out of four dreams of committing incest. One out of four is a thief. One out of four is promiscuous and bears an illegitimate child. One out of four might be considered insane. (38)

Watson posits that the three-generational structure displayed in the Buck case is also reflected in the Compson's genealogy (38). First, we have Caddy's bastard daughter, Quentin, and then possibly Quentin's illegitimate child. For instance, when Quentin asks Jason for money, Jason challenges her asking her why she needed the money. Her reply is "It's some money I owe . . . I've got to pay it today . . . It's a girl. . . It's a girl. I borrowed some money from a girl" (134). Watson asks, "Is Caddy's sexual history repeating itself here in full, all the way down to illegitimate conception? If so, then

eighteen-year-old Quentin in 1928 would find herself in the same role that the Virginia authorities erroneously assigned to sixteen-year-old Carrie Buck in 1924 . . . the crucial link in a three-generational chain of deviance" (39).

In addition, Watson writes, "the price of the family's numerous offenses against eugenic standards of social propriety is racial anxiety about and within the bloodline" (41). The family falls in a long line of "defective traits"—Mr. Compson and Uncle Maury are alcoholics, Caddy and granddaughter Quentin are promiscuous runaways, and Quentin has feelings of intimate versions of "consanguinity" with his sister as he spirals to madness and suicide (Watson 36), as well as homoerotic feelings towards Shreve. As Faulkner probably intended, scrutinizing the Compson family under the eugenic paradigm would fall under Watson's clever subtitle, "America's Worst Family." Benjy is the "poster child" and blamed far more than the other family members for their social and economic ills and decline.

Maria Truchan-Tataryn observes that Faulkner "skillfully strips Benjy's narration to the naked essentials of communication or, more accurately, transmittal of information" (162). She maintains that this grammatical method denotes the mindlessness attributed to developmental disability; I argue that the method is not so much about "mindlessness" because Benjy does respond/react to commands (i.e., to hush) and to his memories of loss (i.e., Caddy, his testicles, etc.), but rather it signifies more about how he is being "talked at, or about." In the novel's first section alone, the word "hush" is used approximately 126 times, *104 of them are directed at Benjy*, while the other 22 are aimed at the other characters. Faulkner's literary technique reveals both the emotional and the social

violence of these repeated commands. Benjy is constantly being derided, told to behave, and expected to conform to society's standards of communication. As Jacqui Griffiths points out, "Benjy does not speak his family's language. The Compson household's difficulty in understanding his crying, moaning, and attempts "to say" lead them to appoint various spokespersons for him (172). Only Caddy tries to understand Benjy.

Faulkner employs several techniques of the gaze and use of space throughout the novel. His use of these literary techniques connects to Benjy's marginalization within the family, but more importantly, they redirect the reader's gaze to those who are doing the shaming. One particular fight scene between Caddy and Charlie embodies Faulkner's use of the gaze:

> "He cant talk." Charlie said. "Caddy."
>
> "Are you crazy." Caddy said. She began to breathe fast. "He can see.
>
> Dont. Dont." Caddy fought. They both breathed fast. "Please. Please." (30)

In the above scene, Caddy fights Charlie who tries to seduce her in front of Benjy. Charlie responds to Benjy's inferiority when he asks Caddy, "Where's his nigger [T.P.]. What do they let him run around loose for," and then tells Caddy that having Benjy there does not matter because he "cant talk" (30). Charlie's attitude underscores how the eugenic laws of white, male, able-bodied supremacy have conditioned him to oppress both T.P and Benjy (and Caddy). When Charlie tries to dominate and control Caddy by holding her against her will, his violent, animalistic behavior exposes and subverts the established construct of his own misguided perception towards Benjy. Caddy's imploring "He can see" exemplifies how Charlie's ignorance stands in strong contrast to Benjy's

ability to understand, and it is through Caddy's protest that readers are able to recognize Charlie's derision and contempt as the basis for his stigmatizing attitude towards Benjy.

Under the tenets of eugenics, Mrs. Compson makes Benjy's disability and his constant care the root and cause of her constant ailments, inactions, and inability to care for her children. Mrs. Compson's ailments throughout the novel are never specified. Ryuichi Yamaguchi states, "Her contribution amounts to lounging in her room, being waited on hand and foot, and forbidding anyone to disturb her. 'But it's my place to suffer for my children [*TSATF* 65]'" (107). The children's actions, particularly Benjy's, are thought to *reflect her*, and as a result, he serves as a focus for her self-pity. The mother designates Benjy as a "punishment" for her sins and her loss of standing as a Bascomb marrying into an aristocratic southern family. Cuddy and Roche, as well as Watson, in their respective studies indirectly provide insight into Mrs. Compson's deep-rooted belief about her role as a mother and wife, stating ". . . eugenicists believed that the mother's heritage was primarily responsible for the defective traits, just like "moron girls were thought to be more dangerous as a sexual threat and genetic menace than their male counterparts," and for that reason, men were warned to select a mate wisely for the future of the family and the race" (Cuddy and Roche 37, Watson 39). Mrs. Compson often reinforces the belief of her own inferiority by repeatedly telling her husband (and others in the family), "I know I'm nothing but a burden to you. But I'll be gone soon. Then you will be rid of my bothering" (8, 40). This engrained belief is also explicit in the mother's interaction with Dilsey in one scene:

> "With two grown negroes, you must bring [Benjy] into the house,

bawling." Mother said. "You got him started on purpose, because you know I'm sick . . . Am I never to have one minute's peace. "

"They aint nowhere else to take him." Dilsey said. "We aint got the room we use to have. He cant stay out in the yard, crying where all the neighbors can see him." "I know, I know." Mother said. "It's all my fault. I'll be gone soon . . . She began to cry. (38-39)

Faulkner's use of gaze and setting are reflected in the above inside/outside dialogue. Mother wants Benjy inside so neighbors will not see him, but as Dilsey tells her, there's no room in the house for him, particularly since the mother wants her space and they don't have the space they used to have. This inside/outside dialogue symbolizes Benjy's liminal state; he can neither be inside nor outside, because the gaze is not just literal but also metaphorical. Like the earlier scene between Charlie and Caddy, the mother wants to pretend in her ignorance, like Charlie, that Benjy does not exist, and this subtle wish undermines the mother's cry for pity: "It's all my fault. I'll be gone soon." The mother's use of pity and the word "sick" to describe her condition directs the reader's gaze not towards Benjy, but ironically to herself. One cannot help wonder who is really the disabled person in the novel.

Faulkner uses the word "sick" (or its variation) numerous times to describe the mother's suffering in connection with Benjy's care. Below are excerpt examples (emphasis added):

1) [To the servants] Mother said. "You got him [Benjy] started on purpose, because you know I'm **sick** . . . Am I never to have one minute's peace. . .It's all my fault. (38)

2) Let [Benjy] go, Caroline." Uncle Maury said. "You'll worry yourself **sick** over him." "I know it." Mother said. "It's a judgment on me. I sometimes wonder." (4)

3) [To Benjy] "Please hush." Mother said. "We're trying to get you out as fast as we can. I don't want you to get **sick**. (4)

4) [The mother to Caddy] "Are you going to take that baby out without his overshoes.". . . "Do you want to make him **sick**, with the house full of company. " My poor baby." she said. (6)

5) "Candace." Mother said. "Yessum." Caddy said. "Why are you teasing [Benjy]." Mother said. "Bring him here." We went to Mother's room, where she was lying with the **sickness** on a cloth on her head."
(26)

6) "Take him downstairs and get someone to watch him, Jason. " Mother said. "**You know I'm ill, yet you..."** (26-27)

7) "Benjamin." she said. She took my face in her hands and turned it to hers. "Benjamin." she said. "Take that cushion away, Candace."
"He'll cry." Caddy said. "Take that cushion away, like I told you." Mother said. "He must learn to mind." . . ."Benjamin." She held my face to hers. "Stop that." she said. "Stop it." But I didn't stop and Mother caught me in

her arms and began to cry, and I cried. Then the cushion came back and Caddy held it above Mother's head. She drew Mother back in the chair and Mother lay crying against the red and yellow cushion. "Hush, Mother." Caddy said. "**You go up stairs and lay down, so you can be sick.** (41)

This double metaphor of being "sick" physically (upstairs in her room) and mentally (in her head) represents the mother's phobias about her health and her over-the-top concerns about the family's reputation due to Benjy's disability. Caddy uses the same language ("hush") towards her mother that others also use towards Benjy. Because Benjy has no language, the mother writes him off as a projection of her miserable health conditions. This misguided assumption is similar to Mrs. Whipple's attitude in "He." Because Mrs. Whipple assumes He has no language, she is able to "write him in any way that suits her purpose" (Fornataro-Neil 354). Fornataro-Neil writes, "close attention to the story shows that He does, in fact, communicate, using a simple, nonverbal sign system. Mrs. Whipple does not want to learn to read or hear him, because to do so would contradict her own illusions. . . [As a result, she] never sees him as being full human, he is underestimated, undervalued, and unloved" (354).

Likewise, Mrs. Compson, because of her concerns for the appearance of things, has a limited view of Benjy's capabilities. For example, by taking away the cushions and ignoring Caddy's explanation, she tries to ignore and normalize Benjy's disability. When she cannot, she cries. This act of control and delusion is similar in a later scene when Benjy wants to go outside:

> Well, he cannot do it, Mother said. It's raining. You will just have to play with him and keep him quiet. You, Benjamin.
>
> Aint nothing going to quiet him, T. P. said. He think if he down to the gate, Miss Caddy come back.
>
> Nonsense, Mother said. (33)

Mrs. Compson's efforts to control Benjy's every move are in part an effort to preserve the purported natural linkage between biological and economic status. The reader is invited to speculate whether or not Mrs. Compson sees in Benjy a reflection of her own suppressed inferiority and the betrayal of the gains she has made by marrying into a prominent southern family. The emotional toil of Mrs. Compson's self-pity—"It's a judgment on me. I sometimes wonder" (4), I wish for Jason's and the children's sakes I was stronger (6)," and "You don't realize that I am the one who has to pay for it"(41)—are thinly disguised acts of control and condescension. Only Jason sneers and calls her on her act: "I ought to know it . . . You've been telling me that for thirty years. Even Ben ought to know it now" (114).

Yamaguchi goes so far as to say that "Mrs. Compson's tears signify neither sorrow nor defeat; they are always accusative and punitive . . . in fact, they are thinly veiled accusations of murder . . . It is not the law of the father, but the tears of the mother, that govern the Compson family, insofar as the family is governed at all" (108). While I would not go so far as to describe the mother's tears in terms of "murder," I agree that they mask her condescension, paternalistic gaze and repeated commands (i.e., "You, Benjamin," "Hush," "Stop it," "She took my face in her hands and turned it to hers."),

which express her consistent need for containment, control and the illusion of maintaining the reputation of the "perfect southern aristocratic family." Uncle Maury and the Father both play into her demands, but Caddy does not, which explains the mother's constant need to berate her daughter's actions with Benjy. Caddy's command to her mother, "You go up stairs and lay down, so you can be sick" (41) is Faulkner's ironic way of putting the eugenically "ineffectual mother" back in her place. The mother's neurotic fear of hereditary contagion precludes her from being a formative mother figure.

One of the many ways that the Compson family sees Benjy as a "burden" is viewing him as a genetic and sexual menace, because they need to constantly contain his whereabouts, restrain his actions, and deflect the gaze that he receives (and they receive) from the community. Here Faulkner's literary technique reveals the situation of setting related to gaze. Sometimes, setting is used to isolate and quite literally marginalize the person with the disability, but sometimes the person escapes and gets seen by the larger public as exemplified by Benjy's inarticulate overtures towards the white Burgess girl, an act that was interpreted as a sexual attack. To contain the "threat" that Benjy poses, the family and caretakers restrict him to the fenced-off family home place and have him castrated. As Watson notes, "the Compson house looks more and more like a contemporary mental institution in its own right, with the novel's opening view '[t]hrough the fence' (3), and its repeated attention to that fence over its first several paragraphs, evoking an inmate's long gaze past the perimeters of his confinement toward freer, greener pastures beyond" (36).

Benjy makes several efforts to go outside, but his mother constantly harps on the idea that he should either stay inside due to the neighbors' watchful eyes, or because he will get "sick" (4, 5-6, 33, 38-39 and more). She constantly refers to him as "poor baby," which is a form of pity, but her show of pity is complex and deceptive. As exemplified with the former characters, Mrs. Whipple's and the three ladies' (i.e., Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Carson, Aimee Slocum), words say one thing, but their actions say another. Their show of pity, along with Mrs. Compson's attitude, *reflects them* and their ulterior motives to control and contain their disabled counterpart.

Because the Compson family with the exception of Caddy, desire to control and contain Benjy (desires that are constantly being destabilized), they often threaten to send him to Jackson. While the story's setting, Yoknapatawpha County, is fictional, the novel's reference to "Jackson" Mississippi State Insane Asylum located in Jackson, Mississippi until 1935 is based on factual history.[10] With Faulkner's novel's setting occurring between 1910-1928, one can only imagine the horrific conditions of the asylum and what it would have been like for someone like Benjy. As specified earlier in Welty's

[10] The state hospital was built in 1855. As of last year, between November and March 2012-2013, one thousand graves and probably more have been excavated. The History Blog (2014) states that "The coffins were about six feet long but much thinner than normal human width because they were compressed by the weight of the soil. There were no grave markers identifying the burials." Apparently the asylum was created in 1848 based on the Kirkbride Plan, a holistic approach to the treatment of mental illness conceived by Dr. Thomas Story Kirkbride, a Quaker physician and lifelong advocate for the mentally ill. It was the sixth institution built in the United States, but the first in the South. The institution was well funded until the end of Reconstruction in 1877, where the funds eventually dried up and the asylum went into a deep decline. While quasi-repairs were made over the years, the conditions became so atrocious that in 1935, the hospital was forced to close. The patients were moved to a new state hospital in Whitfield where the institution and its operation remain to this day (The History Blog, 2014). The History Blog (2014) claims that the asylum began with 250 patients, but by the 1920s it had increased to 1, 670 residents, and by 1930 admissions had doubled to 2, 649. The rise in patient care occurred during the height of its decline and disrepair. The institution was said to resemble what the "original bedlam must have been like" (The History Blog, 2014).

short story with the three ladies who want to send Lily to Ellisville, Aimee Slocum could not decide if Ellisville or marriage was the more ominous choice for Lily. Instead of using moral propriety as the ladies did with Lily, Benjy's caretakers are straightforward and downright nasty.

Their nastiness often has to do with Benjy, who is blamed for the family's misfortune. Faulkner's literary gaze points to this issue of contamination of misfortune, and he describes it in connection with the fence. For instance, after the pasture is sold, one of Dilsey's grandsons, Luster, is put in charge of Benjy, he enlists Benjy's help to find a quarter that he has lost. They are at the fence that divides the golf course (that once used to be the Compson family's pasture) from the house. Benjy is moaning. An unknown person approaches Luster: "Why dont they lock him up." he said. "What'd you bring him out here for." "You aint talking to me." Luster said. "I cant do nothing with him" (Faulkner 32). Here the unknown person speaks to Luster as if Benjy is invisible, a nonentity that should be put away.

In another scenario, Luster is again asked the same question, *Whyn't you take him on home. Didn't they told you not to take him off the place. He still think they own this pasture, Luster said. Cant nobody see down here from the house, noways. We can. And folks dont like to look at a looney. Taint no luck in it* (Faulkner 13). Luster agrees with the interlocutor about society's general opinion that "feeble-minded" persons like Benjy should be kept from the view/gaze of others for the benefit of nondisabled people. He is also deflecting his "connection" with Benjy by directing the interloctor's gaze towards Benjy. Luster's attitude is replayed in another scene by T.P. who chides Benjy, "You cant

do no good, moaning and slobbering through the fence . . . You done skeered them chillen. Look at them, walking on the other side of the street" (Faulkner 33).

All three scenes suggest that Benjy be contained (or restrained) to the house or to Jackson. The caretakers and community's attitudes are primarily motivated by their conception of Benjy as a social menace who needs to be locked up. This social menace also has to do with viewing disability as a "monstrosity." To make my point, I would like to refer to another text, *The Blacker the Berry: A Novel of Negro Life* (1929) by Wallace Thurman. At the end of Thurman's novel two ancillary characters, Alva and Geraldine, treat their baby who has a "shrunken left arm and a deformed left foot" horribly: "Alva declared that it looked like an idiot. Geraldine had a struggle with herself trying to keep from smothering it. She couldn't see why such a monstrosity should live" (192). Thurman's example of disability as monstrous ties must be viewed in in light of Douglas C. Baynton's "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," wherein he critically unpacks the evolutionary meaning of the words "natural versus monstrous." Holmes sheds light on this negative view of disability by stating that disabled people's status in early twentieth century was shaped in large part by their status in the monetary economy. It was the instability of that position –the fact that all "dependents" in a troubled productive economy were perceived as both pitiable and detestable" (102).

Holmes states that dependency is a tricky business and most likely to end in detachment and anger. In one scene Luster becomes angry when he cannot discipline Benjy. He lacks the history to recognize the connections between various locations and

Benjy's bawling. However, he understands the power in the sound of Caddy's name and the significance of certain cherished objects such as fire and jimson weed, and he uses them to taunt Benjy (Roggenbuck 581). He tells Benjy:

> "Will you hush now?" Luster said. "Will you hush now?" He shook Ben's arm. Ben clung to the fence, wailing steadily and hoarsely. "Aint you gwine stop?" Luster said. "Or is you?" Ben gazed through the fence. "All right, den," Luster said. "You want somethin to beller about?" He looked over his shoulder, toward the house. Then he whispered: "Caddy! Beller now. Caddy! Caddy! Caddy." (Faulkner 196)

The knowledge Luster understands and uses to taunt Benjy and his lack of knowledge about what Benjy sees and reacts to become poignant to the understanding of the gap in the story. Readers come to understand the gulf that lies within the sociopolitical landscape of the Compson's household. Luster uses the very system's ideology that dominates and limits him as a black slave to oppress Benjy. Nielsen states, "Racist ideologies defined male and female African Americans as fundamentally inferior specimens with deformed bodies and minds who were best confined to slavery . . . Disability, as a concept, was used to justify legally established inequalities" (50). Because Luster must deflect and justify his own superiority, berating Benjy becomes a justification for his unethical behavior.

