

TEXTUAL COLLISIONS: THE WRITING PROCESS AND THE MODERNIST
EXPERIMENT

A Dissertation

by

ERIN MICHELLE HOLLIS

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2005

Major Subject: English

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ABSTRACT

Textual Collisions: The Writing Process and the Modernist Experiment. (May 2005)

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This dissertation explores textual junctures such as this in the compositional processes of James Joyce, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy and Ezra Pound that illuminate how these modernists negotiated the fraught position of being an author in the early twentieth century. This approach marks a departure from conventional textual criticism as I look at the intersections between textual criticism and literary theory, demonstrating the effects different theories can have on our understanding of textual criticism. Recent innovations in textual scholarship influenced by poststructuralist theorists allow me to uncover and describe the extent to which each of these four authors construct a self-conscious version of authorship in relation to their larger Modernist aims. This examination reveals how Joyce, Barnes, Loy, and Pound were subject to numerous outside influences, personal insecurities and preoccupations throughout the writing process, indicating their desires to both manipulate and participate in the modernist project of innovation and experimentation.

The first chapter addresses the evolution of Joyce's pre-writing, drafting and revising processes as a form of textual gossip. Joyce excised material from much of his early writing, controlling his work as a gossip controls rumors. As he became

increasingly more inclusive in his writing process, he also reflected a more positive regard for gossip as a similarly inclusive process. The second chapter examines the revision and editing of *Ryder*, *Nightwood*, and *The Antiphon*. Barnes increasingly sought legitimacy for her work by subjecting it to the conventionalizing editing of T.S. Eliot and Emily Holmes Coleman. In the third chapter, I interrogate Pound's poetic practices and his status as an expatriate in order to reveal how Pound felt as an exile to his own writing. The fourth chapter analyzes Loy's marginal status in the modernist canon, arguing that she created a persona through her public presentation of herself in her poems that is responsible for her constant and perpetual rediscovery.

For Tom, the leader of the gossipocracy, for Marian, a kind friend and wise advisor, and for John, my forever friend.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION.....	1
Collisions, Collusions, and Collaborations: The Etymology of this Dissertation	3
Textual Criticism: Some Highlights.....	7
Poststructuralism: Derrida Inc.....	13
When Poststructuralism and Textual Criticism Collide: Creation and Destruction.....	16
Modernism, Sociability and Collaborative Authorship.....	17
The Aftermath: Chapters:.....	19
II “MAN DEAR, DID YOU EVER HEAR?”: JAMES JOYCE’S EVOLUTIONARY GOSSIP.....	26
How Gossip Works	27
<i>Dubliners</i> : Joyce’s Tricky Triangular Gossip	36
<i>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i> : The Trap of Judging Stephen	40
<i>Exiles</i> : The Manipulation of Triangular Gossip.....	55
<i>Ulysses</i> : The Embrace of the Outsider	59
“Molly Bloomagain”: Molly, the Censorship of <i>Ulysses</i> and Gossip.....	76
<i>Finnegans Wake</i> : Inclusive Circular Gossip	84
III “THE WAR, SO BLINDLY WAGED ON THE WRITTEN WORD, HAS LEFT ITS MARK”: DJUNA BARNES AND THE	

CHAPTER	Page
STIGMA OF LEGITIMACY.....	96
Legitimacies: Some Definitions.....	97
<i>Ladies Almanack</i> : A Telling Portent.....	100
<i>Ryder</i> : Expurgation and Barnes's Reaction.....	104
<i>Nightwood</i> : The Stigma of Editing.....	122
<i>The Antiphon</i> : Barnes's Final Compromise.....	138
IV "I AM HOMESICK AFTER MINE OWN KIND": REVISION, DISPLACEMENT AND THE SEARCH FOR HOME IN THE WORK OF EZRA POUND.....	151
Pound's Early Poetry: Victorian Constrictions.....	154
Pound and Imagism.....	156
Ezra Pound and Translation.....	162
<i>Cathay</i> : Pound's Invisible Visible Translation.....	167
The <i>Cantos</i> : Pound's Displacement of the Reader.....	183
V "THE PERPETUAL SURGING OF INVENTION": MINA LOY AND THE DISGUISE OF PUBLICATION.....	191
Modernist Authorship: Negotiating Femininity.....	193
Photographs as Disguise: Loy's Manipulation of Her Audience.....	195
"The Effectual Marriage": Loy's Poetic Invention.....	203
"Once Upon a Time": Loy's Ambivalent <i>Love Songs to Joannes</i>	208
An Apology: Loy as Genius.....	212
Loy and Aging: The Fear of Losing the Mask.....	213
Manifestos: Loy's Outlandish Prose.....	216
Loy's Papers and Privacy.....	220
<i>Insel</i> : Loy's Prose Persona.....	222
Rediscovery and Its Aims: Some Questions.....	223
What the Critics Said: Presentations of Loy.....	225
VI CONCLUSION.....	243
Examining Archives: Some Ethical Considerations.....	244
Modernist Solitude vs. Modernist Sociability: An Unweildy Opposition.....	246
"A way a lone a last a long the".....	248

	Page
WORKS CITED.....	251
VITA	267

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1	Gossip and the Devil Came Also	27
2	The Triangular Model of Gossip.....	33
3	The Rectangular Model of Gossip	34
4	The Circular Model of Gossip.....	35
5	Triangular Gossip in <i>Dubliners</i>	39
6	Triangular Gossip in <i>Portrait</i>	44
7	“Chamber Pot” Picture Censored from <i>Ryder</i>	109
8	“Angel” Picture Censored from <i>Ryder</i>	111
9	“The Beast Thingumbob” and “The Cheerful” Censored from <i>Ryder</i>	112
10	Matthew O’Connor: Illustration from <i>Ryder</i>	121
11	Mina Loy in 1909, Photo by Stephen Haweis.....	197
12	Mina Loy in 1905, Photo by Stephen Haweis.....	197
13	Mina Loy in 1907, Photo by Stephen Haweis.....	198
14	Mina Loy in 1909 (II), Photo by Stephen Haweis	198
15	Mina Loy in 1920, Photo by Man Ray.....	200
16	Mina Loy in 1957, Photo by Jonathan Williams.....	201
17	Loy’s Eyes Cropped for the Cover of <i>Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables</i>	201

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Let us not begin at the beginning, nor even at the archive. But rather at the word “archive”—and with the archive of so familiar a word. Arkhe, we recall names at once the commencement and the commandment. This name apparently coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to the nature or history, there where things commence—physical, historical, or ontological principle—but all the principle according to the law, there where men and gods command, there where authority, social order are exercised, in this place from which order is given—nomological principle.

--Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*

No author can control every specific effect—or even, probably, a very large proportion of the specific effects—of a work in the mind of a reader. It takes at least two people, a sender and a receiver, to constitute communication; with a literary work, collaborative creative activity on the part of a reader is an absolute and unavoidable necessity. “Pure” authorship might be theoretically possible when a writer’s holograph manuscript is locked up unread in a library or an attic, but the “initial purity” of the text would immediately begin to be altered if another person were to cast eyes on it.

--Jack Stillinger, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*

it is not a miseffectual whyacinthinous riot of blots and blurs and bars and balls and hoops and wriggles and juxtaposed jottings linked by spurts of speed

--James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

This dissertation queries several disparate assumptions made about modernism and authorship. Two prevailing threads in criticism on modernism have been either to argue that modernist authors were solitary creatures who kept to themselves, sitting alone in their rooms in order to write their heady texts that they expected no one to be

This dissertation follows the style of *PMLA*.

able to read, or that modernist authors were social, communicating with each other and helping each other in order to produce texts that encouraged active reader participation. I argue that modernist authors were both solitary and social depending on the situation. Modernist authorship is an ambivalent arena, and the four authors in this dissertation—James Joyce, Djuna Barnes, Ezra Pound, and Mina Loy—each negotiated this ambivalence in different ways, often embracing but then immediately rejecting sociability or solitude. To that end, each chapter uses a third term to define these authors' relationships with modernism. For Joyce, the term is “gossip” as he recognizes both the dangers and seductions of the social world. In the chapter on Barnes, I use the term “legitimacy” to explore how she both embraces illegitimacy but desires legitimacy for her work through collaboration with T.S. Eliot and Emily Holmes Coleman among others. “Displacement” is the third term in my discussion of Pound as he communicates his own feelings of displacement to his reader, displacing them. Finally, for Loy, “disguise” is the term as she seeks to hide herself, perpetually reinventing herself so she can participate in the community of modernism. I am not, then, arguing for one understanding of modernist authorship; rather, each author navigates the world of modernism differently even as they all recognize the traps and seductions of the modernist community.

This dissertation demonstrates the fraught nature of modernist authorship by exploring the effects of a collision between three different areas: textual criticism, poststructuralism, and modernism. It considers the compositional processes of James Joyce, Djuna Barnes, Mina Loy, and Ezra Pound, arguing for the importance of

collaboration to textual production at the beginning of the twentieth century and querying the effects that sociability and collaboration had on these four authors. I draw on contemporary methods of textual criticism in which manuscript materials are scrutinized in order to uncover information about underlying tensions in a text or to mark the development of an idea through compositional stages. Recent innovations in textual scholarship influenced by poststructuralist theory allow me to uncover and describe the extent to which each of these four authors constructs a self-conscious version of authorship in relation to their larger modernist aims. This examination reveals how Joyce, Barnes, Loy, and Pound were subject to numerous outside influences, technological advancements, personal insecurities, historical conflicts, and social reforms throughout the writing process, and these influences indicate their desires both to manipulate and to participate in the modernist project of innovation and experimentation. Each of these authors participated in this project differently, and each chapter addresses how they dealt with their modernist encounters.

Collisions, Collusions and Collaborations: The Etymology of This Dissertation

In this dissertation, there is an overwhelming, yet highly critical, focus on etymology. In his work, *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida makes use of the etymology of the word “archive” to complicate the process of archiving. In this same sense, etymology forms a heuristic form (albeit a highly contested one) through which this dissertation examines the manuscripts of four different authors in order to question how they began and the very idea of beginnings and to interrogate the complex nature of authorship within the modernist period. It has become almost a cliché to revert to etymology when discussing literary or philosophical concepts, but looking at a word’s history allows the textual scholar to think through the concept of beginning in

composition in a thorough and multi-dimensional process. Etymologically, the word “etymology” means the “true sense of the word”; following Derrida and his deconstruction of origin, scholars have been increasingly suspicious of the privilege accorded to beginnings and the elision of origin with truth. However, like etymology, traditional textual criticism often seeks the origin of the text as a path to interpretive “truth.” Poststructuralists would argue not to trust these origins by colliding other origins of words with their “original” origins. The practice of etymology is thus a microcosm for textual criticism that can productively be viewed through a poststructuralist lens in order to trouble ideas of origin at the same time that the practical necessity for an origin is recognized.

So, let us look, with some suspicion, at the origins of this dissertation. This dissertation evolved out of desire to interrogate the often conventional practices of textual criticism and the complex and apparently impractical or impracticable theories of poststructuralism by seeing what happens when these critical approaches collide with the difficult and disparate aims of modernism. Etymologically, the word “collide” comes from two French words meaning “together” and “to strike or injure.” “Together,” which can etymologically be traced as “to gather,” provides the background of this dissertation. I “gather” in my dissertation disparate theories in order to shed light on these theories. A “gathering,” too, is part of a book.¹ I could go on with this etymology *ad infinitum*, demonstrating Derrida’s arguments about the indeterminacy of language, but this illustrates my point well enough. I use, for heuristic purposes, three words here that are all connected etymologically with the word, “together”: collision, collusion, and

collaboration. “Collision” means “to strike together,” “collusion” means “to play together” (in the sense of “ludic” play) and “collaboration” means “to work together.” These three inter-related concepts reveal three structural concerns of this dissertation.

Collisions

Collisions imply violence and destruction, which is exactly what happens when textual criticism encounters poststructuralism and vice versa. Their separate theories and methods violently question assumptions in each. For example, the idea of the “copy-text” in textual criticism falters when it collides with poststructuralism’s questioning of origins. And poststructuralism’s deconstructive theory becomes complicated when it is confronted with the practical problems of producing a reading text. A collision almost always results in changes, and by colliding these two theories, they affect each other’s assumptions. There is also another sense of the word that applies here: “to be incompatible.” There is definitely some sense in which these two disciplines are incompatible, but I, along with many others, will take advantage of this incompatibility to produce beneficial results.