Several more passages express Faulkner's use of the literary gaze and setting to describe Benjy's family's wish to send him to Jackson. When Benjy escapes from within

the confines of the house and the gates, and runs after the girls, Mr. Compson accuses Jason of leaving the gate unlocked. Their conversation goes like this:

> How did he get out, Father said. Did you leave the gate unlatched when you came in, Jason. Of course not, Jason said. Dont you know I've got better sense than to do that. Do you think I wanted anything like this to happen. This family is bad enough, God knows. I could have told you, all the time. I reckon you'll send him to Jackson, now. If Mr. Burgess dont shoot him first. (Faulkner 33-34)

In another similar scene, the granddaughter Quentin, make disparaging remarks that reinforces the family's perception of Benjy's subhuman status:

> [Benjy] needs to be sent to Jackson, Quentin said. How can anybody live in a house like this. (Faulkner 45)

As with Lily Daw and He, Benjy is considered dispensable and the root cause of the Compson family's problems. Like Mrs. Whipple, who visualizes happier days with just her two able-bodied children and without He to take care of, the Compson's constant threats to send Benjy off to Jackson imply that peace and happiness will be restored if he is gone.

Jacqui Griffith's "Almost Human: Indeterminate Children and Dogs in *Flush* and *The Sound and the Fury"* addresses the idea of Benjy as being a liminal figure—he's not a child but has the mind of one, and he's not an adult due to his castration, even though he is (at the beginning of the novel) 33 years old; he is also not an "animal" but he is treated like one (170). Benjy's actions are "like many domestic dogs, he must learn the

power of the Other through routine repetition" (Griffith 174). Because Benjy's status as a burden has been established, Granddaughter Quentin, Jason, and the mother consistently demean Benjy and his actions. For example, Quentin asks Jason, "Has he got to keep that old dirty slipper on the table . . . Why dont you feed him in the kitchen. It's like eating with a pig" (Faulkner 45). Quentin's snide remark here illustrates how societal construction of "the disabled" often depends upon linking it more to the animal rather than the human.

Her debased remark is similar to the mother's when Versh tells Mrs. Compton that Benjy wants to go outside. After some dispute, the mother reprimands Benjy, "If you dont be good, you'll have to go to the kitchen today" (Faulkner 4). Like a dog, Benjy has no place to go, except the kitchen. Both the mother's and Quentin's remarks are also racist. The kitchen is the only domestic sphere where black servants are allowed to congregate and eat. Faulkner's text demonstrates that the objectification of and violence against animals parallels and undergirds the objectification of and violence against black and disabled individuals in modernist texts. Benjy, He, and Lily are institutionalized (contained) because they are unable to be "rehabilitated" or to live up to their society's definition of "the normal." Under the tenets of eugenics, they are "society's waste and an economic burden" that should be put away or hidden from the gaze of the public.

One last story I have chosen for this chapter's discussion is Porter's "Holiday," primarily because it is conceptually different from the works by Faulkner, Welty, and Porter's "He," and complicates the concept of the disabled child as a burden. Where Faulkner's Benjy is seen as unwanted dependency, Porter's disabled protagonist, Ottilie

Mueller, is a productive worker but treated indifferently within her family. Porter utilizes the gaze and space to portray Ottilie's marginalization and invisibility within the family's day-to-day affairs and events.

"Holiday" is a tale told by a narrator who seeks a holiday for healing and renewal at a remote rural area with a large family called the Mullers. Within the family is a disabled servant daughter, Ottilie. While the narrator comes to understand the family's stoic attitude towards hardship, she becomes puzzled about Ottilie's exclusion and invisibility from her family's interactions and events. The narrator secretly prays that Ottilie might die so that she will not have to suffer anymore, but the family seems to treat her as if she has her own "use" within the family structure, just like everyone else does. The narrator eventually comes to change her mind about the family and Ottilie, and to understand the structural and oppressive implications that underlie the family's patriarchal order.

The Muller's farm is situated "in the deep blackland Texas farm country, a household in real patriarchal style" (408). The Mullers are outsiders in America in that they are German-speaking immigrants. Ottilie (like Benjy) is unable to speak her family's language. She instead uses a series of nonverbal gestures to communicate. The narrator says, "Her muteness seemed nearly absolute; she had no coherent language of signs" (421). Fornataro-Neil states, "Although Ottilie is a member of the family, not one of the Mullers claims her as such" (358). For instance Hatsy, one of the Muller children, does not mention Ottilie as her sister. Instead, she simply tells the narrator that, "That is Ottilie. She is not sick now. She is only like that since she was sick when she was a baby.

But she can work so well as I can. She cooks . . . But she cannot talk so you can understand" (420). While Hatsy states this as a simple matter of fact without the derogatoriness of Benjy's caretakers, the false moral propriety of Lily's ladies, or the deceptions of He's mother, Ottilie has been made invisible, a nonentity who is not really part of the Muller family.

Porter draws our attention to space and gaze to describe Ottilie's marginalization within the family. Ottilie is not included at family affairs or at the dinner table—"no one moved aside for her, or spoke to her, or even glanced after her when she vanished into the kitchen" (415). She is the family's cook. Her bedroom is a "dingy bitter-smelling room, windowless, which opened off the kitchen, beside the closet where Hatsy took her baths" (425) and "where also were stored the extra chamber pots, slop jars, and water jugs" (421). Her windowless prison-like room with a "lumpy narrow cot" represents the invisible wall that divides her from the rest of the family.

Not only does Ottilie's silence and invisibility marginalize her, but the narrator also shares with us early on (long before she is aware of Ottilie's position in the house) that the Mullers are so clannish as to be like "one human being divided into several separate appearances" and that Ottilie "seemed to me the only individual in the house" (417). All of the Mueller's clan (with the exception of the mother and Ottilie) share the same slant grey eyes, flaxen hair, and supple bodies. Despite their immigrant status, these body descriptions are reminiscent of Hitler's Nazi regime where blond hair and blue eyes were considered to be desirable Ayran characteristics of the supreme form of human, or master race. The Mullers are a German patriarchal family where the Father Muller,

whose primary reading is *Das Kapital*, operates his economical power to sustain and build his family, keeping them and their offspring within the family house, refusing to understand why marriage should "take a son or daughter from him" (416). The labors of his offspring, and their spouses and children, contribute to his profits. As Titus points out, in the Muller family, "Milk is women's business, and money is men's in this story" (80).

While Ottile is rendered "invisible" by her family, she is the focal point of the narrator's gaze. The narrator's gaze evolves and yet fluctuates between seeing Ottilie as "whole and, belonged nowhere" (417) and other times as a victim, her face broken in "blackened seams as if the perishable flesh has been wrung in a hard cruel fist" (420). At first, the narrator projects what she thinks is Ottilie's suffering, and expresses a wish for her death "Let it be now, let it be *now*" (428) but then finds joyous freedom in Ottilie's differences by learning to look past Ottilie's physical disfigurements to notice some family resemblance behind her "mutilated face" such as the high cheekbones and the slanted water-blue eyes (420). The narrator understands that she and Ottilie share some similarities in their marginalized positions within the household. While the narrator never states why she needed to get away, the reader can surmise that she left behind a painful relationship before arriving at the Mullers' home.

The narrator's gaze and reflections compared to the rest of the family demonstrates a critique of male power and eugenics—those who are not useful to the patriarchal order or not marriageable are best to be placed out of sight or contained as not to disrupt the symbolic order. Titus states that the narrator and Ottilie are "alienated from the patriarchal [tradition], from its visual affiliations, its language, and its cycles of

marriage and parturition" (84). They are alienated, but are also controlled in terms of their actions within the Mullers' household. The fact that the narrator is positioned at the men's side of the dinner table as a "guest" as opposed to the women's side demonstrates symbolically her place under their watchful eye. Ottilie, who is "not marriageable" is kept out of sight in the kitchen, but is metaphorically contained within the domestic sphere to contribute to the Muller's capital and profits.

Porter subscribes animal-like descriptors to the Muller's able-bodied women in order to deflect and redirect the reader's gaze from Ottilie to the women in the household. Like Lily who observes Aimee Slocum's "bumps" on her face, Porter directs the reader's attention to the narrator's observation that the Mullers are not a reflective family and their days consist of doing the same daily chores. As Titus ingeniously observes, "the Muller's life is little different from animal life. It is physical, instinctive. The women in particular exist in a state of mental sleep, or half-waking" (80). For instance, she describes Gretchen, the family's favorite daughter, who "wore the contented air of a lazy, healthy young animal, seeming always about to yawn" (416), Hatsy who "shared the big-boned structure and the enormous energy and animal force that was like a bodily presence itself in the room" (416), and the mothers of the household as "devoted and caretaking as a cat with her kittens" (419). This deprecating gaze by the author/narrator towards the Mueller's women redirects the reader's attention away from Ottilie and toward Mueller's deficiencies.

Animal descriptions are also connected with Ottilie when the narrator dreams that she heard a dog howling, only to mistakenly realize it is Ottilie howling "without tears" (433). Fornataro-Neil adds her insights to this scene:

> Porter maintains a strong sense of mystery regarding Ottilie's true identity. Yet she does leave us with some interpretive space, some clue as to what Ottilie suffers due to her isolation and practical abandonment by her family. One possibility lies in the parallel established between Ottilie and an animal caught in a trap . . . Denied human status for so long, as well as the necessary love and affection, Ottilie has one overwhelming desire. She howls like an animal in a cage, expressing her desire to be free . . . Significantly, when the narrator later senses Ottilie's 'realness, her humanity,' she herself nearly howls like a grieving dog at the realization. (359)

Franataro-Neil's description of Ottilie as similar to an animal caught in a trap is excellent. Ottilie's symbolic situation parallels that of Lily Daw's as being objectified and "trapped like the hat thrown in the electric wires." Lily and Ottilie both exemplify disabled women trapped in a white-dominated, patriarchal, able-bodied society; they must be "institutionalized" whether it is at Jackson, in the home (or the kitchen), or in an unwanted marriage. However, I slightly differ from Fernataro-Neil's assessment of the narrator's experience in that it is not Ottilie's humanity that the narrator learns, but her own that she has projected onto Ottilie. The narrator's reflection of her own humanity

and growth depends on Ottilie (what David Mitchell and Sharon Synder would refer to as "narrative prosthesis"[11]).

While Ottilie is a working and contributing member of her family and not a "burden," she has for all intents and purposes been "obliterated" from her family's watchful eye. Like Benjy, she is a liminal figure and kept confined and contained within the Muller's institutional walls of silence and indifference. It does not matter to them that she is a human being with feelings. As she rests her head on the narrator's chest, she is no different from Lily who has lost all hope and hangs her head, from He who sheds a tear because His mother is sending him away and from Benjy who moans and grieves for the loss of Caddy's presence. As Truchan-Tataryn concludes, "Disability continues to be the scapegoat that is devalued, rejected and destroyed symbolically to purify society from its fear of sickness, pain, deviancy, and death" (172), but I believe that this is what the authors (as Benjy would phrase it) are *trying to say* and refute. Each of these characters' marginalization becomes one of performativity and subjectivity—readers at first see these disabled characters through other people's eyes, but ultimately it is the depth of the able-bodied characters' monstrosity that the readers come to understand and are finally left to confront.

Gaze and Space as a Literary Tool

Lennard Davis once said in his discussion of eugenics and genetics that "The body is never a single physical thing so much as a series of attitudes towards it" (271).

[11] The authors define "narrative prosthesis" to demonstrate how "disability has been used throughout history as a crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight" (49).

Davis' words ring true for the writers in this chapter who wrote about society's fears towards the "disabled" body. Eudora Welty shifts the meaning of "defective" to those who are doing the judging and shows that moral propriety is often more self-serving than not. Mary Austin discloses her ambivalence towards eugenics, exposing its flawed arguments while trying to live in a society whose negative views about disability did not provide her with the support she needed for her own daughter. Through the eyes of his character, Benjy, William Faulkner reveals families' and caretakers' prejudice and fear towards disability and race, and their ideas about the disabled child being a burden and an economic liability. Katherine Anne Porter provides an interesting parallel between "He" and "Holiday" that even when a disabled child is not a burden, society still treats disability as a "defect" and with indifference, a stance which refutes Huxley's argument that disability is an economic liability. Eugene O' Neill exposes the myths of eugenics and that imagination often outweighs biological heredity. We cannot control the future and begetting the "perfect" child does not necessarily bring happiness.

Eugenicists and their rhetoric marked disability and shamed it—words like fit, normal, degenerate, idiot, feeble-mindedness, defect, defective –all reinforced the idea that disability was something that needed to be contained, controlled, and eradicated. What O'Neill, Porter, Austin, Welty and Faulkner argue is that the key to able-bodied dominance as identity or ideology lies precisely in its ability to go uncommented. Able-body must be attended to, must be visible, in order to demystify and dismantle the pernicious works that eugenicists have sought to reify. By directing the gaze towards

able-bodied characters, these twentieth century writers provide a collective attempt to contest the national ideal body and complicate the concept of citizenship.

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Chapter 4: Institutionalization: Counter Discourses in London's "The Drooling Ward" and Porter's *Noon Wine*

This chapter will investigate narratives that complicate a straightforward reading of literary texts about institutionalization that was often premised on individuals with mental and sometimes physical differences who were classed as insane or "feebleminded" and institutionalized on that basis. My objective is to examine how American literary writers such as Katherine Anne Porter and Jack London expressed concerns about the institutionalization of people with disabilities in asylums in the U.S. in the early twentieth century. Both writers often characterized their main characters' institutionalization in terms of medical and legal abuses, abuses which were ultimately manifested on social, emotional, and physical levels. By writing in these terms, they portray the social and political policy as the cause of their characters' legal, medical, and personal misfortunes. For example, in London's "The Drooling Ward" (1910) the main character, who has been labeled as "feebleminded," uses the system that institutionalizes him to his own advantage while simultaneously showing the flaws and misconceptions that his medical team and society have of those with cognitive, intellectual, or mental disabilities.

Glenn Rohrer writes, "Literature has always been a rich source for human behavior . . . [and] has many advantages over using case studies about those with mental

disabilities" (xi). Rohrer argues that one of the major problems of case studies is that they are used to illustrate a diagnostic point, thus reducing the person studied to a one-dimensional point of view and often encouraging readers to "conform exactly to the current thinking regarding significant characteristics and labels" (xi). In contrast, he maintains that literature challenges the clear-cut difference between sanity and insanity, and inquires whether the concept of insanity should rest solely on the individual (xii). Margaret Price reminds us that madness/insanity/mental disability[12] as a theme in myth and literature has always dealt with people's response to their personal, social, and political environment; she argues that mental disability is deeply intertwined with social context rather than buried solely in an individual brain, and that what often gets lost in many of our academic analyses is the social in the psychosocial (304).

With this context in mind, my approach in this chapter to analyze the social context of mental disability in London's The "Drooling Ward" (1910) and Porter's *Noon Wine* (1937). I argue that in these stories, Porter and London present a counter narrative to contemporary representations of mental disability by emphasizing how American ideals of independence, productivity, and self-sufficiency have played a key role in shaping its negative attitudes towards those with disabilities.[13] More specifically, their respective stories blur the lines between sanity and insanity and underscore society's fear and disgust as a rationale for containment and control of people with intellectual disabilities.

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[12] "Mental Disability" for Price denotes mental illness as well as cognitive and intellectual disabilities.
[13] Thanks to Sarah Frances Rose for her ideas on disability and self-sufficiency. While her excellent dissertation titled *No Right to be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1850-1930*, focuses on public policy problems in terms of disability and disability rights during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, I found many of her ideas to be very useful in formulating my own work and analyses.

Throughout this chapter, I use "intellectual disability" to refer to those who were labeled prior and during the early twentieth century with terms such as "idiot," "imbecile," "feebleminded," "moron," and "defective" with the exception of when I am quoting or discussing an article or an excerpt from a story. I also use the word "resident" as opposed to terminology used at the time when these stories were published, such as "inmate" and "patient," to describe those who resided in the institutions or asylums. Although the terms I will be using are more reflective of a twenty-first-century understanding of disability, they also assign respect, value, and personhood to people with disabilities, a move also advanced by London's and Porter's stories.

A Brief History of the Asylum

According to historian Kim Nielsen, prior to the American Revolution, there was significant evidence to suggest that "unorthodox behaviors were simply part of everyday life. Unorthodox behavior was seen as a moral problem, one that was outside oneself and whose soul was being punished by God. Unless violent, those considered insane were accepted in society" (36). Mental illness was an individual, not a societal problem, to be handled by the family and not the State (Shatkin, slide #8). In fact, they were based upon the English principles that society had a communal responsibility to the poor and dependent (Shatkin, slide #9). In essence, many families in earlier times cared for their own disabled family members by keeping them in their own homes. Sometimes this type of aid depended on whether the family received what was called "indoor or outdoor relief" based on Poor Laws, which were developed in 1620. "Outdoor relief" meant that one could keep his/her independence and receive aid without leaving his/her home;

"indoor relief" referred to getting care in the almshouse. Meeting the eligibility of the Poor Laws was not easy. Many immigrants, prostitutes, alcoholics, people of color, and the general population who were poor through no fault of their own due to illness, accident, or age and were often categorized as part of the "undeserving poor" and denied assistance. Gradually American reformers tried to move those they considered the "undeserving poor" into almshouses or poorhouses.[14] These sites were in regular use by the end of the colonial period.

These institutions, their purposes, and what population they served changed from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century due to demographic shifts and industrialization, which led to population expansions in cities and an increasing number of sick and dependent persons. As a result, more asylums were built and its operational purposes changed. Kim Nielsen states that when Connecticut's first such asylum, for example, was established in 1727, its primary goal was to provide care or confinement, rather than diagnosis (37). Furthermore, well-established American asylums such as McLean (Boston), Bloomingdale (NYC), Butler (Providence), Pennsylvania Hospital (Philadelphia), and the Harford Retreat (Connecticut) "were set up for wealthy families who would not mix with racial and ethnic minorities, for whom almshouses remained the only place" (Shatkin, slide #15). "Insanity" as a catch-all term for mental, cognitive, and social differences did not emerge until scientists began to see mental illness as a "matter of faulty brain operation" (i.e., delirium, melancholy, nervous movements, speech, and excitability (Crowe, Dain 50 ff.; Ray 50 ff. qtd. in Newman 265). By the early half of the

[14] http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/edu/essay.html?id=60

nineteenth century, due to the wide and often ambiguous meanings attached to "insanity," asylum life rapidly became disorganized and the courts had no clear parameters for how to deal with issues of insanity. As a result, they set different standards for competence and different procedures for how to interact with the mentally ill, which often led to chaos and legal abuse. With foresight regarding this problem, Issac Ray published *A treatise on the Medical Jurisprudence of Insanity* (1838), which helped to provide the courts with categories for determining and standardizing legal insanity. Ray divided his subjects into two groups, "one with 'defective development of faculties' (idiocy and imbecility) and the other with 'lesion[s] of the faculties subsequent to their development (mania and dementia)' . . . both of which characterized insane individuals outside the norm and incapable of managing their own lives" (Newman 265).