Collusions

The word “collusion” usually has a negative connotation—“to plan to trick someone together with someone else.” However, I would like to look at its etymological meaning and its more negative connotations together. “Collusion” literally means “to play together.” The latter half of the word can be related to the word “ludic,” which has become a term commonly used to refer to more playful literature. I use the word “play” in its Derridean sense: “Play is the disruption of presence . . . Play is always play of

absence and presence” (“Structure” 292). Derrida’s concept of “play” disrupts assumptions, and this dissertation disrupts assumptions. This dissertation looks at what happens when textual criticism, poststructuralism and modernism collude. That is, what happens when the three play together, creating gaps and questioning each other. The word’s negative connotation also applies. There is a sense in which modernist authors colluded with each other in order to create an image of modernism and its participants that is belied when one looks at their manuscripts and letters. Michael Tratner argues, for example, that T.S. Eliot, and, to some extent, Ezra Pound, consciously created a view of Modernist authors as solitary.² In the wake of such manuscript evidence as Pound’s extensive editing of *The Waste Land*, this myth has become increasingly questionable, and this dissertation questions it even further by looking at the conscious collusion, or collaboration, in which most of these Modernist authors participated.

Collaborations

“Collaboration” has recently become a positive buzzword in both rhetorical and literary studies. The word means “to work together,” and the more negative connotation can be association with working together treasonably against one’s own country. This connotation can productively be related to the work of modernist authors, who often expatriated themselves from their country, and, in the instance of Pound, who was said to have committed treason by collaborating with the Mussolini regime. I also use the word “collaboration” in the more positive sense. First, my method is a collaboration of sorts between textual criticism and poststructuralism; even as the disparate methods and theories are colliding, they are also collaborating with each other. Secondly, I argue for

a collaborative understanding of textual production in the early twentieth century. “Textual Collisions” highlights the significance of a text’s history and of external effects on the writing process. This emphasis reveals the social nature of authorship. Unlike textual criticism that seeks to uncover a singular authorial intention or to produce a singular text from which all interpretations would and should be derived, this dissertation uses the methods of textual criticism in conjunction with recent literary theory to question a conventional understanding of textual creation. Texts are not created in a vacuum, and textual critics need not work on texts in a vacuum either. This dissertation demonstrates how valuable it can be to combine the traditional methods of textual criticism with more recent concepts of literary theory in order to query the complex textual histories of modernist authors.

Textual Criticism: Some Highlights³

In his introduction to textual criticism, D.C. Greetham explains the difficult position of the textual critic: “. . . the problem of interposition, of standing between author and reader, of interpreting one to the other, of clarifying and elucidating a text whose features may have been obscured by the passage of time” (295). This rather romantic view of the textual critic illustrates some of the assumptions inherent in textual criticism as textual critics are seen as the ones who find the text, the ones who make a text shine by “clarifying and elucidating” it. Greetham continues:

For the single most important characteristic of textual *criticism* . . . is that is it *critical*, it does involve a speculative, personal, and individual confrontation of one mind by another, despite the attempts by some

textual critics to turn the process into a science, and despite the frequent misunderstanding by non-textuists, who often suppose that textual criticism is merely a mechanical imposition of certain technical procedures in order to produce “definitive editions” of works that can be accepted without question and will never need editing again. (295-96)

And, indeed, textual critics often must interpret manuscript material to produce a published text, but their interpretation is sometimes invisible. That is, the reader does not know what the textual critic has done to the text before it is published in its final form. Of course, this is not always the case. Sometimes the textual work is visible, as in Hans Walter Gabeler’s synoptic edition of *Ulysses* in which he literally marks the text with all of its stages and changes. And when he was confronted with variants, he often chose the most “Joycean” possibility rather than privileging the first or the last variant. Additionally, sometimes it is entirely the reader’s fault that the textual critic is invisible because they often accept a text at face value, without stopping to question how the text was produced. This dissertation questions the ability of the textual critic to “clarify” a text, complicating the texts instead, making it clear that there is not one “right” way to look at a text’s history, urging readers to look behind the surface of the “final” text to its history.

Karl Lachmann was one of the first textual critics to develop a complex and specific method for organizing and editing an author’s manuscripts. He created specific standards for textual criticism that had not existed before, including the idea that if the

two texts have the same errors they must have the same origins. Lachmann also contributed the idea of several different stages of editing the text:

first, *recensio* (recension) or the charting of variants (which can then translate into “true” readings and “errors”); and second, *emendation* (emendation, often having to resort to a third stage, *divination*, divination), or the rectification of such error—all with the end of reconstructing the physical features of a witness that the editor does not have access to (the archetype). (Greetham 323)

Lachmann’s rigorous method would influence almost all textual critics who followed him because he was one of the first to establish actual principles to follow. For example, W.W. Greg follows Lachmann’s method by creating an even more rigorous, almost algebraic, method. But sometimes the influence was caused by reaction as some later textual critics vehemently opposed his methods by pointing out the limiting nature of Lachmann’s system in that it allows for only two tiers of a text’s history when there may be multiple tiers.

Fredson Bowers and W.W. Greg are two of the most (in)famous textual critics. As Greetham tells us, “it is quite proper to speak of a ‘Greg-Bowers’ school of textual scholarship” (332). Bowers was quite influenced by the algebraic method of Greg, and Bowers held and still holds considerable influence over the community of textual criticism.⁴ Greg questioned the “widely held textual assumption that the most authoritative copy-text for a scholarly edition should be the last edition published during the author’s lifetime” (333). Greg was also responsible for creating the now famous

distinction between “substantives” (errors that affected the meaning of the text) and “accidentals” (errors of spelling, punctuation, etc.), and he argues that there should only be one copy-text which can then be emended by readings from other relevant forms of the text. This resulted in the so-called “eclectic editions” that collected together several variants. Bowers, along with G. Thomas Tanselle, was a great supporter of Greg’s theory and used it in his scholarly editions until it became the dominant method of textual criticism.⁵ The Greg-Bowers method resulted in “the copy-text school of eclectic editing designed to produce a reading clear-text whose features were fulfillment of authorial intentions by the selection of authorially sanctioned substantive variants from different states of the text, and whose copy-text was selected on the basis of its accidentals being as close as possible to authorial usage” (Greetham 335). This method has come under considerable attack as critics have questioned its blind adherence to the idea of copy-text and its isolation of the author.