As almshouses and urban streets became overcrowded, the poor and the insane fell under the jurisdiction of state asylums. So profoundly deficient were the conditions that Dorothea Dix, a political activist, while touring homes for the "indigent insane" in Massachusetts, was appalled at the conditions she found. In her 1843 "Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts" in which she advocated for improving appalling asylum conditions, she described the horrors she witnessed—"criminals, idiots, and the insane confined together, in 'cages, closets, cellars, stalls, pens! Chained, naked, beaten with rods, and lashed into obedience'" (Nielsen 70). She sought to liberate the intellectually disabled from these oppressive conditions and to provide therapies for those who were confined (Chapman et al. 5).

Interestingly, while advocating for the mentally ill, Dix also founded a school for the blind. Chris Chapman et al. state that Dix's diverse endeavors were intimately related—"They were all oriented by the concern that confinement be specialized. Undifferentiated confinement was now an injustice, but specialized confinement could educate and rehabilitate" (5). Consequently, different institutions were built to fit the needs of certain populations whether it was for the insane, the blind, or the deaf. Institutions for the intellectually disabled would come later in 1874. The New York Asylum for Idiots was the first one to be run by Hervey Wilbur. However, not all specialized institutions were geared to the true purpose of education. The true goal of education was sometimes ambiguous as disabled people were often not allowed to pursue a higher education but were provided instead with the opportunity to learn a trade, or the institution just simply warehoused them. Nielsen writes,

> The period from the Civil War until the 1890s is one in which disability became increasingly institutionalized . . . As in the United States and its citizens debated the human capacity for education, they also explored and disagreed over which people would have access to various forms of education . . . the management of disability became increasingly built into national structures. The population of asylums expanded, sometimes resulting in horrific experiences. At the same time, educational institutions led and staffed by people with disabilities expanded, creating rich spaces of disability culture, although they generally remained racially exclusive.

> Some institutions enriched lives, others caused devastation, and some did both. (98-99)

Despite inconsistencies among institutional living, disability advocates such as Samuel Gridley Howe, Hervey Wilbur, and their followers also began to argue that a certain population of "idiots" could be educated (Nielsen 71). Wilbur and Howe believed that the state had an "imperative duty" to "help such citizens"; the belief was that with a proper education and means of training, "idiots" or the "feebleminded" could be integrated into the community (Nielsen 71-72). Unfortunately, during the 1860's and 1870s, industrialization and policymakers' fears of hereditary public dependency doomed many advocates' "efforts to return their [intellectually disabled] students to their families and fundamentally altered the direction of state funded idiot asylums" (Rose 320). Sarah Frances Rose writes, "By the dawn of the twentieth century, thousands of inmates were laboring in institutions for the feebleminded. Except in rare cases, inmates' work did not provide them with a path to release. Instead, their labor helped to defray the cost of their public dependency. The disabled, deserving poor had become burdensome, undeserving dependents" (320-321). As a result of this change, "the asylums often served as a rationale and a secure, temporary holding pen in the process of removing 'undesirables' from the nation" (Cary, Ben-Moshe, and Chapman xii). In this case, the "undesirables" were most often those who were intellectually, mentally, or cognitively disabled. They also pointed to those who were "paupers," criminals, and women.

While Issac Ray set the stage for distinguishing between insanity and "feebleminded" in 1838, the Third Annual Report of the State Board of Charities and Corrections, published in 1911 by Davis Bottom, further differentiated the two terms:

> In both insanity and feeble-mindedness there is present this inability to adjust one's self as a whole to one's environment. 'Insanity is a disease or disturbance of the intellectual areas of the brain which is marked by derangement, partial or complete, of the mental faculties; . . . Feeble-mindedness is a state of mental defect from birth, or from an early age, due to incomplete cerebral development . . . The distinction between insanity and feeble-mindedness is the difference between a disease and a defect. While a predisposition to insanity is hereditary, insanity is not inherited; it is not congenital; people are never born insane. On the contrary, feeble-mindedness, as a rule, is inherited; it may be congenital; people are born feeble-minded . . . So insanity is a disease of certain brain cells, and, therefore, curable. Feeble-mindedness is caused by the absence at birth or the destruction soon afterwards of certain brain cells and is, therefore, incurable. (12)

Whether a person was insane or "feebleminded," he or she often endured a long history of condescension, suspicion, and exclusion. The fact that the "feeblemindedness" was considered a "defect" and "incurable" added a threat to the nation's consciousness. According to James Trent, the concept that people with intellectual disability posed a public threat "began to penetrate American consciousness" by the First World War (141).

The slogan "menace of the feebleminded" became more widespread due to the growing influx of immigrants at the time and the association with immigrants from certain countries as being of inferior stock.

In 1912, Henry H. Goddard, the author of *The Kallikak Family* lent support to this growing fear of defective strangers by giving the Binet tests to immigrants on Ellis Island. He reported that 40 to 50 percent of immigrants were feebleminded; while the general population was astounded by the data, many were prepared to believe the well-known author (Trent 168). The rhetoric of "the menace of the feebleminded" soon gave way to the authority of medical superintendents in the third decade. The medical superintendents moved away from eugenics to emphasize mental hygiene—it was one of several ways that they could receive legislative appropriations and promote sterilizations among the residents as a means of control and dealing with institutional overpopulation. Trent writes, "Popular attitudes about mental deficiency, cultivated by superintendents and their supporters, convinced prosperous parents not only that having a defective mind in the family was stressful but also that to deal with the stress, families had best give up their defective family member and be silent about it" (188).

The institutional population in 1904 was 14,347; by 1923, the population rose to nearly 43,000 (Trent 188). Because of crowded institutions and high demand, by 1925, most mental institutions were creating colonies and enforcing parole (Trent 214). After 1933, during the depth of the Depression, many superintendents did not insist on sterilizing every inmate, but instead sterilized only those who were ready for discharge (Trent 215). Licia Carlson points out that "feeblemindedness" was considered incurable,

hopeless and dangerous (high-grades were a danger to society, and low-grades were in danger from society) (44). Within the institutional walls, "low-grades were often given futile tasks to keep them busy, while the work performed by the high-grades served the purposes of the institution" (Carlson 45). In short, education was often directed at institutional adaption, not at acquiring skills for working out in the community.

Twentieth-century linkage between citizenship and normativity became at least an underlying, if not an overarching, theme in the residents' lives. Within the institutional walls, they "were subjected to the expert's normalizing gaze," which controlled and classified them (Carlson 46). Furthermore, the pursuit of normalization by the medical community and society – or even the illusion of normality –carried over to other individuals who were deaf, blind, polio survivors, or mentally disabled. Anne Finger, who is a polio survivor, describes the "normalizing and controlling process" well in her memoir, "I am struck by how often the media representations of disabled people seem to keep us confined; not just inside buildings, but our bodies themselves contained" (69).

"Noon Wine" and "The Drooling Ward"

The following sections examine how Porter's *Noon Wine* and London's "The Drooling Ward" *counter and complicate* early twentieth-century ideologies of Darwinism, eugenics, or marketplace ethics that were often used to mark, stigmatize, and justifying placing those with mental disabilities in asylums, and to reinforce and reaffirm the local community's censure of and fears about mental disability. Where London looks at intellectual/cognitive disability and the infrastructure of a mental institution, Porter

centers her story on mental disabled characters and a farm that been created in the façade of a mental asylum.

Both stories posit that the diagnoses of disability are too frequently inaccurate, and that normalcy and craziness are relative terms that create unnecessary social mistreatment and misjudgment. More specifically, Porter uses her "able-bodied" characters such Mr. Hatch and the Thompsons to reinforce the concept of normativity as being a relative and shaky one; in London's story, Tom, who calls himself a proud "feeb," parodies the doctors, nurses, and the "outside" world. He maintains that he, not the doctors and nurses, has the upper hand in determining his status and that he deserves to be treated with respect for his unique skills in working with the droolers in the asylum. Furthermore, both authors use the concept of disability in their respective stories to deconstruct the hierarchies between the "fit" and the "unfit" while ultimately rejecting the validity of the link between physical/mental wholeness and normativity. The fact that Porter and London uproot the stigmatization of disability and make readers examine it glaringly in all its subtleties is a tribute to their observations and sensitivity.

"The Drooling Ward": The Normalizing Gaze

"The Drooling Ward" was written late in Jack London's career, 1914, and collected in *The Turtles of Tasman* (1916). A 28-year-old narrator named Tom tells the story. He calls himself a self-styled high-grade "feeb," short for feebleminded, and believes himself to be better than the droolers he cares for and the conceited "epilecs" who live in a separate ward. He narrates about two different events in his life when he left the hospital. The first time was when he was adopted by a couple who owned a ranch.

Under the couple's supervision, he was forced to work incessantly, was beaten by the man, and was not allowed to go near the children. He escaped and returned to the hospital. The second time he ran away with two "epilecs" and a drooler to the mountains. Because they were without necessary provisions for survival and were afraid of the dark, they retreated and headed back to the institution. He concludes that the institution is "home" and his favorite area within the hospital is the drooling ward. He plans to stay for the duration of his life with the hope that he may someday be further recognized for his expert skills with the droolers and have an opportunity to marry one of the nurses.

According to the American Academy of Developmental Medicine[15] and the National Register of Historic Places in Sonoma County[16] where London's protagonist, Tom, resided, such an institution existed and was close to the Jack London Ranch in Glen Ellen, California. There is no extra information that explains why London wrote about the mental institution or whether he had visited the place, but it is obvious that he was very aware of the establishment. The Home was first privately founded in Vallego in 1883 "to provide and maintain a school and asylum for the feebleminded, in which they may be trained to usefulness."[17] The institution was taken over by the State two years after its founding. During the years from 1918 until 1949, over five thousand residents were involuntarily sterilized. It was first named the California Home for the Care and Training of Feebleminded Children. After that, the institution relocated its residents to Santa Clara, just south of Glen Ellen. It has undergone three name changes since then, to

[15] https://aadmd.org/articles/jack-londons-told-drooling-ward
[16] http://noehill.com/sonoma/nat2000001180.asp
[17] http://noehill.com/sonoma/nat2000001180.asp

the Sonoma State Home in 1909, to Sonoma State Hospital in 1953, and then finally, to Sonoma Developmental Center in 1986. Ed Davis, a former tech worker at the institution during the early 1970s, published his experience in a fictional account, *All Things: A Return to the Drooling Ward* (2014),[18] confirming many of the abuses as well as the care given to many of the residents prior to and during his two-year residency at the Sonoma institution. Davis provides insights into the hierarchy of the mental hospital that London's narrator lived in and how the site was a world in itself apart from mainstream society. He states that when the institution was first called the "Home for the Feeble Minded," those who lived there were referred to as "inmates"; then in the succeeding decades, "patients" became "residents," and then "clients" (2).

While the institution has a place in the nation's cultural memory, the "Home" within London's story also has special significance for Tom. He calls it "Home" when mainstreamed society would regard it as an institution. He tells the reader, "I know the world, and I don't like it. The Home is fine enough for me" (225). Tom, who is speaking as an insider, insists that the Home is for the feebleminded and not for the insane. With a sense of pride as if to educate the reader and minimize the troublesome label of feeblemindedness, Tom narrates, "Nobody's crazy in this institution. They're just feeble in their minds" (224). Tom paints his inner world at the Home as an effective operation where specific residents were given jobs to keep the institution running smoothly. This observation confirms an early contention by Licia Carlson who described the inner

[18] There are a couple of contradictions in Davis' book. The author claims the book is fictional; however, it reads more like a memoir of his past experiences at the institution. He states, "What we observe every day shapes who we are and how we behave, so seeing both the outside and inside of things, though often uncomfortable, is vital." Yet the story is narrated from his perspective. Nowhere in the book do we have the residents' point of view.

workings of the institution "where disciplinary techniques were employed to make "inmates" productive (44). The following are excerpts from the story that exemplify the type of interactions and thoughts that Tom has about his own position as an "expert" under the staff's normalizing gaze, and how Tom's comic tones work to shift the "gaze" away from him towards the medical staff:

1) Miss Jones says I'm an expert. (224)

2) Dr. Dalrymple says I am, and he ought to know. (224)

3) Mr. Dalrymple says I'm too smart to be in the Home. (224)

4) Miss Kelsey says I talk too much. (224)

5) Miss Kelsey called me a fool the other day. (225)

6) Miss Kelsey asked me why I don't write a book about feebs. (225)

7) Only yesterday Doctor Dalrymple said to me, 'Tom . . . I just don't know what I'd do without you.' (225)

8) I heard Miss Jones tell Miss Kelsey once that I had an amazing gift in handling droolers. (227)

9) Doctor Wilson was mad as could be, and said I was the worst feeb in the institution, along with Joe and Charley. But Miss Striker . . . just put her arms around me and cried, she was that happy that I'd got back. (230)

Interestingly, while Tom is doing all the talking, the various examples above effectively encourage readers to shift their attention to the nurses and doctors, and how they are interacting with Tom. While the medical staff seems to genuinely care for Tom, they also often refer to his level of intelligence and expertise as if to "normalize" him, making him

almost a one-dimensional character. They treat him like a child. Readers never forget that the nurses and doctors are in charge. In contrast, the quirky narration by Tom about his own self-perceived work status helps the reader to shift from perceiving Tom as defective and incurable to being educable, productive, and even willful and sneaky. Tom's description of his institutional life complicates the often medical (diagnostic) view of disability in a way that catches the reader off guard, because it is a seemingly contented resident, not a medical practitioner, who tells the story.

In comparison to Porter who is the extradiegetic narrator throughout *Noon Wine* (to be discussed in the next section), London remains "aloof" until he makes an "appearance" at the end of "The Drooling Ward." When Tom, Joe and Charley ("two epileps"), and little Albert (a drooler) run away to the mountains to find a gold mine, they encounter two people, a man and a woman, on horseback. Tom recognizes Mr. Endicott as the man who "owns a ranch and writes books" (229). Graham writes of the Endicotts, "Obviously this is London, and the woman, we suppose is Charmian [London's wife]" (431-432). When Tom tells the Endicotts that he, Joe, Charley, and Albert are running away, the couple is amused. They laugh and offer parting words: "But watch out the bears and mountain lions don't get you when it gets dark" (229). That night Charley and Joe "throw fits" due to fear of wild predators and the dark (229). When the horrible night is over, Tom leads the group back to the Home the next day.

Of this scene, Graham states that besides being a "literary joke," the couple serves "a more serious purpose in that they seem to represent the unfeeling attitude towards the feebleminded held by the general populace" (Graham 432). While I agree with Graham's

observations that London is a master of comic tones, there's more to the scene than meets the eye. In literary works, most disabled characters are typecast as being on the periphery of society, literally and figuratively. In the above scene, the Home, not the outside surroundings, is central to Tom and his fellow residents' lives. The Endicotts on horseback are associated with the wildness of the mountain terrain. When Tom addresses Mr. Endicott with a polite "How do you do, Mr. Endicott," he is physically looking down at him (229). While Tom is respectful, the Endicotts are tactless. While it seems that the Endicotts with their freedom and indifferent attitudes have the upper hand, London mocks his own character by having Tom talk down to him in a literal fashion. In this sense, London complicates what we know about disability by criticizing or undercutting himself and the society he represents by giving Tom the upper position. Thus, London's work asks questions similar to those that Porter's asks, such as "what informs society's perceptions of the disabled individual? What social implications do these perceptions have when someone is from a mental institution or an asylum? Ed Davis, in his semi-fictional account of his experience as a worker at the Home during the 1970s, indirectly answers these questions:

> Boys and girls, men and women, young and old were sent to "The State Home" to live their lives apart. It was simply understood that they needed a place where the *abnormal was normal*, where their unusual needs could be met, where they would be safe. All that was true. It was equally true that their separate world was created as much for our peace of mind and

> protection as for their safety. And in that separate world there was little to protect them from us. (my emphasis; 3)

The phrase "abnormal is normal" seems particularly relevant to Tom because he regards himself as a "high-grade feeb," one who holds a "job" within the institution and anticipates "marriage." Davis' last sentence (albeit a powerful one) explains and complicates how London's story works to make the distinction that while Tom has created a "working title" (for himself) in the institution, his social identity and sense of security are dependent on the dominant medical system that houses and feeds him. His labor helps to keep the institution running, but it is the doctors and nurses who are in charge in part because their diagnoses keep Tom in the institution.

J. David Smith, in his review of London's story, argues that the panoply of etiologies often associated with mental disabilities is illustrative of reductionism and the power of typology thinking (359). Citing R. Luckasso et al. (1992), Smith further contends that "while the AAMR (American Association of Mental Retardation) delineated more than 350 causes of mental disabilities, the list did not take into account the varying degrees and specific types of disabilities associated with these etiologies" nor that mental disability should be a term "used to describe an aggregation of diverse human circumstances" (359). By having Tom tell his story, London shifts the reader's gaze from the medical establishment's overgeneralized etiology of disability to Tom's inside knowledge and expertise. Tom ranks himself and his fellow residents according to their levels of accomplishment and status. For instance, at the story's beginning, Tom

introduces and separates himself from the droolers to establish his standing within the institution:

> Me? I am not a drooler. I am the assistant. I don't know what Miss Jones or Miss Kelsey could do without me. There are fifty-five low-grade droolers in this ward and how could they ever be all fed if I wasn't around? I like to feed droolers. They don't make trouble. They can't. Something's wrong with most of their legs and arms, and they can't talk. They're very low-grade. I can walk, and talk, and do things. (223-224)

For London's narrator, at the bottom are the droolers, of which there are two sub-groups, micros and hydros. In the middle are the "feebs," low and high-grade. On the top level are the high and low-grade "epileps." To Tom, the low-grade epileps are disgusting and the high-grade ones are arrogant. He is the expert and can categorize the residents easily:

> Do you know what a micro is? It's the kind with the little heads no bigger than your fist. They're usually droolers, and they live a long time. The hydros don't drool. They have the big heads, and they're smarter. But they never grow up. They always die. I never look at one without thinking he's going to die. (225)

By having Tom group the "feebs" into simple and fixed categories, London makes evident not only the hierarchies among the residents, but also the recognition that our perception of individuals with different cognizant skills and mental abilities will vary and is arbitrary. Tom's version (as opposed to that of the medical realm) about their intelligence or lifespan adds to their humanity; to put this another way, although he

employs the cataloguing practice of medical science, Tom does provide information about each individual that goes beyond disability labels. We also have Tom's version of how he sees himself and how his opinion may differ comparatively from the AAMR's classifications of intellectual disabilities.

Don Graham observes that the "story systematically inverts the sane/crazy distinctions made by 'normal' people outside the Home" by paradoxically revealing the way society tends to view disability in terms of disgust, fear, and dependency; he ingeniously argues that the "Home" is both a microcosm of the larger world and a parodic reversal of that world (430). Several scenarios within the story support Graham's observations. When the Bopp family adopts Tom, they physically and mentally abuse him. They force him sleep in the woodshed, keep him working at all hours of the day, and poke fun of him (the children pelt him with rocks and call him "looney"). Tom, tongue in cheek, contrasts his experiences amid the Bopps with the Home environment: "You never see anything like that in the Home here. The feebs are better behaved" (226). Tom's humorous comment serves several purposes: while society assumes that individuals with disabilities are not following the norms and therefore are misbehaving and in need of correcting, London marks the Bopps family's ableism and cruelty as a form of misbehavior that needs to be addressed and fixed. Tom is aware that he is an outcast in society, but at the hospital, he fits in. Inside the institution, Tom finds security and work he likes, and his contributions hold value for those in charge. Outside the institution, at the Bopps, he is physically abused and has to work in isolation.

The sane/crazy distinction is also parodied in the behavior of the high-grade girls who set the tables in the big dining hall:

> Do you want to know what they talk? It's like this. They don't say a word for a long time. And then one says, 'Thank God I'm not feeble-minded.' And all the rest nod their heads and look pleased. And then nobody says anything for a time. After which the next girl in the circle says, 'Thank God I'm not feeble-minded,' and they nod their heads all over again. And it goes on around the circle, and they never say anything else. Now they're real feebs, aren't they? I leave it to you. I am not that kind of a feeb, thank God. (224-225)

In both situations, Tom mocks mainstream society and the microcosm of it that the institution represents. Both worlds have incorporated the fear and stigma of disability and Otherness into their belief system. However, Tom's exclamation, "I am not that kind of feeb, thank God" mimics the attitude of the high-grade girls' that he derides. He tells the reader, "I don't look like a drooler, do I? You can tell the difference as soon as you look at me. I'm an assistant, expert assistant . . . I am a high-grade feeb. Dr. Dairymple says I'm too smart to be in the Home, but I never let on . . . And I don't throw fits like a lots of the feebs" (224). Later, he adds, "I could get out of here if I wanted to. I'm not so feeble as some might think. But I don't let on . . . My mouth is funny, I know that, and it lops down, and my teeth are bad . . . But that doesn't prove I'm a feeb. It's just because I'm lucky that I look like one" (225). He also tells the reader, "I don't think I am a feeb at all. I play in the band and read music. We're all supposed to be feebs in the band except the

leader. He's crazy. We know it, but we never talk about it except amongst ourselves" (225).

These various humorous remarks are riddled with contradiction; the contradictions impart how medical and scientific practice often tends to classify various disabilities, and how physical appearances are often presumed to be direct manifestations of a disabled person's level of mental capabilities. To pry himself away from society and the medical profession's "normalizing gaze," Tom uses his narration to distinguish himself from the other "feebs" and establish his own uniqueness. The fact that Tom constantly confuses the reader about the extent of his disabilities/abilities subverts assumptions about how we "diagnose" individuals according to disability categories provided by the medical establishment. Such contradictions challenge the readers to look at the creation of stereotypes, which often find medical justification in the classifications of scientists and doctors, and the damages that they can evoke in our attitudes towards disabilities; the incongruities also push us to question why we often feel the need to "label" the disabled population in ways that are rhetorically more harmful than good.

As a case in point, London does not objectify Tom or make his character inspirational. Instead, London describes Tom as a master manipulator of getting out of unwanted tasks or difficult circumstances. One such situation is when Miss Kelsey (a nurse) asks him to do a task, and he responds by acting like a low-grade drooler. He tells the reader, "And I know a lot of foolish noises. Miss Kelsey called me a fool the other day. She was angry and that was where I fooled her" (225). Tom describes a similar scenario with the Bopps. He says, "Mrs. Bopp used to pinch me and pull my hair when

she thought I was too slow, and I only made foolish noises and went slower" (226). In his desperation to leave the Bopps family, he explains, "I waited a long time, and got slower, and made more foolish noises, but [Mr. Bopp] wouldn't send me back to the Home, which is what I wanted. But one day . . . Mrs. Brown gave me three dollars, which was for her milk bill with Peter Bopp. [I used the milk receipt] to buy a ticket . . . and rode on the train back to the Home" (227). Tom's ability to master these various activities effectively demonstrates how society (or the Bopps in this case) can underestimate the abilities of disabled people.

Despite Tom's cleverness, there are indications that institutional life is not all that it is made out to be. Tom fantasizes that if the medical staff were to openly recognize his abilities, he could have a "normal" life:

> Some day mebbe, I can going to talk with Doctory Darlymple and get him to give me a declaration that I ain't a feeb. Then I'll get him to make me a real assistant in the drooling ward, with forty dollars a month and my board. And then I'll marry Miss Jones and live right on here. And if she won't have me, I'll marry Kelsey or some other nurse. There's lots of them that want to get married. (227)

Tom's narration is peppered with contradictions, particularly in relation to marriage. While Tom certainly understands marriage as a cultural value, he does not seem to recognize the values (i.e., love) that undergird marriage. He is aware that "feebs" are not allowed to get married and states in his observations of the doctors' marital problems, that "being married ain't what it's cracked up to be" (226). He continues to naively

express his desire to marry one of the nurses someday (226, 227, 230). He does not appear to understand or see marriage as a contract between equals or that one of the women might not want to marry him. He thinks putting up with a wife won't be any worse than putting up with the droolers. Because of his disability status, he will never be allowed to marry. The institution that appears to encourage him also oppresses him.

Underlying most of Tom's narration is London's use of comic tones. London's humor works as a narrative technique that forces the reader to take an observer's role looking into the cosmic world of Tom's experience, both inside and outside the institution in which he lives. This narrative distance does away with sentimentalizing or infantilizing Tom's disability and instead provides an evaluative tool for revealing and complicating the relationships that Tom has with the medical staff and his society. For London, then, humor and fiction provide uniquely enabling techniques through which to think about literary representations of disability by re-directing the gaze from Tom towards his caregivers and his fellow residents, as well as people from outside the institution.

By re-directing the gaze through humor and irony, Tom's narration discloses a more serious issue, the able-bodied characters' stigmatizing, paternalistic, and/or normalizing attitudes towards him. This re-direction also paradoxically allows the reader to see the narrator as much more than his disability. Through Tom's eyes and interactions, we discover that he can be willful, sneaky, contradictory, naïve, perceptive, and very aware of what he needs to do to survive and the kind of social environment that works for him. We also learn that Tom himself is unfamiliar with the concept of

marriage, because his twentieth century institutional world and society do not allow him to have that experience.

As a counter-narrative towards early twentieth-century fiction, London's story affords a complex picture of Tom's impairment illustrating that intellectual disability cannot be truly classified/labeled, because similar impairments will result in different diagnoses and different cultural implications among individuals. Furthermore, disablement in society does not lie intrinsically within the disabled persons themselves but in world that tries to segregate, control and contain them.

Noon Wine: Insanity as a Mobile Signifier

As exemplified with London's story, Porter's *Noon Wine*[19] (1937) also reads as a complex portrayal of ability and disability, and the slipperiness of defining them. This slipperiness works as a counter narrative to the discourse on mental disability and institutionalization, because it complicates the meaning of "what is disability?" What makes one person's "deficiency" a disability and another person's not? While engaging

[19] Katherine Anne Porter's *Noon Wine* is a partial tale about a man, Mr. Olaf Helton, who escaped from an asylum in North Dakota and finds a job at the Thompsons' run-down farm in sweltering South Texas. Royal Earle Thompson is a proud bigot who has let his dairy farm go to seed. He has no real interest in the daily workings of the farm, is clueless about Mr. Helton's past in the asylum, and is willing to leave women's work to his newly hired hand. Mr. Helton soon becomes an invaluable worker and the farm prospers under his hard work and guidance. Later, when Mr. Homer Hatch, a bounty hunter, shows up, he tells Mr. Thompson that he is harboring a lunatic who escaped from an asylum after killing his brother over a lost harmonica. Since both men want Mr. Helton (Mr. Thompson to keep him and Mr. Hatch to take him back to the asylum), tension escalates between them. In a quick motion of rage, confusion, and fear when Mr. Thompson thinks he sees the bounty hunter going after Mr. Helton with a knife, he kills Mr. Hatch with an ax. Mr. Thompson, in his attempt to prove his "innocence," is ostracized by his community and family, and eventually commits suicide. Mr. Helton is later apprehended and killed by the sheriff 's posse when he tries to flee from the farm.

with these questions may not have been Porter's primary goal when she wrote *Noon Wine,* she was very aware of the stigmatization towards people with disabilities in her time. She wrote two other stories--"He" (1927) and "Holiday" (1920)—in which a misunderstood disabled character is the focus. Her characters Mr. Helton, He, and Ottilie are all disabled and marginalized figures that help to keep the machinery of their homesteads running, whether in the field, the barn, or the kitchen. Porter's He is sent to an asylum when he is sick (due in large part to the family's insensitivity) and becomes a financial burden to his family, whereas Mr. Helton runs away from the asylum and turns out to be an indispensable and invaluable worker on the Thompsons' family farm. While He and Mr. Helton's characters are often described and viewed in terms of their differences, Ottilie is ignored and contained within the Muller's institutional household walls of silence and indifference. The three short stories thus complicate the concept of the American breadbasket (the image of the stalwart American farmer providing food to the nation) because disability in her time was (and still is) often equated with dependency. Citizens with disabilities were labeled as inferior individuals and positioned in direct contrast to American ideals of independence and autonomy (Nielsen xiii). They were often viewed as lives not worth living (under negative eugenics) or individuals who needed to be institutionalized (out of sight and out of mind), so that society could put their fears about disability to rest.

Along with "Holiday" written in the 1920s (and completed in later years) and "He" published in 1927, *Noon Wine* (1937) is a complex disability narrative because of the ambiguous ways in which disability is portrayed. To illustrate, Mr. Helton is

characterized as a taciturn man, whose silence can be read in multiple ways—that is, reserved, impolite, odd, and troublesome. The question becomes, is he crazy? Does he have a mental disability? Or is he a sane man who has a quick temper that makes him crazy? How are we or the Thompsons to understand his special attachment to his harmonica, an attachment so strong that he will kill his brother for losing one and refusing to replace it? Or when he stops to pick up his harmonicas when trying to escape the sheriff and his men? How do we know the difference between a congenital mental disability and a flash of anger so extreme that it makes him "lose his head" and murder someone? Mr. Helton's reserved nature and the narrative viewpoint do not give us the chance to "know" him. Instead, we see him only through the Thompsons' eyes, with each of them holding (and representing) their respective prejudicial views.

Moreover, Mr. Helton is not always a figure of disability.[20] In fact, in terms of his physical ability, he is the most able person on the farm, making it run efficiently and profitably. There seems to be a conundrum where the characters cannot mark him as someone who needs or should be "institutionalized" because the Thompsons need his physical prowess. This is why Mr. Hatch is so threatening to Mr. Thompson: he's a bounty hunter who has been sent to take Mr. Helton back to the asylum, yet Mr. Helton is the central driving force in maintaining the farm, and the source of the Thompsons'

[20] Porter, in her book *On Writing*, discusses how *Noon Wine* came into being and how she understands her characters. Of Mr. Helton, she writes, "Mr. Helton is, by his madness, beyond good and evil, his own victim as well as the victim of others" (480). I find it interesting that she refers to his "disability" as "madness" because we see also "madness" manifesting in various ways within her other characters such as Mr. Thompson and Mr. Hatch. Yet, she does not use the word "madness" to describe them. So how does Porter truly classify "madness"? In another statement, Porter writes, ". . . Helton too, the Victim in my story, is also a murderer, with the dubious innocence of the madman; but no less a shedder of blood" (478). Here she recognizes that Helton's madness may be questionable, yet she makes him accountable for what he has done.

livelihood. Without him, they can't run the farm, and Mr. Thompson does a very Helton-like thing (if Helton really did kill his brother years before) when he imagines Mr. Hatch stabbing Mr. Helton and consequently stabs Mr. Hatch in return, killing him. At that point, it becomes even more unclear who is the crazy man with the violent streak.[21]

How Porter frames the story allows us to see the above ambiguities that lie behind the societal construct of disability, especially at the time when she wrote the story. Framing a story not only gives us boundaries in which to analyze a piece of literary work, but it can also be a form of emotional and psychological power that holds the story together and permits the reader to evaluate, reevaluate, and define its effectiveness. Framing is a literary tool that allows us to discuss the main narrative of the story and our response to that narrative. While Porter allows the reader into the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, and often interjects some of her own authorial voice when describing Mr. Helton and his actions, this choice of framing permits the reader to study the Thompsons' reactions to (and interactions with) Mr. Helton over time. Yet Porter never explains Mr. Helton's choices or his consciousness. Batey states that Porter leaves Mr. Helton's history obscure for a good reason—"His past is locked away from the Thompsons and from the reader by the farmhand's impenetrable loneliness, the wall he has erected between himself and the world" (229).

What makes Mr. Helton operate narratively as a disabled figure is not what is explicitly wrong with him, but rather how his life and body are appropriated by the Thompsons' dominant view of him as flawed (i.e., he does not talk, or at least, not much)

[21] Thanks to Dr. Debra Moddelmog for her insights.

and in need of regularization (thus, they try to engage him at the table and to invite him to church). However, because of his invaluable contribution to the farm, they perceive his differences less often over time and eventually come to regard him with acceptance. In the absence of a label, they do not mark him as a disabled person until Mr. Hatch shows up. Without the social cues to regard him as a disabled individual, they not only have him to run the farm, but they also work with him. In this light, Porter's story raises more questions of "Does labeling someone as crazy actually make them crazy? When do oddities, obsessions, or differences cross the line and become a disability? Or more important, when does the story depict that they do? Are Mr. Helton's differences a 'mirror' to the Thompson's and their deficiencies?"

In my attempts to answer the questions I have posed, I discuss in the following pages how (mis)perceptions in Porter's story operate to counter and complicate our reading and understanding of "disability" through the physical/metaphorical space of the Thompson's farm, and the family's reaction to and interaction with Mr. Helton. And then finally, I discuss how Porter creates the Thompson farm as a bedlam of an asylum to counter the animalistic/human dichotomies that were often fueled during early twentieth century literature.

When Mr. Helton, a Swede, escapes from an asylum that has imprisoned him for 15 years to Mr. Thompson's homestead, the farm metaphorically becomes another asylum for Mr. Helton. As the "gatekeepers" of this asylum, the Thompsons keep their distance from the "foreigner" and what they consider to be his oddities, and he is relegated to the barn and field, with the exception at mealtimes. Mr. Thompson treats Mr.

Helton as a “feminine character” where he is all too happy to give Mr. Helton what he considers to be “women’s work,” preferring to go to town and tipple at the local tavern. Mrs. Thompson, who is central to the household, is an invalid. Cynthia Barounis states that “The Darwinian logic of the traditional frontier narrative places the male in harsh conditions; it is the fittest who survive, the ablest bodies that endure” (389). Yet, in Porter’s story (again, another one of her many ironies and ways in which she complicates the concept of disability), Mr. Helton, a liminal figure and an escaped “lunatic” who is relegated to the barn and field, is the model of steadiness and sobriety, and one who reverses the fortune of the farm by his diligence and inventiveness.

Disability is often viewed as someone being “disabled,” the “problem child” that society needs to cure, erase, normalize, or hide. Here Porter shows that despite the Thompsons’ “normal” appearance and their status as Mr. Helton’s gatekeepers, they are more dysfunctional—Mr. Thompson is an inept farmer, Mrs. Thompson is physically sick, and the boys are undisciplined. Why does it matter? In many families/stories, the father is the bread earner. If he becomes sick or disabled, then the mother or some of the children often step in. But in Porter’s story, each of them has a "genuine" reason why they cannot make the farm productive. So they rely on Mr. Helton, the one person in the story who is supposedly (by society’s standards) a nonproductive member of society. In many ways, this unconventional view of disability is about the labor capacity of the disabled individual. The irony of the story is that Mr. Helton’s labor is what holds the family and the farm together--he repairs “the disorder” brought about by Mr. Thompson’s ineptness.

When Mr. Thompson kills Mr. Hatch, he becomes a central threat, both to his family and his community. The "order" that Mr. Helton provided is once more in disorder. Mr. Thompson is no longer seen as a sane person, but as a murderer. This perspective is particularly emphasized again within the physical space of the farmstead. For instance, when Mr. Thompson wakes up from a nightmare that disturbs Mrs. Thompson, the two boys, all grown up and "disciplined," come to their mother's rescue, but treat their father as if he were a danger to the family's safety. As a result, Mr. Thompson leaves the house and retreats "to the farthest end of his fields" to "the last fence" where he commits suicide (267-268). His isolation and marginalization mark him as "a stranger in a strange land." By first centering our attention on Mr. Helton, Porter ingeniously complicates our view of disability by later shifting our focus to Mr. Thompson whose marginalization (physically and metaphorically) eventually mirrors that of Mr. Helton's.

The Thompson's perceptions of Mr. Helton's identity and Otherness reflect their white, able-bodied positions and master narratives. The Thompsons and their white, normative position are what Toni Morrison refers to as the "sophisticated privileged space" (Nobel Lecture). Her concept of privileged space carries us towards rethinking the American Modernists' concept of selfhood, identity, and Otherness. In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison uses two distinct notions – presence and absence – as conceptual tools to both understand racism and to demonstrate how the looting of language can do violence to literature by limiting the knowledge that is being represented or given. She argues that the imaginative and historical terrains early American writers used to write about white

characters were shaped by what they created and wrote about black characters. Her goal as a writer is not to focus primarily on race *per se* or even its ideology, but rather to understand "the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it" (*PITD* 11). She advocates studying how literary whiteness and literary blackness are made, and discusses the consequences of those constructions. She states, "readers of virtually all of American fiction have been positioned as white" (xii). Through her analysis of various writers such as Poe, Cather, and Hemingway, Morrison illustrates the effect of that assumption on the literary imagination. For her, "the scholarship that looks into the mind, imagination, and behavior of slaves is valuable, but equally respected is a serious intellectual effort to see what racial ideology does to the mind, imagination, and behavior of masters" (11). Therefore, Master narratives must be scrutinized in order to understand how self, identity, and Otherness are being played out. Following this line of thought, Porter's literary style stretches the reader's understanding by showing how Mr. Helton's differences (defined by society's standards) make up for the Thompsons' "deficiencies"; in this way, the concepts of absence and presence are working interchangeably. Mr. Thompson as a white male in charge of his wife's dairy farm cares about his reputation and "lets his behavior be dictated by community standards of propriety" (Batey 234). Thus, Mr. Helton's work ethic compensates for Mr. Thompson's indolence and his stereotypical and sexist views of what he sees as women's work and their "partnership" allows the farm to run more profitably. This is one of the ways in which Porter complicates her story, because it is Mr. Thompson whom we view as limited, not the "disabled" Mr. Helton.