Hans Walter Gabler rejected the primacy of the copy-text in his edition of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Instead of using one copy-text as his exemplar, Gabler created a “continuous manuscript,” using various manuscripts as a provisional copy-text rather than any published version of the text. Thus, because Gabler has no fixed copy-text, he allows for the inclusion of all variants in his “continuous manuscript.” This method is reflected in his synoptic edition of *Ulysses*, in which the history of the text is made clear and the reader can identify the changes the text went through by decoding his editorial symbols. Gabler, thus, questions the authority of the “copy-text” and the “eclectic edition” which erases the history of the text.

Jerome McGann reacts to the isolation of the author inherent in the “eclectic method” by arguing for a social understanding of authorship.⁶ He argues that no text is written in a vacuum, and every text is open to the influence of all those who have come into contact with the text, such as the typesetter, editor, publisher, censor, and even the reader. Both Gabler and McGann question the traditional methods of Greg and Bowers. The eclectic method has also been questioned by the method of “Genetic Criticism” that has recently become increasingly more popular. The method began in France, and it looks at the evolution of a text. This method has become increasingly prevalent in Joyce Studies. Such critics as Daniel Ferrer, Jean-Michele Rabaté, Michael Groden, Sam Slote, and David Hayman have used genetic criticism to examine the evolution of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.⁷ *Finnegans Wake* especially lends itself to this method because there is so much manuscript material that the evolution is easy to trace. Genetic critics generally try to understand why a text evolved a certain way. Recently, more attention has been paid to connecting textual criticism with literary criticism. George Bornstein and Philip Cohen have been two of the most vocal proponents of understanding Modernist literature in terms of textual criticism.⁸

In his recent article, “Textual Criticism at the Millennium,” G. Thomas Tanselle outlines some recent trends in textual criticism and their advantages and disadvantages. He points out the overwhelming interest in seeing texts as social in the wake of the influential arguments of textual critics such as McGann:

During the last part of the twentieth century, however, a focus on texts as social products came to characterize the bulk of the discussion of textual

theory, if not editions themselves. For the first time, the majority of writings on textual matters expressed a lack of interest in, and often active disapproval of, approaching texts as the products of individual creators; and it promoted instead the forms of texts that emerged from the social process leading to public distribution, forms that were therefore accessible to readers. (1)

Tanselle, then, sees textual criticism as moving away from a focus on individual authorial intention, but he sees this move as potentially both beneficial and damaging:

This dramatic shift has produced some benefits, but it has not been an unmixed blessing. Both the turn away from the author and the emphasis on textual instability reflect trends in literary and cultural criticism and thus are evidence of the growing interconnection between fields that for too long had little influence on each other. . . . These welcome developments, however, came at a price. One is that the prose of many textual critics has been infiltrated with the fashionable buzz-words of literary theory and with a style of writing that often substitutes complexity of expression for careful thought. Another is the notion that recognizing the importance of socially produced texts involves rejecting the study of authorial intentions. (1-2)

This dissertation might be described as pragmatic: it recognizes that textual critics must pay attention to authorial intention to understand a text's history, but, by seeing authorial intention through a Derridean lens, this dissertation complicates what an author is even

as it recognizes the necessity of the author. Tanselle demonstrates that important strides have been made in connecting textual criticism with more recent literary theories, such as poststructuralism, but the two disciplines still betray a mistrust of each other.

Poststructuralism: Derrida Inc.

Jacques Derrida has been the most influential theorist behind this dissertation, but I also engage some ideas from other poststructuralist theorists. Derrida is most well-known for his theory of deconstruction, which is a complex system for analyzing texts that emphasizes the idea of *differance*:

The end of linear writing is indeed the end of the book, even if, even today, it is within the form of a book that new writings—literary or theoretical—allow themselves to be, for better or for worse, encased. It is less a question of confiding new writings to the envelope of a book than of finally reading what wrote itself between the lines in the volumes. That is why, beginning to write without the line, one begins to reread past writing according to a different organization of space. If today the problem of reading occupies the forefront of science, it is because of this suspense between two ages of writing. Because we are beginning to write, to write differently, we must reread differently. (50)

Just as Derrida recognizes how we are beginning to write and read differently, his theory encourages us to look at texts and their histories differently. Poststructuralism is compatible with textual criticism because of this very understanding of how texts work. Textual critics read “between the lines” tracing the history of a text. And I would extend

this argument further to say we must approach the manuscripts of a book differently. Looking into the history and evolution of a text should not be undertaken without first realizing the underlying tensions—what we are not seeing about our method but should be seeing.

Derrida's twinned concepts of "the trace" and being "under erasure" are invaluable to a textual approach to modernism. Derrida argues that all words and all language contain a "trace" of former meaning, of what, as he argues, has been placed "under erasure." He argues that every absence, every former connotation is thus present in the word:

The presence-absence of the trace, which one should not even call its ambiguity but rather its play (for the word *ambiguity* requires the logic of presence, even when it begins to disobey that logic), carries in itself the problems of the letter and the spirit, of body and soul, and of all the problems whose primary affinity I have recalled. (43)

Derrida further argues that "a mediation upon the trace should undoubtedly teach us that there is no origin, that is to say simple origin" and "the trace *is nothing*" (46, 47).

Visually, when something is placed under erasure, it looks like this: ~~trace~~. If we understand an author's emendation as an "erasure" we can productively examine the presence of a previous version in its absence from the final text. The word is both present and absent at the same time, creating a complex "play" with its origins, its meanings, and the idea of writing. Because of his complicated interest in origins, Derrida quite often turns to etymology as a means of deconstruction. He examines the

“play” between meanings in order to argue for the possibility of multiple interpretations and to examine the assumptions inherent in binaries and dualisms. These ideas are, once again, reflected in the terminology of textual criticism. The “palimpsest,” a manuscript that has been erased and written over but on which traces of the erased text remain, mirrors Derrida’s “trace.” The palimpsest plays with ideas of presence and absence. Is the erased text still there, is it fully present? Quite often, the text written over the erased text on a palimpsest has no relation to what was first written on the palimpsest. This, too, recalls Derrida’s “trace” since the distinctive meanings of words are exactly what allows for his concept of “play.”

Derrida’s well-known, inventive concepts have influenced my understanding of other theorists and critics cited in this dissertation. The first chapter, which focuses on James Joyce, his drafting processes and gossip, interrogates theories about gossip using a Derridean approach which examines the traceable assumptions undergirding the prevalent censure of gossip as discourse. The second chapter employs the theories of Michael Warner, a queer theorist who has been influenced by Derridean concepts, in order to examine Djuna Barnes’s complex relationship to the competing alternatives of aesthetic and social legitimacy. Chapter three complicates the field of translation studies by looking at it with Derridean eyes in order to demonstrate why and how Ezra Pound revised his work so often. The final chapter presents Mina Loy’s *oeuvre* in the light of a poststructuralist theory of authorship, influenced not only by Derrida, but also by Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes. Derrida’s concepts are constantly present in this dissertation; there are traces of them everywhere.

When Poststructuralism and Textual Criticism Collide: Creation and Destruction

Textual criticism is often seen as conservative and inflexible, lagging behind the progress of other humanities disciplines. Both Greetham and Tanselle argue for a connection between the two disciplines, and Tanselle sees the connection as both beneficial and possibly damaging. Recently, many studies and collections have focused on combining the disciplines.⁹ There is still, however, an overwhelming belief that textual criticism has remained an insular discipline that doesn't pay attention to advancements in other areas. Even though this criticism is somewhat unfair, there is still a huge gulf between textual criticism and literary theory. These two apparently clashing methods would benefit from their collision.

Derrida's ideas about "the trace" and "erasure" are especially applicable here. All final texts, all "products" of a writer's work, contain numerous traces and numerous instances of erasure, which are seemingly invisible. Textual criticism highlights these traces, making them present even as their absence is recognized. Looking at a text's complex history demonstrates that all final products are founded on rocky ground at best. Derrida's theories and the theories of his colleagues help to question the sometimes unexamined obsession with origins that textual criticism often entails. This is not to say that textual critics should abandon an interest in origins altogether, but rather that we might develop a more complex understanding of the relationship between origin and publication, manuscript and printing. Derrida's ideas also benefit from an encounter with textual criticism. Sometimes, practical considerations require textual critics to cling to old ideas of authorship: how can one edit a text, using the manuscripts of a particular

author, without in some way privileging the authenticity and authority of these sources? What kind of text would a thorough-going poststructuralist approach produce? Is hypertext particularly adapted to the demands of concepts like trace and erasure? Are such texts useful for either students or professional critics?

The collision of these two disciplines can result in a questioning of both. Practically, could a poststructuralist textual critic abandon all ideas of origin? Probably not. But should these ideas about origin remain unexamined and uncomplicated? Probably not either. Poststructuralism benefits textual criticism by reminding textual critics to be suspicious of definitive texts, to question origins, and to realize the complicated nature of their work. Textual criticism helps poststructuralism by grounding that theory in the material text. Both disciplines are often accused of going to extremes: textual critics are seen as unchanging and old-fashioned and poststructuralists, resisting limitation and allowing deconstruction to function *ad infinitum*, are seen as impractical. While these accusations are often based on misunderstanding, a collision between the two practices could temper these tendencies.

Modernism, Sociability, and Collaborative Authorship

The method resulting from a collision of textual criticism and poststructuralism reveals a great deal about what it meant to be an author within the modernist period. In the past, modernist authors have been seen as solitary figures. Modernist authors have often been accused of elitism, which stems from this idea of modernists as solitary figures cut off from the “real world” who make their work too difficult for “everyday people.” Each chapter of this dissertation attempts to demonstrate just how false that

notion is. This dissertation does not, however, argue for a simple idea of collaborative authorship either. The word “collaboration” contains traces of negativity, which in this instance could be seen as elitism. That is, the modernist authors could be assumed to have collaborated with each other to the exclusion of their readers, creating a coterie readership. The textual evidence belies this assumption as most of these authors created texts that encouraged widespread participation, even before they were “complete.”

While each chapter demonstrates how each author participated in some kind of social authorship, I complicate the idea of social authorship, wondering what effect prevailing assumptions about what it meant to be an author and what it meant to be a modernist have had on each writer. By looking at the work of these authors through poststructuralist and textual lenses, it becomes clear that these authors actually encouraged the participation of others with their texts. Even Ezra Pound, who is often grouped with Eliot as one of the most solitary of modernists, is also widely known for his editorial work. He allowed for participation with his work, even though as he invites people in he is constantly pushing them away.

What does it mean to be social? Is being social always a good thing? Does collaboration always have positive effects? Collaboration is commonly seen as desirable now. But, in some sense, collaboration can have both positive and negative effects on a writer’s work. Such is the case with Djuna Barnes, who allowed her work to be produced collaboratively, often resentfully letting her editors control her work even as she voiced her gratitude for their help. But Joyce has a more positive connection with sociability since he allows his readers to participate in the creation of meaning in texts,

preferring to think of the novel as a machine for producing ideas, and creating texts that constantly participate in collaborative processes through influence and allusion. But being social sometimes means producing an acceptable public persona, a less authentic self. Mina Loy reacted to the pressures of modernist sociability by creating an outward persona that often acted as a shield. The social, collaborative world of modernism was not always a kind or friendly place, and textual production during the modernist period demonstrates how fraught with traps and uncertainties creating a work could be. Each of the authors in this dissertation had to deal with the sometimes positive, sometimes negative, and sometimes ambivalent attitude of the difficult world surrounding their work, affecting how they presented themselves and their work to each other and to their readers. Sociability and collaboration thus represent more than a double-edged sword that was apt to cause both pain and joy—they represent the ambivalence of writing within modernism—a discipline that produces different effects depending on how it is approached. Each of these authors approaches the world of modernism in distinctly different ways, producing different perspectives on a world that has often been seen as monolithic and unyielding.