Porter further complicates the meaning of disability within the story by describing the Thompson's reactions to what they call Mr. Helton's "oddities"; their reaction to him mirrors in many ways their own dysfunctional behaviors. When Mr. Helton first approaches Mr. Thompson for a job and tells him that he is a Swede, Mr. Thompson takes the Swedish Helton for Irish, miscategorizing him "by his long upper lip" (223) and his strange drawling voice that waved slowly up and down with the emphasis in the wrong place (225). Mr. Thompson, sensing that a bargain is at hand, tries to disguise his dislike for spending money and becomes "very hearty and jovial" (224). In contrast, Mr. Helton "never had looked at Mr. Thompson, but there wasn't anything sneaking in his eye, either. He didn't seem to be looking anywhere else. His eyes sat in his head and let things pass by them" (223). On one hand, Mr. Thompson superimposes his own stereotypical views about foreigners onto Mr. Helton. (This act ironically foreshadows a later action when Mr. Hatch assumes that Mr. Thompson is Irish and questions his Americanism.) On the other hand, Mr. Helton does not base his perceptions on what he sees, but goes by his own intuition: "He just clumped down his big square dusty shoes one after the other steadily, like a man following a plow, as if he knew the place well and knew where he was going and what he would find there" (222).

Mrs. Thompson, who is the invalid and a disabled member of the family is often described lying down with green shades drawn at all hours of the day, also misperceives and misjudges Mr. Helton. At first, Mrs. Thompson complains about Mr. Helton's aloofness at the dinner table -- "the pallor of his eyebrows and hair, his long, glum jaw and eyes that refused to see anything . . . " (236). Later, as Mrs. Thompson tries to invite

Mr. Helton to church, she is "almost frightened at his face. The pale eyes seemed to glare past her, the eyebrows frowned, the long jaw hardened. 'I got work,' he said bluntly, and lifting his pitchfork he turned from her and began to toss the hay" (237).

While Mr. Helton's reticence is disconcerting to the Thompsons, their most-often voiced complaint is that he does not talk. Mrs. Thompson first observes, "Now here was Mr. Helton, who was a Swede, who wouldn't talk, and who played the harmonica besides" (228). Later to Mr. Thompson, she expresses disapproval of Mr. Helton, "He's not polite, that's the only thing I've got against him. He just can't seem to behave like other people. You'd think he had a grudge against the world. I sometimes don't know what to make of it" (237). A disgruntled Mrs. Thompson complains, "It's like sitting down at the table with a disembodied spirit"; Mr. Thompson replies, "Let him alone. When he gets ready to talk, he'll talk" (236). But Porter narrates, "The years passed, and Mr. Helton never got ready to talk" (236). Because of Mr. Helton's invaluable contribution to the family's farm, they learn to ignore what they term his eccentricities, and they abandon their efforts to modify his behavior. He is allowed to eat at the family table and "be treated like a white man," but he either quickly returns to his chores or plays the same mournful tune on his harmonica. To rationalize Mr. Helton's silence, Mrs. Thompson tells Mr. Thompson, "I think it's a mighty good change to have a man round the place who knows how to work and keep his mouth shut. Means he'll keep out of our business. Not that we've got anything to hide, but it's convenient" (232).

As the Thompsons lose their sense of Mr. Helton as "Other," they begin to view him as "the hope and the prop of the family" (241), cease "to regard him as in any way

peculiar" (241), see him "as a good man and a good friend" (241), and assume he is "like one of the family" (255). Stout remarks:

> Helton is so unobtrusive that they easily become accustomed to his presence, and so useful that they are glad to accept the benefits of his work without wondering about him as a person. Indeed, the ease with which the Thompsons dismiss the mystery of Helton's character is one of the story's judgments on them. For the reader, however, the mystery is very real, primarily because it is so sharply particularized in Helton's peculiar and slightly ominous fixation on his collection of harmonicas. (208)

I agree with Stout that Mr. Helton's unobtrusiveness as well as his productivity makes the Thompsons' lives easier, but I fail to see how dismissing his character or history is one of the story's judgments on them. Had they pressed Mr. Helton about his past, Mr. Thompson, who cared about his reputation in the community, would have dismissed him on the spot. We would have a completely different story. In this way, Porter complicates how we view disability and the label and stigma we put onto it. In the absence of a label, the Thompsons do not stigmatize him as an escaped mental patient until Mr. Hatch's visit. As a result, without the societal cues to regard him as a disabled person, they work alongside him. Furthermore, I am struck by Stout's description of Mr. Helton's attachment to his harmonicas as being "peculiar and slightly ominous." While Porter's ironies leave readers with various ways to interpret her story, it is Mr. Hatch's fixation on catching Mr. Helton that is uncanny, peculiar, and ominous, whereas Mr. Helton's

harmonica is his "voice." Several clues abound in the novella support these two observations.

The only possessions Mr. Helton had with him when he first arrived at the farm were his six harmonicas (227). By the time Mr. Hatch arrived (nine years later), he had a dozen (251). Porter describes how the harmonicas are in different keys, thus playing a different tonal range. Using one of the harmonicas, Mr. Helton would play the same tune, "night after night, and sometimes even in the afternoons when [he] sat down to catch his breath" (236). The most straightforward clue that the harmonicas represent Mr. Helton's preferred voice is when Porter emphasizes the word "natural" to contrast two different situations within the novella. First, when the mischievous Thompson boys discover and ruin the harmonicas, instead of using angry words, Mr. Helton shakes each boy in silence. By ruining the harmonicas, the boys "take away Mr. Helton's voice." When Mrs. Thompson witnesses Mr. Helton wordlessly shaking their son Arthur by the shoulder, she is perturbed by Mr. Helton's silence—"If it had been a noisy spectacle, it would have been quite *natural*. It was the silence that struck her" (237; my emphasis). Her view of what is "natural" (as well as the rest of the family's) changes over time:

> At first the Thompsons liked it [Mr. Helton's harmonica playing] very much, and always stopped to listen. Later there came a time when they were fairly sick of it, and began to wish to each other that he would learn a new one. At last they did not hear it any more, it was as *natural* as the sound of the wind rising in the evenings, or the cows lowing, or their own voices. (236; my emphasis)

Porter's analogy which emphasizes that the harmonica is like that of the Thompsons' voices reinforces that the harmonica is the voice of Mr. Helton, or his preferred way of expressing himself. His harmonica playing is no longer considered an oddity but something that is very natural—as natural as the sound of the Thompson's own voices. This situation is very similar to when a person gets to know a disabled person over time; the disability itself "disappears" and becomes a non-issue within the relationship.

Unfortunately, the Thompsons' community does not carry out this "natural" acceptance after Mr. Hatch is killed and Mr. Helton runs to the woods to get away from the sheriff and his men. During the scuffle with the sheriff 's men, Mr. Helton loses two of his harmonicas. As he tries to pick them up, the sheriff's men catch him, are rough with him, and treat him like a trapped animal. The sheriff tells Mrs. Thompson, "they didn't aim to harm [Mr. Helton] but they had to catch him, he was crazy as a loon" (259). By imposing a label onto Mr. Helton's identity, they rationalize and justify their unnecessary abusive approach. Barbara Fass Leavy states, "resistance to the forms of society, supposedly constructed to insure individual survival, [may, unfortunately, be] inevitably antithetical to the self's endeavor to preserve itself" (145). Mr. Helton fights "like a wild cat" because it is his only possible chance of survival in a world that tries to label rather understand him. Batey points out that it is unclear why the sheriff felt the need to organize a posse with everyone turning out with ropes and sticks to tie Mr. Helton, since the part about his previous incarceration was not known until his trial, except that perhaps they suspect him because he was a "forriner" (247). One possible explanation is that under negative eugenics, immigrants were often connected/conflated

with the undesirables, the feebleminded, and physically disabled individuals (Clare, "Yearning Towards Carrie Buck"). While the sheriff's men's actions are certainly unjustifiable, one thing is clear--they are working from their white, able-bodied positions and misassumptions (not unlike the misassumptions that Mr. Thompson makes of Mr. Helton at their first meeting). The role that Mr. Helton's harmonicas play in his capture and death thus symbolize society's preference not to accept or recognize disability/differences as a fundamental part of the human voice and experience.

Mr. Helton's fixation on his harmonicas may be considered "unnatural" to some people, but Mr. Hatch's obsession with catching and imprisoning Mr. Helton adds peculiarity and menace of its own to the story. Mr. Hatch is sickly-looking (has baggy skin, wears clothes too big for him), models "crazy" behavior (i.e., is overly jovial, tells jokes that do not match the social situation, twists Mr. Thompson's words around), and appears to be unkempt and possibly unhealthy with his brown rabbit-like teeth and other unsavory physical characteristics (i.e., sunken eyes). Stout says the particular scene between Mr. Hatch and Mr. Thompson creates a sense of "dis-ease" (211). This double metaphor aptly describes Mr. Hatch who not only looks "sick" but who is socially awkward and purposely deceiving. Mr. Thompson first introduces the idea of "lunatic" but the reference interestingly applies to Mr. Hatch, not Mr. Helton. Up to this point, the Thompsons have not regarded Mr. Helton as an escaped lunatic, but simply as a farm hand. They value his labor, despite his oddities. Then, once Hatch "lets it slip" that Mr. Helton had been in an asylum, Mr. Thompson tries to put that knowledge into context of a situation he once knew with his Aunt Ida. But unlike Aunt Ida who "got vi'lent" and

went "so wild she broke a blood vessel" (247), Mr. Helton "never acted crazy" (247).[22] According to Mr. Thompson, Mr. Helton always acted like a "sensible man" (that is, a man with all his senses intact) (247). Only Mr. Hatch's reiteration of Mr. Helton's "craziness" creates a sense of unease for Mr. Thompson, even though he feels that Mr. Hatch has misunderstood him and continues to defend Mr. Helton's reputation.

Mr. Hatch's repetition of words such as "loony," "loonatic," and "crazy" when referring to Mr. Helton illustrate the power of language to change and influence the way we perceive reality. At first, Mr. Thompson refuses to believe that Mr. Helton had a fifteen-year history of being in an asylum before he escaped. Later, he grows doubtful and then defensive. Porter describes the scene: "[Mr. Hatch] sat there drooping a little, and Mr. Thompson didn't like his expression. It was a satisfied expression but it was more like the cat that et the canary" (246). As tension begins to build between both men, they hear Mr. Helton near the barn playing the harmonica. Mr. Hatch explains that the tune Mr. Helton is playing is a Scandinavian drinking song. Disability/Insanity and criminality (as explained in my eugenics chapter) have often been linked, and Mr. Hatch's meandering ways reinforce that ideology, particularly when he later tells Mr. Thompson, "Now, this Mr. Helton here, like I tell you, he's a dangerous escaped loonatic . . . in the last twelve years or so I musta rounded up twenty-odd escaped loonatics,

[22] "Porter alludes to the conditions of mental asylums in this era—primitive facilities, methods, and supervision—by having Thompson describe what happened to his Aunt Ida in a Texas institution: . . . For a bizarre speculation why Thompson's aunt is named Ida . . . is a colloquial contraction of 'I'd have,' so 'Ida . . . got vi'lment' 'foreshadow(s)' Thompson's violence against Hatch" (Batey 230)

besides a couple of escaped convicts . . . I don't like to see lawbreakers and loonatics at large" (252-253). Given Mr. Hatch's unsettling demeanor, readers are positioned to feel a sense of relief when Mr. Thomson defends Mr. Helton, the savior of the farm, and roars at Mr. Hatch, "You're crazy. You're the crazy one around here, you're crazier than he ever was!" (255).

Mr. Helton's mother, a marginal character in the story, serves as the plot device that allows Mr. Hatch to resume his thus-far-thwarted pursuit of Mr. Helton. Mr. Hatch tricks her into giving him the information and the funds he needs to pursue Mr. Helton. The fact that he has no qualms about stealing from and deceiving Mr. Helton's mother reveals his own criminal acts, his fears about disability, his need for control, and his own instable mind. His "obsession" to keep his bounty record "perfect," a pursuit that leads him to recapture a perfectly productive member of society, leaves readers wondering how many others he has perhaps falsely or unjustly pursued and captured to maintain the fiction of his unblemished record. What is even more interesting is that Mr. Hatch has no medical training, yet he is the one that labels and makes a "clinical" diagnosis of Mr. Helton. While Mr. Hatch may represent the state of North Dakota and its laws, readers can surmise (as Mr. Thompson perceives) that despite his "legitimate" reasons, he is the "real lunatic" who is out to oppress those he deems as inferior to himself. It is as if Porter turns the "mirror" to reflect not so much Mr. Helton's Otherness, but to further readers' understanding of Mr. Hatch's differences and his evil motives. Porter, in her essay about "Noon Wine" characterizes Mr. Hatch as a "doomed man" and "evil in the most

dangerous, irremediable way," and yet "one who works safely within the law" ("On Writing" 480).

Porter's short novel purposely creates a counter discourse to the institutionalization of the disabled population by inverting and ironizing common assumptions about the supposed healthy/unhealthy and "normal"/"abnormal dichotomies that fuel those assumptions. Mr. Hatch's visit blurs and troubles the line of "what is disability?" We have Mr. Hatch pointing a finger at Mr. Helton, Mr. Thompson calling Mr. Hatch " a lunatic," and the community eventually labeling Mr. Thompson as someone who is mentally unstable and a murderer. As a continuation of her stylistic inversions and ironies about disability, Porter also creates the Thompson farm as a bedlam of the asylum. This approach will be discussed in the context of Critical Animal Studies.

The Thompson Farm as a Bedlam of the Asylum: A Further Look at Porter's *Noon Wine*

Disability Studies theorists have recently incorporated some of the findings of Critical Animal Studies and offer yet another dimension to the narrative of disability in Porter's short novel. The works of Jacqui Griffths, Susan M. Griffin, Marianne DeKoven, and Maria Truchan-Tataryn demonstrate the importance of studying the intersection of species, disability, and literature as a way to challenge the kinds of marginalization that often occur in literary and cultural studies. This approach, called "Critical Animal Studies," illustrates how the concept of "the human" is developed through its contrast with "the animal" and how the societal construction of "the disabled" often depends upon

linking it more to the animal rather than the human. For instance, Jacqui Griffiths and Maria Truchan-Tataryn criticize the way Faulkner represented Benjy in *The Sound and Fury*. Truchan-Tataryn argues that Faulkner and many scholars in their respective discussions of Faulkner's depiction of Benjy have perpetuated and sustained "the idiot myths" (163). She maintains that the prevalent sentiments which involve the concept of the "idiot" as a primitive, pre-social being creates "animalistic" images of Benjy. She believes that disability continues to be a scapegoat in Faulkner's novel, and it is erroneous to associate intellectual ability with mental, emotional, and social emptiness. Furthermore, Benjy is comprehended not only as a literary typecast, but also a type of disabled person who is unfortunately used in society to illustrate and reinforce the erroneous conclusion that disabled people's lives are worthless and not worth living. She expresses desire for more understanding of the diversity and range in the human experience and its textual representation. Griffiths suggests an association of caninity in the case of Benjy. When Benjy is castrated, he is viewed as neither an adult nor child, neither animal nor human. Instead he becomes a hybridized representation of dog and child due to his minority status. Griffths gives many examples of how Benjy is dehumanized by how he is confined within the space of the home, how he is unable to speak the family's language, moves "like a trained bear," how he represents and contradicts the idea of a child, and how he must learn (like a domestic dog) routine repetition.

In another critical work, Marianne DeKoven provides an excellent analysis of the "puppy" used in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and how the puppy represents

the subjugation of Myrtle and the child she will never have. DeKoven states, "analyzing the uses of animal representation can clarify modes of human subjugation that ideology might otherwise obscure" (363). She presents the view that the study of literary animals can also be used to represent the writer's concern for human oppression and mistreatment of human and nonhuman. In a similar move, Susan M. Griffin in her study of Mary Wilkins Freeman's *Understudies* upholds that stories depicting animal/human identities are both performative and relational. She contends that these stories are psychological "because they are centrally concerned with the representation of the interiority" (511).

What these critics' works illustrate is that the exchanges of Disability Studies and Critical Animal Studies have helped change many of the ways in which we study disabled people, shifting our focus from the medical/biological view of disability to a wider and more complex understanding of our society's ideology and construction of disability. For instance, Katherine Anne Porter's main character "He" in her short story of that same title, comes to mind. Porter gives "animal characteristics" to her disabled character to describe how society treats him as if he is inhuman. He is institutionalized (caged), because he is unable to live up to his family and society's definition of "the normal."

In Porter's *Noon Wine*, the setting of the Thompsons' farm, with its collectivity of sights and sounds, creates a sense of "normality," but when the same situation is resituated within the context of a mental asylum, one has a very different viewpoint of the characters and their behaviors. In other words, context can impact how we interpret behaviors, sights, and vocalizations. A major way in which Porter flips the association of

the farm as a wholesome place of healthy living and the asylum as a madhouse of disability and confusion is when the Thompsons' farm represents an asylum of a different sort, but an asylum nevertheless. Porter complicates the concepts of disability by providing animal descriptions to *both* her able-bodied and "disabled" characters. Porter's use of animal metaphors provides not just character descriptions, but also illustrates how the relationships between people can be described in terms of corresponding relationships between animals. In short, Porter does not describe one character in animalistic terms to make that character appear less human or less humanly able. Instead, when the characters are both animals--for example, prey and predator, domesticated and wild, etc.--the connotations of humanity and bestiality, natural and not natural, and so forth, are made ambiguous and slippery.[23]

Porter provides the reader with several examples of this slippery cataphonic and visual mayhem that exists on the farm, beginning with the Thompson boys. Arthur and Herbert, age six and eight, at the beginning of the novella are described as "small, rooting animals"-- grubby, dirty, and grimy, evoking "images of the animal vitality of insect larvae" (Batey 211). When Mr. Helton first walks past the gate into the Thompsons' farm, Porter depicts the boys "sitting back on their haunches and one almost expects them to bark or bray at Helton rather than to say hello" (Batey 211). Later when Arthur calls Mr. Helton to the dinner table, he "bawls like a bull calf," 'Saaaaaay, Hellllllton, suuuuuupper's ready' and add[s] in a lower voice, 'You big Swede'" (Porter 230). The boys' animalistic behavior continues after dinner: ". . . shortly from their attic bedroom

[23] Thanks to Dr. Amy Shuman for her insights.

the sounds of scuffling and snorting and giggling and growling filled the house and shook the kitchen ceiling" (Porter 231). A few days later, despite Mr. Helton heeding Mrs. Thompson's warning and hiding his harmonicas in the farthest corner and out of reach in his shack, the boys mischievously get into them. Feeling triumphant, "They galloped through their chores, their animal spirits rose with activity . . . They sprawled and fought, scrambling, clutched, rose and fell shouting, as aimlessly, noisily, monotonously as two puppies. They imitated various animals" (239).

Upon finding his harmonicas ruined, Mr. Helton reprimands them by shaking each boy violently without a word. Afterwards, the boys "looked hang-dog from under their forehead" (238). Porter, in these various scenes, illustrates the boys' rowdy behaviors and how Mr. Helton's immediate and effective (yet violent) discipline eventually helps to (positively or negatively) shape their actions and perceptions.

In discussing how to discipline the boys, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson often use animal metaphors. Mr. Thompson threatens physical violence but never acts on it: "My goodness, Ellie, we've got to raise em. We can't just let em grow up hog wild" (232) and "I'll tan their hides . . . I'll take a calf rope to them" (239). The boys act animalistic; however, they are not labeled "mentally disabled" within the farm scenario. If we were to place them in an asylum, our perspective of them would be altogether different, because then their disorderly or unruly behaviors would be magnified in such a way to be viewed as "not quite normal." Robert Batey in his excellent and thorough job of analyzing *Noon Wine* discusses how the boys' animalistic behavior illustrates Mr. and Mrs. Thompson's ineffectualness as disciplinarians. I take his analysis further to claim that it is not just

disciplinary factors, but also how our society promotes and controls our behavior to ensure that we act "normal"; to be disabled is to act outside of those "normal" parameters. The fact that the community eventually punishes Mr. Thompson after he has been acquitted by ostracizing him goes to show that society will try to control or eradicate what they have termed (or labeled) to be abnormal behavior.

Interestingly, when the boys are all grown up and supposedly solid citizens in the eyes of their parents, Mr. Thompson takes credit for their model behavior: "Mr. Thompson was relieved to find that, without knowing how he did it, he had succeeded in raising a set of boys who were not trifling whittlers. They were such good boys Mr. Thompson began to believe they were born that way . . . " (241-242). Porter points to the irony of this situation by stating the boys never disputed their father's words. Mr. Helton, in contrast, is an escaped asylum patient and ironically the "model citizen" the boys should emulate—they learn hard work, not by their father's example, but Mr. Helton's--"The boys grew up and learned to work. They could not remember the time when Ole Helton hasn't been there" (241).

Consequently, at the story's end, they are "tamed" and have become the new protectors and gatekeepers of the farm. They establish a new, controlled able-bodied ownership that ironically hosts their invalid mother. When Mr. Thompson, after a restless night in bed abruptly jumps out of bed and starts yelling maniacally, his act frightens the-sleeping-but-now-awakened Mrs. Thompson. The boys come to their mother's rescue; they "stood on each side of Mrs. Thompson and watched Mr. Thompson as if he were a dangerous wild beast" (266). Because they now see their father as "deranged," there is no

place for Mr. Thompson, just as there was ultimately no place for Mr. Helton outside of Mr. Hatch's mental institution. Also, as a "wild beast" Mr. Thompson no longer belongs in the domestic sphere. Thompson's death, like Mr. Helton's, is the result of community's/family's reaction by shaming and shunning. Batey states, "By the end of the story, Thompson is in a situation parallel to Helton's at the beginning. A murderer, a stranger in his own neighborhood, he keeps playing his 'one tune' over and over until he sees the hopelessness of his position" (252).

What separates Mr. Thompson (a murderer) from Mr. Helton (a murderer committed to an asylum) is the judgment of the court—although Mr. Thompson's neighbors do not want anything to do with him, Porter effectively demonstrates how people disassociate themselves from anyone labeled "different" (even wrongly so). In the conversation between Mr. Thompson and Mr. Hatch, there were social implications for Mr. Thompson. He did not want his reputation ruined, as if associating with a mental disabled person from an asylum was somehow "catching." Simultaneously, Mr. Thompson knew that Mr. Helton was a solid citizen and that the community would not believe him—after hearing Mr. Hatch, they would be too willing to believe that Mr. Helton was an "animal" and in need of being returned to the asylum. Kylie Valentine's *Mad and Modern* points out, "Once labeled as mad, it is impossible for the strongest institutional and cultural forces to ignore the label or to carry on as though it was not there" (142-143). According to Phyllis Chelser, "Madness—as a label or reality—is not conceived of as divine, prophetic, or useful. It is perceived as (and often further shaped

into) a shameful and menacing disease from whose spiteful and exhausting eloquence society must be protected" (95).

Despite the different judicial and societal treatments towards Mr. Thompson and Mr. Helton, and how the community perceives their "madness," Porter once again complicates the view of disability through her descriptions of Mr. Hatch and Mr. Thompson. Previous critics have argued that Mr. Hatch is Mr. Thompson's double because of both men's ability to be overly jovial when they are being deceiving (Stout 211). The hearty and jovial laugh that Mr. Thompson uses with Mr. Helton during their first meeting parallels Mr. Hatch's overuse of "haw haw, haw" (i.e., said three times, instead of two) (247). Mr. Thompson's reaction to Mr. Hatch is that he liked a good laugh as well as any man . . . [But] this feller laughed like a perfect lunatic" (245). Mr. Thompson begins to uncannily "resemble" the deceiving Mr. Hatch because Mr. Hatch reminded Mr. Thompson of somebody (244).

Additionally, both characters are "incongruous" in their actions and speech. Mr. Thompson is an ineffectual farmer and poor disciplinarian of his children; his bark is worse than his bite. He depends on Mr. Helton to run the farm and "discipline" his children. Similarly, Mr. Hatch does not mean what he says, twists Mr. Thompson's words around, tells jokes at inappropriate times, does not make his true motives known, and threatens to disclose Mr. Helton's asylum history if Mr. Thompson does not comply and help "round up" Mr. Helton. As Mr. Thompson's dislike for Mr. Hatch grows, his observations of Mr. Hatch become more explicitly "animalistic." When Mr. Hatch asks Mr. Thompson to help "round up" and "overpower" Mr. Helton as if Mr. Helton were a

cow, a nonhuman form, Mr. Thompson reacts by calling Mr. Hatch a "dirty low down hound" (253).

The tension that exists between Mr. Hatch and Mr. Thompson is similarly visible between Mr. Helton and Mr. Hatch. Within and outside the domestic sphere of the Thompson's asylum, Mr. Helton's actions are twice referred to as that of the dog, and then at last, of the cat. The first case in point is when he is sitting at the Thompson's dinner table: "At last, he took a fair-sized piece of cornbread, wiped his plate up as clean as if it had been **licked by a hound dog**, stuffed his mouth full, and, still chewing, slid off the bench and started for the door" (231; my emphasis). The second instance is narrated by Mrs. Thompson (after Mr. Hatch's murder), "Mr. Helton, with his long sad face and silent ways, who had always been so quiet and harmless, who had worked so hard and helped Mr. Thompson so much, running through the hot fields and woods, being hunted like **a mad dog**, everybody during out with ropes and guns and sticks to catch and tie him . . . [with bitterness, the men] *had* to be rough, he fought like **a wild cat**" (259; my emphasis).

In comparison, Mr. Hatch is more consistently labeled as rabbit-like. Porter describes his teeth in two different scenes: "The fat man opened his mouth and roared with joy, showing **rabbit teeth brown as shoeleather**" (243; my emphasis). Later, while they are talking, "Mr. Thompson kept glancing at the face near him. He certainly did remind Mr. Thompson of somebody . . . [and] finally decided it was just that all **rabbit-teethed men** looked alike" (244; my emphasis). Porter writes that Mr. Thompson did not

like Mr. Hatch's expression, "It was a satisfied expression but it was more like the **cat that et the canary**" (246; my emphasis).

A few takeaways from these two descriptions: Mr. Helton's bodily actions are described primarily as that of a dog but Mr. Hatch's facial features are depicted as rabbit-like. In this way, Porter reverses the story of the hound chasing the rabbit to illustrate the ridiculousness of Mr. Hatch's pursuit. Mr. Hatch is "all talk" and needs his "double" (Mr. Thompson) to help "round up Mr. Helton." Rabbits are, of course, a prey species. Porter's double-irony here is striking. Instead of being preyed upon, Mr. Hatch "preys" on Mr. Helton for the money he can get as a bounty hunter, despite the fact that he symbolizes the "rabbit" and is part of the "prey species." Mr. Hatch's need to contain and control Mr. Helton belies his own lawful intentions and establishes how the ideals of institutionalization in fact become a justification for unethical behavior. In contrast, Mr. Helton, within the homestead, is domestic and a functional member of the farm. Dogs often signify as domestic, steady, reliable, and obedient animals. The domestic sphere of the Thompson's asylum affords Mr. Helton a sense of personhood and independence, while outside that domestic sphere he fights like a "wild cat" and is considered dangerous by the community. Porter's animalistic images create bedlam of rhetorical oxymora in Thompsons' "asylum." By subverting the farmstead, Porter effectively demonstrates how these animal metaphors (in representing disability or differences) are often slippery and ambiguous.

London and Porter: Subverting the Discourse of the Funny Farm

Both London's and Porter's stories targeted a medical system that privileged classification of the normal versus abnormal, anxieties about the threat of the disabled individual to the healthy family and nation, and practices of confinement and discipline, all of which helped justify the institutionalization of the mentally disabled population in the early twentieth century. Historically, asylums and mental institutions operated to classify, contain, and segregate. London's and Porter's respective stories illustrate how early twentieth century society and the medical profession tended to focus on pathology and deviance when that pathology was actually situated within their own attitudes, actions, and practices. Mentally disabled individuals were often framed as a failure of control, not as a failure of care, and this pathology is what underlies many of the negative attitudes towards disability today. As a result, ideas about work, independence, and self-sufficiency continue to play a role in shaping disabled individuals as second-class citizens.

While London focuses on the infrastructure of a mental institution, Porter turns the Thompson's farmstead into a makeshift asylum. Within those "institutional" walls, the short stories by London and Porter point to the slipperiness and even ambiguity of defining mental and intellectual disability. Tom, in his narration, demonstrates his knowledge and limited experiences about the Home and the outside world, and both are central to understanding the complexity of his intellectual disability that goes beyond the system that classifies him as a "feeble-minded" individual. London uses comic tones as a counter discourse to redirect the gaze towards a medical system that patronizes and cares

for Tom, while at the same time, presents how Tom differentiates himself from his fellow residents as a way to make his own self unique, thus defying the ab/normal paradigm. Similarly, Porter's novella goes beyond the medical classification of mental disability, discounting the animalistic/human dichotomies. She attributes animal characteristics to both her able-bodied and disabled characters. This attribution allows the "definition" of mental disability to differ among her characters, Mr. Helton, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Hatch. While Mr. Hatch's work as a bounty hunter is authorized by the law, he is obsessive with finding Mr. Helton and goes so far to deceive Mr. Helton's mother. Hatch is also sickly looking and manipulative. Mr. Helton, who is the object of Hatch's search, is obsessive with his harmonicas and goes the length to kill a brother who would not replace his lost harmonica. He is also productive worker and a model citizen on the Thompson's farm. Mr. Thompson, who is caught between the two men and a typical law abiding citizen, becomes faced with losing his hard working, but low wage farmhand. He is obsessive with his reputation and goes far and wide from neighbor to neighbor to defend his honor after he has been acquitted of killing Mr. Hatch with intent. He is also lazy and depends heavily on Mr. Helton to run his farm. Each man's obsession ends up costing his life—Mr. Hatch "at the hands" of Mr. Thompson, Mr. Thompson through suicide, and Mr. Helton during the shuffle with the sheriff and his men. Are their obsessions disabilities or are their disabilities parts of their obsessions? This interweaving of obsession and mental disability creates a very complex picture of what mental disability is or isn't. This complexity reveals the psychosocial aspect of disability—to miss the social aspect is to create a one-dimensional and stereotypical view of mental

disability from a medical perspective. The men's disabilities were not just internal but were also very tightly connected with their social environment.

Both London and Porter paint a complex picture that defy and complicate medical classifications and society's labels of those with mental/intellectual disability. By carefully demonstrating the complexity of mental disability, the authors delineate the fears that underlie society's discriminating and paternalistic attitudes, and the social system's need to control and segregate people with disabilities. While Mr. Helton does not talk, Tom does not stop talking. Perhaps if we "listen" carefully, as Porter and London seem to be arguing we should do, we will hear Helton's harmonica playing somewhere in the world to the tune he knows best and understands.

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Chapter 5: Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who is the Fairest of Them All?: Shattering the Mirror of Normality

> "Undermined as mothers, fathers, workers, lovers and in a host of other capacities, disability is a life lived before a looking glass that is cracked and distorted by the vandalism of normality." (Hughes 68)

In the early twentieth century, national discourses about disability worked in mutually constitutive ways to underline particular ideas about American citizenship and normativity. Rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization discourses evoked stigmatizing attitudes towards the disabled population. To be disabled was considered a failing on the part of the disabled individual, whether that disability was attributable to genetic inheritance, low economic status, undesirable living conditions, or war injuries. Therefore, American society thought it desirable for a disabled person to "overcome" his or her disability, to find a cure, or to be institutionalized. In my dissertation, I have argued that literary texts from a literary disability studies analysis[24] illuminate the various ways in which early twentieth-century writers such as Dalton Trumbo, Eudora Welty, Katherine Anne Porter, Jack London, William Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill, and Mary Austin countered and complicated many of the ideologies about disability that the rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization discourses promoted and propagandized.

[24] As illustrated in Chapter 1, my work is dedicated to the exploration of literature from a disability studies perspective. My desire has been to build on a growing body of advanced and interdisciplinary scholarship on how literary works intersect with historical and contemporary attitudes towards disability.

More specifically, these early twentieth-century American authors' respective stories redirect the normalizing and/or dehumanizing gaze away from the disabled figures and toward able-bodied characters. Read collectively, they contest the national ideal body and complicate the concept of citizenship and normativity in provocative and productive ways. The texts examined herein lend themselves to disability studies counter-readings not only because each author depicts a protagonist with an impairment, but also because each of their stories defies narrative expectations, thus troubling ideas of the "normal." As my title and the epigraph by Bill Hughes at the beginning of this chapter evince, "the mirror on the wall" reflects the distortion of our national discourses and represents the creation of a myth based out of our society's associations between normality and citizenship. The power of these authors' literary works lies in their ability to crack, distort, and shatter the looking glass of normality, making readers realize how the focus on trying to cure or eradicate disability has been created as a false front for able-bodied people's fears about the different body.

"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" is a line from the popular fairytale and movie, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. While the movie has been modified somewhat over time, with some versions naming the dwarfs and others making Snow White more "hero" than victim, one aspect of the film that has not changed is the stepmother and her attachment to the mirror. I suggest that her attachment be understood as an embodiment of the "mirror stage," a concept developed by Jacques Lacan. While his theories were developed within the field of psychoanalysis, they have also been applied to other disciplines such as philosophy, cultural studies, and film

theory. Lacan's theory posits that children are initially unable to recognize their own reflections in the mirror and that learning to make that identification requires an awareness of not only how they see themselves, but also how others perceive them.[25] Applying Lacan's theory to Snow White's stepmother, we realize that she is stuck in the early stages of Lacan's mirror theory, unable to see herself as others see her. It takes the presence of Snow White's youth and beauty to focus her gaze and shatter her illusions.

To explain the significance of Lacan's mirror stage, how it parallels with Snow White's stepmother's inability to look past her looking glass, I first turn to Barbara Suess' "The Writing's on the Wall—Symbolic Orders in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'" in order to demonstrate how a Lacanian reading advances our understanding of "the gap" and its function in shattering the mirror of normality. Suess takes a Lacanian approach to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," published in 1892, to illustrate how it represents both patriarchy as well as how patriarchy's abusive politics leads to the protagonist's ultimate inability to separate fantasy from reality (3). She argues, however, that unlike many other critics' assessments of Gilman's story, a Lacanian reading compels one to read the protagonist's actions as a predictable consequence of the social order rather than an act of her own volition. Suess contends that the critics fail to take into consideration the many instances where the narrator, whom she references as Jane, "displays a strong fighting spirit against John's condescending medical advice" and describes how the protagonist is thwarted by the "patriarchal social order" to create her

[25] According to Lacan, this identity formation is somewhat controlled and regulated by the Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order is therefore is a time when the child enters into language and accepts the rules dictated by society. The Symbolic Order is made possible due to one's acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father, whose laws and restrictions control the child's desires and actions within a community of others.

own Symbolic Order through writing (6). When the writing process "fails" to produce the Symbolic Order, Jane is forced to find her own Order within the wallpaper. At the end of the story, Jane walks over the Order that John represented, "the Order that did nothing but oppress her" (9).

Aside from her Lacanian analysis, Suess concludes that while Jane is not "free" from her patriarchal oppressive society, her role sheds light on how social oppression helps and sustains what could have been a less tragic illness. Although Suess' argument is provocative, I find it incomplete and want to extend her analysis further. We need to ask, "Why is it important to explain that the protagonist (from a Lacanian model) should be exuded from blame for her condition?" Or more importantly, on a more concrete level, "how can we illustrate that this is vital to our understanding of Gilman's story?" "What linguistic techniques does Gilman use to help us with that understanding?" While the following discussion supports many of Suess' arguments, the questions above require us to expand upon the particular importance of Gilman's protagonist's role. A linguistic approach (one way of doing a close reading) can support and strengthen our symbolic understanding of the protagonist's thoughts and actions.