The Aftermath: Chapters

Drafting: James Joyce and Gossip

This chapter examines Joyce's complex writing process, examining changes in how he approached composition from his early work in *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*. His writing style mimics gossip in different ways. Many critics have argued that Joyce's writing process was always accretive, but it can also be argued that in his early work, he

cut more than he added; he is the soul of discretion, making numerous cuts for the purposes of concealment. By incorporating the concept of gossip that Patricia Meyers Spacks creates in her important work entitled, quite simply, *Gossip*, this chapter demonstrates how Joyce's attitude towards the idea of gossip evolves as his writing process becomes more inclusive and less secretive. He moves from the position of isolated gossiper, controlling the rumors of his text, to the position of inclusive gossiper and gossipee, allowing gossip free reign as he lets his texts gossip with each other and with the texts that influenced him from the Bible to Wagner to advertisements. There are three models of gossip represented in his texts. He begins with a triangular model of gossip, creating distinctions between gossiper and gossipee that make outsiders of many of his characters. This model of gossip is especially at work in *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Exiles*. He begins to question this model in *Exiles*, giving the gossipees power over rumor that they had not previously possessed. Joyce's writing process for each of these texts was very controlled. He often deleted information that might expose his characters' secrets, and he acted as the master gossiper, retaining control of information about his characters. In *Ulysses*, Joyce becomes a little bit more ambivalent about gossip. Sometimes, as with the character Molly, he embraces gossip's potential for inclusion; yet, at other times, he remains critical of its effects. Following Sean Murphy's discussion of exclusion and inclusion, I argue that Joyce's model for gossip has become more rectangular as he begins to be more inclusive.¹⁰ The addition of another point to the model allows for more movement within the model. Thus, gossipees often are not entirely excluded as others sympathize with them or are aligned

with them. Joyce's writing style becomes more inclusive as he begins to write through accretion rather than through erosion. The rectangular model of writing and gossip allows for a more complex attitude than the triangular model, but it still creates distinctions between gossiper and gossipee and between the author and his audience. Finally, with *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce embraced gossip with a circular model in which no one and everyone is an outsider. He manipulates the idea of gossip as he manipulates his text, allowing readers to become a part of the writing process. That he titled his final text *Work in Progress* when he was presenting it in parts in little magazines (such as *transition*) indicates how much he wanted his readers to participate in the production of the text. As he becomes more inclusive with his concept of gossip, indicating its possible positive effects while he embraces its negative connotations, he lets go of the idea of authority.

Revision and Editing: Djuna Barnes and Legitimacy

This chapter argues that Djuna Barnes sought legitimacy for herself as a modernist author even as she embraced less conventional social practices in her work. The revision and editing of her work reveal her increasing desire for legitimacy as an author. Early in her career, she did not seek as much acceptance for her work. Her novel, *Ryder*, was expurgated for fear of censorship. Her reaction was one of great anger that is reflected in her foreword. She purposefully marks her text so that her readers know it has been censored. In her later works, Barnes became more willing to compromise her writing by allowing others to edit it and to impose their own points of view. Her most famous work, *Nightwood*, was edited by T.S. Eliot and Emily Holmes

Coleman. While Coleman was a more collaborative and more compassionate editor than Eliot, she did make some changes that were not sanctioned by Barnes. Eliot was egregious in his changes, taking out material that he thought censors would object to, but that may have offended only his own sensibilities. Eliot also wrote the foreword to the novel, legitimating Barnes's work by arguing for its modernist sensibility and aesthetic difficulty. I argue that this editing has marked Barnes's text, but by an absence rather than a presence of a stigma. The stigma of legitimacy marks her text with the absence of any mark, making it less authentic than her earlier text, *Ryder*. With one of her final works, *The Antiphon*, Barnes makes the most compromises. Once again, Eliot edited her work, deleting material he thought to be too offensive. Eliot wrote a blurb for *The Antiphon* that is similar in tone and style to his foreword for *Nightwood*, but Barnes rejected this blurb because it was too insulting. Her notes also show her conflicted feelings about accepting Eliot's help, which, at the same time, she perceived as necessary for publication. As her work evolved, Barnes became more ambivalent about the idea of legitimacy in her work. She begins by almost completely embracing unconventional modes of existence in her works like *Ladies Almanack*, but later becomes unsure of these illegitimacies as she shows the effects of less conventional lives. Barnes increasingly sought legitimacy for her work, and in turn, became increasingly more ambivalent about the difficulties of narrating unconventional sexualities. The stigma of legitimacy on her work affects her as an author, making her question her integrity.

Translation: Ezra Pound and Displacement

In this chapter, I argue that Ezra Pound created several different personas that belie the central position in the modernist community he has come to inhabit. Pound wanted to communicate to his readers his own feelings of not belonging because he was an exile. Pound constantly recreated himself as he sought a place of comfort within the modernist community. He created different literary movements, such as Imagism and Vorticism, translated frequently, and included foreign languages in his poetry all in attempts to create a new place for himself as he outgrew the previous place. This constant revision of his own persona has several results: it highlights Pound's lack of certainty about his place in modernism and it displaces readers for his work so that they feel the same kind of exile that he did. Pound consciously adopts the mantle of exile; yet, he is constantly looking for a home he cannot find. He looks in literary movements, other languages, and other countries, until, after Pisa, he finally realizes he will never have a home. He thus explodes the idea of home in his own work.

Publication: Mina Loy and Disguise

The final chapter examines Mina Loy and how she consciously created a public persona designed to inhabit the margins of the modernist canon. Loy has been constantly rediscovered since she began publishing work—an interesting phenomenon. Critics often want to claim her for their own, establishing an exclusive Loy coterie. Loy might be better served if her intended persona were maintained. Loy was conscious of the difficulty inherent in being a modernist woman author, so she created disguises to hide behind. She used different mediums, such as photography and poetry to present

herself to the world, and in this presentation she created what she called her “incognito.” In photographs Loy presents a consciously posed, mysterious image of herself. In her poetry, she used shock to disguise. I look specifically at her major poems, such as “Partuition,” one of the first poems to discuss childbirth from a woman’s point of view, and *Love Songs to Joannes*, which creates a subtle critique of traditional love at the same time it betrays a desire for that love. The result of this disguise, this persona, has been a strange placement of Loy in the modernist canon. Critics keep making bids for her to become part of the canon, but she is always being pushed back to the margins. I examine how Loy is constructed in different publications of her texts, looking at the introductions, jacket copy, and blurbs that frame her as an author. Questioning the idea of rediscovery, I wonder why someone seeks to rediscover an author. That is, is this decision always altruistic? While Loy should not be entirely ignored, it may be more productive to let her stay in the margins she created for herself.

NOTES

¹ A gathering of a book is the pages put together in sequence. This is done differently depending on when the book was produced. In older texts, the gatherings are put in order according to signatures.