Two techniques that Gilman uses are important to note—her use of pronouns and repetition. First-person pronouns can sometimes encode certain perspectives on reality by illustrating how language reflects the whole social framework, that is, how people talk to each other (Alexander 226). Secondly, pronouns have a significant function/power dimension that is marked by non-reciprocity (Alexander 227). Let's look at the beginning of Gilman's story:

> Personally, **I** disagree with **their** ideas.
>
> Personally, **I** believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do **me** good.
>
> But what is one to do?
>
> **I** did write for a while in spite of **them**; but it does exhaust **me** a good deal—having to be too sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition. (1, my emphasis)

While the protagonist lets us know that she disagrees with "them," (i.e., John, doctors, patriarchal society), there is a sense of passivity ("But what is one to do?"). The repetition of pronouns suggests a personal involvement that serves to blur the distinction between experience of self and observations of others. In other words, we, as readers, have only a one-sided view. This limited viewpoint is crucial because repetition of pronouns throughout the story seems to wash all meaning, leaving an impression of impotent violence and a sense of unreality to the whole scene. The protagonist even remains unnamed until the end of the story. As Suess observes, "she [the protagonist] has no stable relation to or understanding of the Symbolic Order that paternity represents, this perception has sent her headfirst into psychotic delirium" (5). Let's look towards the end of Gilman's story:

> **I** suppose **I** shall have to get back behind
>
> the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!
>
> **It** is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as **I** please!
>
> **I** don't want to go outside. **I** won't, even if Jennie asks **me** to

For outside **you** have to creep on the

ground, and everything is green instead of yellow. (9, my emphasis)

Then later:

"What is the matter? **he** cried. "For God's sake, what are **you** doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but **I** looked at **him** over **my** shoulder.

"**I**'ve got out at last," said **I,** "in spite of **you** and Jane. And **I**'ve pulled off most

of the paper, so **you** can't put **me** back!" (9, my emphasis)

In this second passage, we sense that the power has shifted from John and the patriarchal system to Jane, but only in the personal and repetitive world of "I." Instead of a "What is one to do?" attitude, the narrator states that she will not go outside where the grass is green and social oppression exists. Even John cannot put her back behind the bars of the wallpaper. Most importantly, she refers to herself in third person as "Jane" who, as Suess argues, cannot be put back into her oppressive regime. Instead, she creates her own Symbolic Order in the world of "I," where "Jane" is separate from "I," in her desire to break away from her oppressive establishment.

This binary world of "I" and "Jane" illuminates other oppositions within the story:

Outside: Inside

John: Jane

Verbal/Social interaction (patriarchal): Writing (Feminine)

Reality: Fantasy

Reader: Text

Here is where Suess could have carried her argument further about Jane not being responsible for her progress toward insanity. The oppositions (above) are important because they provide tension within the margins of the story. To recognize the importance of the margins or the marginalized (the "outside" as opposed to the "inside") requires not only recognition of the protagonist's progress from reality to fantasy, but also an awareness of the gap between the dramatization within the text and the reader outside the text. We could add another layer of binary oppositions:

John (Master): Jane (Patient)

Jane (Master of story): Reader (Recipient)

At the beginning of Gilman's story, John is the patriarch and Jane is his "patient." By the end of the story, we have a different "Jane." The protagonist, through her repetitive use of personal pronouns, becomes the master of the story and we, the readers, are the recipients of her "creepy" story. Jane's "I"s (eyes) now look down on John. Rula Quawas writes, "In a moment of victory and triumph, [Jane] demonstrates the power to see through John when he pretends to be loving and kind and to integrate herself and the woman trapped in the paper into a single triumphant 'I'" (7). While the protagonist does not obtain her freedom, she does make progress toward self-identity and personal achievement (Quawas 7). The reader's knowledge of her condition then becomes the breakthrough for the text and the method from which the readers gain insight. The situation becomes an ironic one, because knowledge, which has usually been in the form of the "Master's authority," slips not only through John's patronizing attitudes, but also through the protagonist's

mastering of her "I"s. Instead, the reader (the eyes of the text) becomes "the one who knows."

The gap between what the readers "see" and what Jane and John understand (or better yet, what John does not understand) is precisely the information that Gilman is trying to convey. Jessica Benjamin's "Two-Way Streets: Recognition of Difference and the Intersubjective Third" offers a more compelling argument about this gap idea. She contends that the gap creates a "moral third" where the space consists of a "dialogic function" that goes beyond the meanings of the "subject-object oppositions of action-reaction, active-passive, knower-known" and the "symbolic paternal function" (130). She describes the function of this space as a certain kind of internal mental space where one perceives not only the conflict between two dyadic points (for instance, the conflict between Jane and John) and the position of the Other (in this case, Jane's), but also the "intersubjective process" between Jane, John, and the reader's interpretation(s). For instance, if we go beyond Lacan's dyadic form of mirror recognition, we could say that John projects his society's paternalistic and sexist views onto Jane and her disability/Otherness. The knowledge that the reader gains from this information is what shatters the mirror of normality and enables him/her to understand Jane's emerging knowledge of self and the type of oppressive society that she lives in. John's medical facts/views almost take a mythical stance because readers come to understand that his (mis)diagnosis is warped within the limited view he has of women and disability in his society and time. While this moral third opens up a space for understanding Jane's "resistance" and self knowledge, the reader also learns the ways in which patriarchy,

including the medical profession in late nineteenth/early twentieth century, are much more powerful than the resistant individual, and these ways dominate how John behaves towards Jane and her disability.

This literary disability analysis of Gilman's story leads to a more complex perspective on the gap idea—"if disability is a socially constructed experience, how is it a lived experience?" (Burch and Sutherland 129). Susan Burch and Ian Sutherland answer this question by saying that "the two are not mutually exclusive" and that "what it means to be Disabled in our society is understood through the lens of the social category, and through the social construction, which is not less powerful" (129). For instance, Georgina Kleege's "Here's to Looking at You" (1999) and Benjamin Bahan's "Upon the Formation of a Visual Variety of the Human Race" (2008) describe how "seeing" differs for each of them in terms of their disability. Kleege, who is legally blind, questions how we see. For her, "seeing" is a social act that can bring on a variety of (mis)interpretations. She writes,

> Look at me when I 'm talking to you. Do you really see all that you say? Or is it a convenience of language to ascribe to my eyes those qualities, emotions, messages you derive from the rest of my face, our surroundings, or the words I speak? Aren't you projecting your own expectations, interpretations, or desires onto my blank eyes? …. If I see your eyes as blank, it is only because I am projecting what I see (or don't see) onto you. (138)

Here, Kleege explains how our culture and language assign meaning to our eyes during interactions with others. Our sighted world depends on hand gestures, facial expressions, gaze, and/or posture. But for Kleege, "eye contact" can only be achieved by aiming "her gaze" at the sound of the speaker's voice and focusing on the blurry shadow that she knows to be the face of the speaker. She points out that while it is not difficult to sometimes imitate certain eye activities, misinterpretations and misperceptions can occur. In contrast, Bahan references the importance of eye activity in American Sign Language. He writes, "Among signing deaf people, the role of vision and the use of eyes expands exponentially" (84). He posits that deaf people are superior at peripheral vision, spatial processing, and rapidly presented visual information, yet society as a whole disregards that information and instead focuses on what deaf people lack. Of this gap in understanding what deaf people can do, Bahan writes,

> I can't help but wonder about the "what ifs," because it has taken society so long to acknowledge the role of vision and signed language in the lives of Deaf people. So many generations of signers have been handcuffed in a society intoxicated by the ideology that speech is language and vice versa. It is amazing that with these impositions, Deaf people have developed into one of the most visual groups of people on the face of the Earth. One wonders what the possibilities would be if they were allowed to proceed in life unbounded. (96)

Kleege's and Bahan's discussions echo Slavoj Žižek's parallax gap that expresses how two opposing ideas can cohere at the same time. Their discussion of how people do not

understand what it means to be blind or deaf opens up the gap between what is society's lack of understanding and what could be (un)learned. By attending to the gap like Gilman illustrates within her story, Bahan and Kleege target a goal similar to that of Garland-Thomson's, whose desire is to bring attention to the gap that often exists between disabled people and their literary representations.

What makes literature such a persuasive tool for intervening in national narratives about the able body is that it has the power to perpetuate or dispel myths about disabilities. In Chapter 2 on Rehabilitation, I describe how Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* rejects the mythical connections between disability, masculinity, and citizenship. As his story demonstrates, the post-war rehabilitation program strengthened the idea that disabled veterans, if they did not "overcome" their disability and "be a man," were dependent, unproductive citizens. Trumbo's protagonist, Joe Bonham, effectively "unmasks" the military and medical establishment's ulterior motives, ignorance, and desires to keep his disabilities disclosed and hidden. By pressing their hands on Bonham's forehead, the military and medical professions do not allow him to speak. Amy Dunham Strand's *Language, Gender, and Citizenship in American Literature, 1789-1919* interestingly discusses the etymological link between "voice and vote" (11). She states that the two words have long been interrelated in Anglo-American politics. Because "to vote" is in a relevant sense "the expressed opinion, judgment, will, or wish of the people" and is the act of becoming an American citizen, to vote or to have a voice is the act of receiving "the badge of citizenship" (11).

If we apply Strand's argument to Trumbo's novel, the military and medical

profession's act of silencing strips Bonham of his full recognition as an American citizen and human being. The novel's "displaced voice"—the narrator voicing the character of Joe Bonham, and the reader hearing "Bonham's voice" that others in the tale do not hear--is similar to Gilman's story where readers become the protagonist's desired listeners. Both Jane and Bonham in their use of repetitive pronouns emphasize a different "symbolic order" of things. Unlike Snow White's stepmother who is unable to get past her mirror and the myths of ageism and beauty, Bonham exposes and shatters the medical and military's team's incompetence. The gap between the medical/military team's ignorance and the reader's knowledge is what makes the story's ending a powerful one. While Bonham's body remains hidden from the world, his "secret" about the medical/military's oppression is revealed.

One of the many strengths of literary disability analysis is that it demonstrates how writers wrote and countered "what was on the national mind" about people with disabilities. In Chapter 3 on Eugenics, I demonstrate how Eudora Welty, Mary Austin, Katherine Anne Porter, William Faulkner, and Eugene O'Neill challenge and complicate the national idea of dysgenic marriages, "bad blood," and the disabled child being an economic burden to the state. They also counter the idea that happiness can be achieved only by not having a disabled child in the family.

Their respective stories particularly make use of the gaze and setting to create boundaries, often very porous boundaries that are transgressed. Space, for instance, is sometimes used to isolate and quite literally marginalize the person with the disability, but sometimes the person escapes and is seen by the larger public (Benjy) or relegated to

the kitchen (Ottilie); sometimes the abject subject crosses the line (Hard Mag); other times the disabled person stares back (Lily); and finally, sometimes the marginalized person who gazes outward does not find what she seeks (Nina). My main argument is that in these literary representations, the spaces between what is "normal" and "defective" are blurred and that although some people work very hard to keep them in place, it is sometimes the case that the "defective" is only in the gaze, that is, only in the eyes of the beholder.[26] For example, Mrs. Henby in Mary Austin's "The House of Offence," sees Hard Mag only as an Other and a carrier of "bad blood." She fears that Hard Mag's daughter will carry the same bad blood and is hesitant at first to take the daughter in as her own. Similarly, in Eudora Welty's "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies, the three ladies only see Lily's intellectual disability and her physical maturity as a threat to them and the city of Victory. Yet their obsession with restraints betrays their ulterior motives to control Lily's life, which in turn reveals their own moral "defectiveness."

The happiness script also depends on the gaze. The question of whose script is put in place seems to be connected to the question of who is gazing at whom, who is the object of the gaze, and how the ideal object gets framed and sought after.[27] For instance, in Katherine Anne Porter's "He," Mrs. Whipple, in her desire for happiness, frames He as the burden of all her economic problems. She follows the eugenic argument that having a disabled child will bring misery and, therefore, will be an economic burden. By "staying in line" with the eugenic beliefs and denouncing He's humanity and citizenship, Mrs. Whipple irrationally hopes that her family will find happiness and financial freedom.

[26] Thanks to Dr. Amy Shuman for her insights
[27] Thanks to Dr. Amy Shuman for her insights.

In another example, O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, Nina, who is the love object of three men and their respective gazes, is constrained to follow her wife and motherhood role to their perfection. By having an affair to give birth to the "perfect" child, Nina is unable to find the happiness she seeks, because her son Gordon Jr., does not resemble her deceased lover, Gordon Shaw. For Nina, Gordon Jr. is Sam's "creation," even though Sam is not the biological parent. After Sam dies, Nina marries Charlie, the writer of fairytales. Nina and Mrs. Whipple, like Snow White's stepmother, are unable to live with reality, incapable of distorting or cracking the mirror to interrupt the eugenics ideology that plays heavily in their way of thinking and in their lives.

The eugenic world of normates had a specific idea of what it meant to be a mother of a disabled child, and neither Nina nor Mrs. Whipple questioned this idea. The same unquestioning attitude occurs with the families/guardians of Ottilie, Benjy, and Lily, and Hard Mag's daughter. The gap between the characters' ignorance and what the readers learn is how Porter and O'Neill, as well as Welty and Faulkner, destabilize the gaze. Defectiveness no longer belongs to the experiences of those living in marked bodies or connected to impoverished spaces, but is shown to be a flaw of those who control and oppress. As a result, the writers effectively shatter the gap by redirecting the gaze and exposing eugenic myths, shifting our focus from the medical/biological view of disability to a wider and more complex understanding of our society's ideological and oppressive constructions of disability.

Literary disability analysis can also enhance our understanding of how writers used literary techniques to invert and ironize common and erroneous assumptions about

the asylums and the mental disabled population in early twentieth century. In Chapter 4 on Institutionalization, I show how Katherine Anne Porter's *Noon Wine* and Jack London's "The Drooling Ward" countered the link between mental wholeness with normativity and citizenship by utilizing elements of the mirror concept to subvert the inside world of the mentally disabled and outside world of the normates. London illustrates that the microcosm world of the institution and the macrocosm world of the Bopps and Endicotts "reflect" each other—the residents in the institution incorporate many of society's stigmatizing behaviors towards their fellow mates, while the outside world's stigmatizing attitude towards those with disabilities reflects their similar limited world views. Furthermore, Tom's contradictions and comic tones about his impairment do not allow the reader to define him one-dimensionally, but shift the reader from perceiving Tom as defective and incurable to being educable, productive, willful and even sneaky. Equally important, in Porter's *Noon Wine* the Thompsons' farm of the "normal" becomes a metaphorical mental asylum. Mr. Helton's "differences" (and being a model worker) reflect similarly (and in opposition) to Thompson's and Mr. Hatch's deficiencies. By portraying Mr. Helton, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Hatch as shadowy reflections of each other, Porter seems to be asking readers, when do oddities, obsessions, or differences cross the line and become a disability? As such, Porter, as well as London, shatters the rigid boundaries that society and its symbolic order use to define and label mental disability. Examples of inside versus outside, master versus patient, able-bodied versus disability (as with Gilman's story that I describe at the beginning of this chapter)

abound within Porter's and London's stories and help delineate the importance of these superficial and often overlapping margins.

Looking at the end of each story mentioned in Chapters 2-4 provides ways of understanding the mirror concept, the gap, and the shattering of the concept of normality. To unpack the gap mirror concept, I have created a chart with one column representing the disabled protagonist's position and the other as the oppressive establishment's position:

Please see Chart #1 (below):

Chart #1: The Mirror Effect	
The Disabled Protagonist's Position	**The Oppressive Establishment's Position**
Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun* Bonham "unmasks" the medical/Military team's ulterior motives and ignorance. By achieving the ability to communicate via Morse code, Bonham refutes the rehabilitationist's ideology that one had to be fixed or cured, in order to be recognized as a rightful citizen and human being.	The medical/military team continue to keep Bonham hidden.
Eudora Welty, "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" When Lily is sucking on her zinnia, it is a poignant moment within the story because as she gazes back at the three ladies, the readers become aware not only of the ladies' unethical moral acts and decisions, but also of their own beliefs that are based on eugenic ideologies and attitudes toward those with intellectual disabilities. The ladies have become rigid in their eugenic beliefs, and their obsession with restraints betrays their ulterior motives to control Lily's life.	The ladies and the community of Victory continue to control Lily's life by having her marry the xylophone player.
Mary Austin, "The House of Offence" The final irony is that despite Hard Mag "crossing the line" literally and figuratively, to Mrs. Henby's home to prove that her daughter has not inherited "bad blood," Mrs. Henby will forever pretend that her new daughter "looks" like her, living out a myth of her own.	Hard Mag releases all control and care of her daughter to Mrs. Henby. Mrs. Henby will keep Hard Mag's daughter's identity a secret. She is relieved that the daughter looks nothing like Hard Mag and more like her.

Chart 1: continued

Chart 1: continued

Katherine Anne Porter, "He" "He" shows himself to be able to do more tasks than his siblings. His tear at the end of the story reveals the mother's hypocritical actions and her concerns about her reputation as a mother of a disabled child, dispelling the eugenic myth that institutionalizing a disabled family member will bring economic happiness.	"He" will spend the rest of his days in an institution away from the only family he has ever known. His mother will continue to believe that without "He" she will achieve happiness and economic wealth.
Eugene O'Neill, *Strange Interlude* Under the eugenic and authoritative "gaze" of three men in her life, Nina seeks happiness by giving birth to the "perfect" child.	Nina does not find happiness in Gordon Jr. After Sam's death, she marries Charlie, the writer of fairytales and the one who represents patriarchy. She is unable to see past society's institutionalized ideologies that oppress her.
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* The Compsons will forever ignore their own "defectiveness" using Benjy as their scapegoat for their economic woes. In an attempt to tell Benjy to "hush," they hide their own fears about their own defectiveness. Their actions reveal that defectiveness lies only in the "gaze of the beholder."	Benjy is sent to an institution by Jason after Mrs. Compson dies.
Katherine Anne Porter, "Holiday" Under the gaze of the narrator, Ottilie's individuality shows itself, compared to the rest of her family who look and act alike. Ottilie's difference is what makes her a strong character.	Ottilie's family will continue to ignore/minimize her, despite being oblivious to their own mindless lives and selves.
Jack London, "The Drooling Ward" Tom's humor illustrates that there is a more complex side to him than his institutional and outside worlds give him credit for. By showing how he has the "upper hand," Tom effectively turns the "gaze" towards his oppressors.	Tom will continue to live out his days within the regulations and rules of the institution. He will never marry.
Katherine Anne Porter, *Noon Wine* The harmonicas become the voice of Mr. Helton and the text, creating a different symbolic order of things. His death reveals the sheriff, his men, and the community's prejudice and ignorance about disabilities and intolerances of differences.	The Sheriff and his men blame Mr. Helton for his "loony" behavior and do not take responsibility for his death. They see him only for his differences.