² See Michael Tratner’s *Modernism and Mass Politics: Joyce, Woolf, Eliot, Yeats* for further discussion. Tratner points out that “Writers as diverse as George Lukács and Maurice Beebe have held that the modernist era marked a retreat from Victorian concern with social issues into introspection, solipsism, or aesthetic detachment” (3).

³ For more complete introductions to textual criticism, see D.C. Greetham’s *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, G. Thomas Tanselle’s recent article “Textual Criticism at the Millennium,” and the recently revised 3rd edition of William Proctor Williams and Craig S. Abbot’s *An Introduction to Bibliographical and Textual Studies*.

⁴ He was, after all, editor of *Studies in Bibliography* for 52 years.

⁵ For further information, see Bowers’ *Principles of Bibliographical Description* and Tanselle’s *A Rationale of Textual Criticism and Textual Criticism since Greg, A Chronicle, 1950-1985*.

⁶ See his *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*.

⁷ See Daniel Ferrer’s “The Freudful Couchmare of L: Joyce’s Notes on Freud and the Composition of Chapter XVI of *Finnegans Wake*,” Michael Groden’s *Ulysses in Progress*, Sam Slote’s “Reading *Finnegans Wake* Genetically,” and David Hayman’s *The Wake in Transit* and “From *Finnegans Wake*: A Sentence in Progress.”

⁸ See *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, edited by George Bornstein and Ralph Williams, *Representing Modernist Texts: Editing and Interpretation*, edited by George Bornstein, and *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, edited by Philip Cohen.

⁹ See, for example, the University of Michigan Press's series "Editorial Theory and Literary Criticism," such as Joseph Grigely's *Textualterity* and Peter L. Shillingsburg's *Resisting Texts*. Also see any of the articles in the collections mentioned in the previous footnote.

¹⁰ See Sean Murphy's *James Joyce and Victims: Reading the Logic of Exclusion* for more discussion of the rectangular model.

CHAPTER II

“MAN DEAR, DID YOU EVER HEAR?”: JAMES JOYCE’S EVOLUTIONARY

GOSSIP

The drafting and composition of James Joyce’s works have recently been the object of scrutiny. From genetic interpretations to more conventional examinations of his processes in book collections and journals, Joyce’s extensive notes and drafts have been the subject of numerous books and articles.¹ Most of these studies focus on either *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake* because the available material is so rich for these texts.² Joyce’s other texts, however, also provide some interesting insights into his process. Furthermore, while most of the studies have focused on one text, comparing the drafting processes of all of Joyce’s texts can help to reveal both sustained and changing preoccupations. In this chapter, I will argue that Joyce’s notes reveal that he composed each of his texts uniquely. Furthermore, I will look at transitional texts to explain why Joyce continually changed his drafting and composition process. Informing my explication of his notes will be the idea that Joyce’s method in the notebooks and manuscripts functioned much as does gossip in a community. And in fact, thematically, throughout Joyce’s work there is a consistent preoccupation with the idea of gossip. Joyce created his texts following the codes that gossip generates and also produced both simple and sophisticated reactions to gossip. By examining Joyce’s notes, drafts, and published editions, I will explore his multiple uses of and reactions to gossip and how he both troubles and participates in gossip and all its apparent positive and negative

connotations. Joyce encourages his readers of all levels to have different understandings of gossip, and the level at which readers understand his complex use of gossip depends on the knowledge the reader has of both his published texts and the extensive notes and draft material that accompany it. Furthermore, Joyce also used the model of gossip in the writing of his works in order to create a specific status for himself as a modernist author: by encouraging his critics to uncover the “secrets” that his notes contain, Joyce in many ways fosters a Joycean community that has often reacted to his work in a gossipy way, circulating rumors. This is not to say that Joyceans are merely trivializing his work; rather, Joyce’s work is specifically subject to a kind of play that I see as potentially beneficial to the understanding of his work.

How Gossip Works



Figure 1: Gossip and the Devil Came Also

Figure 1 illustrates the prevailing negative attitude towards gossip. In her book-length discussion, *Gossip*, Patricia Meyer Spacks develops an extensive and intricate theory of gossip. Drawing on sources from Boswell's biography of Samuel Johnson to William Faulkner, Spacks concludes that gossip becomes increasingly ambivalent as we increasingly understand that it has two sides: the negative, malicious side where people aim to hurt or control others by using secrets and rumors, and the positive, helpful side that creates community and gives the gossipers power when they might not have had it before. Spacks begins her study by examining the etymology of the word gossip, which originally meant "god-related" (Spacks 25). The word used to refer to godparents and the meaning slowly altered over time as the term became more pejorative. At one point, according to Spacks, the word referred to a close group of friends or family, but it gradually came to mean a group of women talking, which led to the idea of gossip as idle or trivial talk that often has malicious intent. It is interesting to note that the word pejorates as it becomes part of women's discourse; that is, quite often, when a word becomes part of the arena of women it acquires a negative connotation. With all of his interest in language and punning, Joyce might well have been extremely interested in gossip's conceptual deterioration over time. A word that began with such positive associations signifying close relationships such as godparents intrigued Joyce. In *Finnegans Wake*, for example, he uses the word "gossip" in a section related to godparents: "The proto was traipsing through the tangle then, Mathew Walker, godsons' goddestfar, deputizing for gossipocracy . . ." (476). Besides the obvious relation between "godsons" and "gossipocracy," Roland McHugh's annotation reveals a more

subtle connection. The word “goddestfar” resembles the Danish word “bedstefar” which means “godfather” (476). Joyce, thus, knew the history of the word, and, in his final work plays with its meaning in intriguing ways, which I will discuss later in this chapter. The etymology of the word “gossip” provides an opportunity for a great deal of play with meaning that intrigued Joyce.

Based on its etymology, Spacks develops a theory about the ambivalent nature of gossip: “Gossip feels good: a form of closeness, a mode of power. And gossip feels bad: devious and treacherous power, potentially threatening attachment. In literature and life, it signifies ambivalence” (63). While Spacks’s understanding of gossip is complex and enriching, she limits her definition by creating a binary of the two sides. I would like to argue that her definition of gossip could be even more ambivalent by first examining the two sides she elucidates and then complicating these sides by examining the play between the two through the multiple lenses of Joyce’s prewriting notes, his drafting process, and his published texts.