Each disabled character's action—whether it's unmasking, playing the harmonica, gazing back, crossing the line literally and/or figuratively between the fit and unfit, showing off one's expertise—defies/resists the dominant system that controls them. The oppressor's actions, on the other hand, are those of containment—that is, of masking, institutionalizing, controlling, regulating, and dictating the desires and rules of communication of those with disabilities. Rather than stopping here and seeing the mirror affect as a direct line of opposition or the disabled characters just defying the symbolic order, I will again draw on Benjamin's concept of the moral third. Benjamin's intersubjective space/process offers readers the opportunity to "see" through the oppressive and dehumanizing actions of the oppressors, and puts them in the position of knowing that each of the disabled characters has been treated wrongly, or unfairly. This knowledge (understanding the disabled characters' positions and the stories' actions) helps to negotiate and dispel the connection between citizenship and normality. While knowledge does not bring freedom for the disabled characters (or even the readers), the gap becomes a dynamic space/process of possible resistance and vulnerability.

O'Neill's *Strange Interlude* is a case in point. At the end of the play, when Nina's son Gordon Jr. flies away in his airplane, Nina tells Ned, "See, Ned! He's leaving me without a backward look!" (220). Gordon Jr., who symbolizes society's eugenic ideology about normality, is leaving Nina without a backward glance. Nina is left to live out her fairytale life with Charlie. O'Neill's irony draws the reader's attention to both the power of myths and society's perpetuation of the "normal." The knowledge the reader gains from this scenario is that while Nina does not find happiness in her son, Gordon Jr., she is

also unable to see past the institutionalized ideologies that continue to dominate and oppress her. This insight or space (gap) of vulnerability leaves open for dialogue in the ways readers will negotiate how people with disabilities will continue to be discussed and portrayed in literary works.

The importance of disability literary studies' role in spreading knowledge cannot be overstated. To facilitate the teaching of the texts examined herein, I have included a model Disabilities Studies syllabus (see appendix). Not surprisingly, textual resistance to institutionalized discourses of the early twentieth century differs from the resistance modeled in texts produced in the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century, and yet ironically they perpetuate similar myths in different ways. One particular scene in the recent *Mirror, Mirror* movie (2014) exemplifies this trend. The princess wants to celebrate her eighteenth birthday by attending the queen's gala, but the queen questions why she is out of her room. She proceeds to tell Snow that she finds her very irritating and not to sneak into the party like that again. She then tells Snow, "It's important to know when you've been beaten, yes?" and sends Snow White back to her room. At the end of the film, when the princess and prince are getting married, the queen shows up as an aged woman. The queen offers the new bride an apple and says, "Just one bite for good fortune. To the fairest of them all." Realizing that the old woman is the Queen, the princess cuts the apple into slices and responds *by looking directly into the eyes* of the queen, "Age before Beauty," she says, before giving her a slice and adding, "It is important to know when you've been beaten, yes?" The mirror shatters and the Queen disintegrates into nothing. This film use of the old adage "age before beauty" and the act

of hurling it as an insult at an old woman illustrates the stronghold that our society's dominant discourses still have in perpetuating certain myths about disability. Today, ageism is defined as "a tendency to regard older persons as debilitated, unworthy of attention, or unsuitable for employment."[28] Despite the film's use of resistance towards the meaning of "beauty," retelling this tale (in all its cultural variations) continues to perpetuate the myth of ageism as a disability.

The tension between resistance and the perpetuation of the beauty myth is reflected in the Queen's complicated relationship with her not-so-reliable mirror. Sometimes the mirror tells her the truth; sometimes it responds obliquely. The gap between truth and reality (or some convolution of the two) shatters the Queen's claim to power. That gap is important to the reader's knowledge, even when it is put to the service of sustaining the beauty myth and shattering the Queen. Because with realization comes is an understanding of how the constraints of the Queen's system offer order, and only without them is Snow White able to respond, "You know when you've been beaten." It is a very redemptive ending, though at the cost of keeping in place beauty as a victory. There's always a loss when that which we thought we recognized is no longer recognizable—as Benjamin argues, that's what creates the opportunity (133,135-136).[29] Working the gap demonstrates how these works of literature expose the dominant representations of people with disabilities as misrepresentations. The normative is shattered. As with the writers of the early twentieth century who resisted the dominant institutionalized discourses in their respective stories, our knowledge is better for having

[28] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ageism?s=t
[29] Thanks to Dr. Amy Shuman for her insights.

read them; it is up to us readers, like the writers before us, to take up the opportunity to dispel the myths our society continues to foster about people with disabilities in different ways.

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Appendix: Syllabus Justification for Literary Disability Studies Course

I. Purpose/Rationale

To demonstrate the importance of Literary Disability Studies, I have created a syllabus that will serve as a guide as to why literature/literary studies is important to Disability Studies, and conversely, why Disability Studies is important to literature/literary analysis. The rationale for teaching such a course is threefold:

1. To engage majors and minors in Disability Studies and American Literature (and advanced non-majors from related fields) in discussions concerning the theorizing of the "literary representation of disability" and the "actual experience of disabled people."
2. To learn how early twentieth century institutionalized discourses (Rehabilitation, Eugenics, and Institutionalization) affected the way the nation responded and treated people with disabilities, and how certain writers effectively (through their respective stories) "shattered the connection between normality and citizenship."
3. To understand how literary disability can be a useful tool for understanding the use of gaze and space in literary texts.

Cracking and Distorting the Looking Glass of Normality

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to critical issues in and approaches to the study of disability and early twentieth-century American literature. The class will explore how some early twentieth-century American authors wrote a variety of fiction, poetry and drama that fostered and critiqued prominent discourses employed to understand and treat people with disabilities during that time: rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization. These discourses and practices advocated and reinforced the medical and scientific models, which viewed people with disabilities who need to be cured, fixed, or institutionalized. In this context, students will be asked how early twentieth century definitions of disability fit with the theme of this course, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, Who is the fairest of them all?" In short, how did "disability" under these institutionalized discourses create or shatter the mirror of normality? By examining a series of films, articles, short stories, and drama in early twentieth century works, we will learn the ways in which various writers wrote about disabled characters, and how our understanding of disability can inform or enhance our knowledge about the gap between disabled people and their literary representations.

Required Texts:

Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun*

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (We will read the Benjy's section only.)

Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Comprehensive Coursepack [CPK]

The theoretical readings are available in coursepack and noted individually below.

Class Requirements:

1. **Class Participation** **20%**

As an upper division undergraduate class, this course requires every student to come to class prepared, having read the assigned texts carefully, and participate actively in discussions.

2. **Discussion Questions** **20%**

Once a week, you will be required to submit a discussion question regarding the literature and/or critical essays assigned for that day. Please keep your discussion question and carefully thought out answer to one or two substantial paragraphs.

3. **Discussion Board and Report** **30%**

In pairs, students will choose a short literary piece about disability or a critical essay about disability in literature, and add to the discussion board we will create about Literary Disability. The goal of this project is to broaden what we know about American literature that featured characters with disabilities between 1900-1947. For example, if a pair chooses William Faulkner's "Barn Burning" (1939), they might discuss how Faulkner represents the father's or the sisters' disability. How does this representation reflect the rehabilitation or eugenics discourses used at the time? Is Faulkner's representation of disability perpetuating its negative stigma or does his story work as a counter narrative? Please be sure to go beyond plot summary to offer an analysis of the text you have chosen. Two pages (single spaced) of analysis plus bibliography is required. The bibliography should adhere to the guidelines of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 3rd ed., and should be duplicated and distributed to the class

members on the day of the report. The pair will report this information to the class (no more than 10 minutes). The pair will then post all of this information to our Discussion board to help other scholars interested in the early twentieth century find primary sources. This project/presentation will be due towards the end of the semester.

4. **Literary Disability Quilting Bee (The Final Exam Experience) 30%**

We will engage in a collaborative and individual "quilting" experience that asks you to bring together the major themes, texts, and issues discussed throughout this semester.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Week 1

Day 1: The importance of Literary Disability Studies: Opening Day Question

Question: What do we mean by Literary Disability Studies in early twentieth century America?

- Brief overview of the rise of rehabilitation, eugenics, and institutionalization discourses
- Addressing the gap between disabled people and their representations in literature
- What is normality?
- What is disability?

Day 2: Why is Disability Studies necessary to Literature/Literary Analysis?

Readings:

Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Roosevelt's Sister: Why We Need Disability Studies in the Humanities" [CPK]

Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Disability, Identity, and Representation: An Introduction" [CPK]

Questions:

- Why is disability important to the humanities?
- Thompson argues that there is a gap between disabled people and their representation in literature. Explain.
- Does Thomson provide ways to study or close this gap?

Week 2

Day 3: Shattering the Mirror of Normality

Readings:

Clips from the movie *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall* (2014)

Lennard Davis, "Introduction to Enforcing Normalcy" [CPK]

Lennard Davis, "Constructing Normalcy" [CPK]

Questions:

- What are myths and how are they created? How do they become "facts" and/or part of fairytales?
- How is the concept of "Mirror, mirror on the wall" a myth?
- How is Davis discussing the concept of "normalcy?"
- How can we put the "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" concept in conversation with disability?

Day 4: Why is Literature/Literary studies important to Disability Studies?

Readings:

Tobin Siebers, "Introducing Disability Aesthetics" [CPK]

Excerpts from Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* [CPK]

Questions:

- What does Morrison mean by "literary whiteness and literary blackness"? How can we apply her theoretical concept to disability?

Week 3

Day 5: The Symbolic Order

Readings:

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" [CPK]

Barbara Suess, "The Writing's on the Wall: Symbolic Orders in "The Yellow Wallpaper"

[CPK]

Questions:

- What does Suess' Lacanian reading of Gilman's story reveal? Why does she feel that a Lacanian reading is important to the understanding of the story?

Day 6: Ways of Seeing: Rhetorics at Play

Readings:

Benjamin Bahan, "Upon the Formation of a Visual Variety of the Human Race" [CPK]

Georgina Kleege, "Here's Looking at You" [CPK]

Questions: Explain the following passages.

- **Bahan:** "…I can't help but wonder about the "what ifs," because it has taken society so long to acknowledge the role of vision and signed language in the lives of Deaf people. So many generations of signers have been handcuffed in a society intoxicated by the ideology that speech is language and vice versa. It is amazing that with these impositions, Deaf people have developed into one of the most visual groups of people on the face of the Earth. One wonders what the possibilities would be if they were allowed to proceed in life unbounded" (96)

- **Kleege:** "Look at me when I'm talking to you. Do you really see all that you say? Or is it a convenience of language to ascribe to my eyes those qualities, emotions, messages you derive from the rest of my face, our surroundings, or the words I speak? Aren't you projecting your own expectations, interpretations, or desires onto my blank eyes? …. If I see your eyes as blank, it is only because I am projecting what I see (or don't see) onto you. But only you can say for sure. Go ahead. Take a look. Pull the wool off your eyes. Tell me what you see" (138).

Week 4

Day 7: Rehabilitation Discourse

Readings:

Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun* (Book 1: "The Dead" Chapters 1-X)

Excerpts from Beth Linker, *War's Waste* [CPK]

Questions:

- Background on Dalton Trumbo
- What type of discourse did the rehabilitation movement foster during and after WWI?

Day 8: The Mask of Rehabilitation

Readings:

Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun* (Book 2: "The Living" Chapters XI-XX)

Questions:

- What does Trumbo's protagonist mean by the mask? Why is this metaphor important to the story?
- What is the significance of the hands on Bonham's forehead?
- What breakthrough does Bonham achieve? Why is Bonham's breakthrough ignored by the medical/military team?

Week 5

Day 9: Heroes and Misfits

Watch:

Film: *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)

Readings:

David A. Gerber, "Heroes and Misfits: The Troubled Social Reintegration of Disabled

Veterans in *The Best Years of Our Lives*" [CPK]

Questions:

- Why is Gerber critiquing the representation of Homer Parrish, played by real-life war veteran Harold Russell?
- How would this film be received today?

Day 10: Masculinity, Disability, and Guilt

Readings:

Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Questions:

- How does Hemingway show Jake as being insecure about his masculinity?
- How does the experience of war shape the characters in the novel?
- Describe Jake's relationship with Brett.

Week 6

Day 11: Masculinity, Disability, and Guilt

Readings:

Dana Fore, "Life Unworthy of Life? Masculinity, Disability, and Guilt in *The Sun Also Rise*s" [CPK]

Blackmore, David. "'In New York It'd Mean I was a . . . ' Masculinity Anxiety and Period Discourses of Sexuality in *The Sun Also Rises*." [CPK]

Questions:

- Dane Fore writes, "Jake could 'pass' as one of the most heroic of heroes. He has suffered the all-important amputation of a 'part'—one which most men would probably consider the most vital 'limb' of all. And yet the injury cannot be paraded in front of the public for acclaim. Because his wound must remain hidden and unknown, it must also remain 'shame'" (84). Explain what Fore means by "shame" and its relationship to masculinity, being a hero, and sustaining war wounds.

Day 12: Eugenic Resistance: The Trouble with Moral Intelligence

Readings:

Eudora Welty, "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies" and Flannery O'Connor, "The Life You Save May be Your Own" [CPK]

Alison Arant, "'A Moral Intelligence': Mental Disability and Eugenic Resistance in Welty's 'Lily Daw and the Three Ladies' and O'Connor's 'The Life You Save May Be Your Own.'" [CPK]

Questions:

- What is Eugenics?
- Explain the three ladies' role in Lily's life. How do they impose their own eugenic beliefs and restraints on Lily?
- How does O'Connor attack the concept that someone's blood determines his or her moral composition?
- How do Welty and O'Connor counter and complicate the eugenic theme of dysgenic scenario in their respective stories?
- How do both authors successfully shift the gaze from the disabled characters to the able-bodied ones?

Week 7

Day 13: Eugenics: The trouble with "Bad Blood"

Readings:

Mary Austin, "The House of Offence" [CPK]

Richards, Penny L., "Bad Blood and Lost Borders: Eugenic Ambivalence in Mary Austin's Short Fiction." [CPK]

Questions:

- Compare Mrs. Henby's life with Hard Mag's. How does Mary Austin complicate the concept of "bad blood"?
- How does Hard Mag convince Mrs. Henby to adopt her child?

Day 14: Eugenics: The Object of Male Gaze and Motherhood

Readings:

O'Neill, Eugene, *Strange Interlude* [CPK]

Questions:

- How do the three men who love Nina "gaze" at her differently?
- Why must Nina perform her motherhood role to perfection?
- Why did Nina and Ned have an affair? Did Nina find the happiness she seeks? Who is Gordon Shaw? How does he reflect the various myths within the play? How is O'Neill criticizing eugenics?

Week 8

Day 15: Eugenics: The Happiness Script

Readings:

O'Neill, Eugene, *Strange Interlude* [CPK]

Tamsen Wolff, "Eugenic O'Neill and the Secrets of *Strange Interlude* [CPK]

Questions:

- How does O'Neill dispel many of the eugenics myth in the play? Who does Nina marry at the end of the play and why?

Day 16: Eugenics and The Unfit

In-class:

Watch "The Black Stork" (1916 film)

Readings:

Take a break**!**

Questions:

- Explain your reaction to the film. Why would it be an unacceptable film today?

Week 9

Day 17: Eugenics: Disabled Child as a Economic Burden

Readings:

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (Benjy section only)

Maria Truchan-Tataryn, "Textual Abuse: Faulkner's Benjy" [CPK]

Questions:

- Describe the Compson family. How does the family fall into a long line of "defective traits"? How is Benjy treated by the family and his caretakers?
- Why does Truchan-Tataryn feel that Faulkner does a great injustice to his description of Benjy?

Day 18: Eugenics: Disabled Child: Almost Human

Readings:

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (Benjy section continued)

Griffiths, Jacqui. "Almost Human: Indeterminate Children and Dogs in *Flush* and *The Sound and the Fury*." [CPK]

Questions:

- How does Griffiths describe Benjy's "animalistic" role in the family?

Week 10

Day 19: Conflation of Disability and Deviance

Readings:

Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Questions:

- How does McCullers represent deafness and mental disability? How does she perpetuate negative stereotyping about disabilities in her novel? Give examples.

Day 20: Eugenics: Conflation of Disability and Deviance

Readings:

Carson McCullers, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

Heidi Krumland "'A big deaf-mute moron': Eugenic Traces in Carson McCullers's *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*." [CPK]

Questions:

- Why does Krumland criticize McCullers for her description of Spiros Antonapoulos?

Week 11

Day 21: Institutionalization: A Counter Narrative

Readings:

Jack London, "The Drooling Ward" [CPK]

Katherine Anne Porter, *Noon Wine* [CPK]

Questions:

- What were mental institutions and asylums in early twentieth century like?
- How does Tom in London's story distinguish himself from the other residents? Why does he prefer living in the institution? How does London use humor in the story? And why?
- How is the Thompsons' farm in Porter's story a mental asylum? How are Mr. Helton, Mr. Thompson, and Mr. Hatch shadowy reflections of each other?

Day 22: Institutionalization: Independence versus Dependency

Readings:

Katherine Anne Porter, "He" [CPK]

Katherine Anne Porter, "Holiday" [CPK]

Questions:

- Explain the mother's reaction and relationship with He. What is the significance of He not having a name? Why does the family send He to an institution?
- How would you describe Ottilie's position in her household? Why is she not included in the family events? What are the narrator's observations and reactions to Ottilie? How does the Muller's household represent Nazi eugenics?

Week 12

Day 23: Institutionalization: Psychosocial Implications in Mental Illness

Readings:

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* [CPK]

Questions:

- What is the significance of the title? What is Blanche's state of mind when she arrives at Elysian Field? What are the psychosocial implications of Blanche's illness?

Day 24: Institutionalization: Psychosocial Implications in Mental Illness

Readings:

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (continued) [CPK]

Questions:

- Describe Blanche's relationships with her sister, her sister's husband, Stanley, and Mitch. How does Stanley take advantage of Blanche? What does the play's ending imply about mental illness?

Week 13:

Day 25: Reports and Presentations

Day 26: Reports and Presentation

Week 14:

Day 27 Review Day

In-Class: Quilting Bee Review

The class will engage in a collaborative and individual "quilting" experience that asks them individually (and collectively) to bring together the major themes, texts, and issues discussed throughout this semester for their final exam.

Day 28: Final Exam

Quilting Bee Final Exam