Spacks discusses the negative side of gossip quite extensively throughout her work. She begins by discussing gossip’s reputation, cleverly developing a paradigm in which she gossips about gossip. She recognizes the way negative or malicious gossip works both in “the world” and in literature, discussing a definition of gossip developed by Roland Barthes, who argues that gossip is “murder by language” (30). She examines why gossip has such negative associations, pointing out its objectifying nature: “Even ‘innocent’ forms of gossip objectify the person considered; those talking communicate at

the cost of another, whom they reduce to a kind of fiction” (34). As I have previously discussed, this reduction takes away the gossipee’s power and agency.

Gossip also changes as it passes through people’s mouths. An excellent example of this phenomenon is the popular children’s game that is most commonly called “telephone” but is also sometimes called “gossip.” In the game, the participants sit in a circle, and someone begins the game by whispering a few sentences or a “secret” into his or her neighbor’s ear. This continues until the final person hears the “secret,” and this participant says it aloud. Without fail, the “secret” changes significantly by the end so that it barely resembles the original “secret.” This game is a microcosm for what happens when people gossip. The original rumor may or may not begin as the truth, but by the time it is widely circulated, it bears little relation to its beginnings. This aspect of gossip can be related to the writing process and to revision specifically as the “secret” a text begins with barely resembles the “rumor” it becomes.³ This game also demonstrates one of the key elements of gossips: the disguising of rumors as a “secret.” Because people think the information they are being told is something not many people know, the information becomes more valuable. Gossip is all about who knows the secret and who has the privilege to be part of the “inner circle.”

Spacks’s discussion of the negative connotations of gossip focuses mainly on gossip’s reputation, recounting many instances of malicious gossip and why people engage in it. Her discussion of the positive connotations of gossip, however, is more fully developed and exciting, which demonstrates that even though she wants to argue that gossip is ambivalently two-sided, she is much more invested in creating a positive

perspective of gossip and in showing that this side of gossip is less acknowledged.

Spacks begins her discussion of positive gossip, or what she calls “serious” gossip by recalling how a friend of hers “defines gossip as *healing talk*” (57). She develops her friend’s idea:

Healing comes from sharing. Indeed, in the most common paradigm of gossip—two people talking about a third—aggression becomes in effect a function of sharing. The gossiping pair establish their alliance at the expense of another, displacing the hostility onto the absent third.

Reduced to means rather than ends, aggression serves alliance. (57)

Thus, gossip is beneficial because it gives the gossipers a chance to vent and eliminate feelings of aloneness and it also allows the gossipers to gain insight about the third person that clears the way for forgiveness. This intimacy, however, creates conflict in the gossipers that sheds light on why gossip is so pejorative. The intimacy created through gossip is dangerous, since this intimacy encourages the telling of secrets that can then be turned into gossip about the gossipers; that is, the gossipers who participate in the intimacy that gossiping fosters is always in danger of being turned into the gossipee.

Although Spacks develops an intriguing theory of gossip here based on the community and intimacy it creates, she still uses a version of gossip that creates an outsider.

Spacks’s argument raises a question that I will be addressing in relation to Joyce’s works: what might happen to gossip if there were no gossipee, or if the gossipee had some of the power?

For Spacks, gossip is not only “healing,” but also “playful,” creating possibilities that do not exist in everyday “straight” talk: “the metaphor of play, in its multiple senses, summarizes gossip’s complexities of emotional meaning” (63). Spacks’s discussion of play brings to mind Jacques Derrida’s poststructuralist understanding of the word “play.”⁴ Focusing on the gaps existing in language because of its instability, Derrida argues that from those gaps emerges a sense in which language is constantly shifting through a collaborative web of associations. He discusses the almost infinite multiplicity of meaning created by this play. In fact, Spacks’s “multiple senses” of play actually demonstrate Derrida’s point. By listing all the varied and contrasting definitions of the word “play” she demonstrates the concept of “play” that Derrida asserts.

Although Spacks does a great deal to reinvigorate the idea of gossip, playing up its positive aspects, she concentrates primarily on the triangular and Freudian view of jokes that can be productively applied to the way gossip functions.⁵ That is, gossip always works through triangulation.⁶ If we modify Freud’s theory about jokes slightly, it clarifies the way gossip conventionally functions.

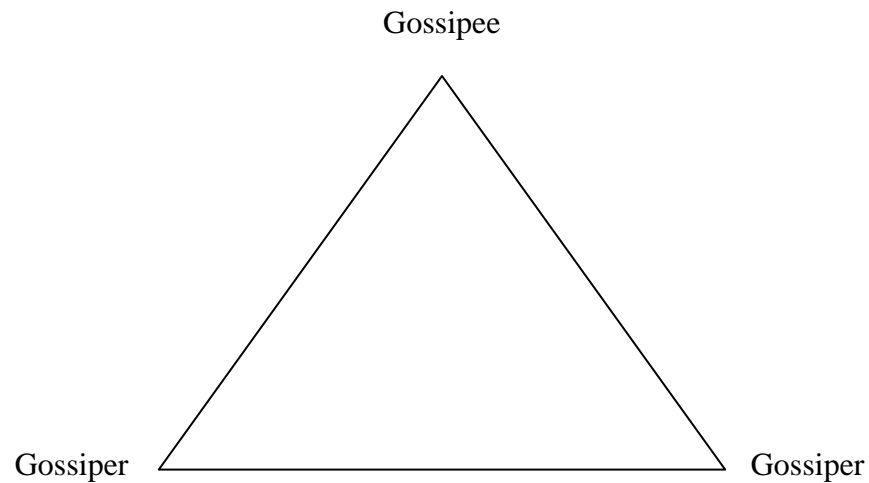


Figure 2: The Triangular Model of Gossip

Thus, as figure 2 demonstrates, Spacks argues that a sense of community, sharing, and healing is created between the two gossipers, but at the cost of making someone an outsider.

In his book, *James Joyce and Victims: Reading the Logic of Exclusion*, Sean P. Murphy presents a different model for understanding group communication. Murphy argues that Joyce questions binary (oppositional) and ternary (dialectic) structures like Freud's model of jokes throughout his work. While Murphy does not focus specifically on gossip, his model suggests a rectangular alternative to the triangular dynamic of exclusion that can be applied to gossip:



Figure 3: The Rectangular Model of Gossip

Figure 3 demonstrates Murphy's argument; by adding one more point to the model, the way exclusion happens becomes more complicated. The fourth point can be excluded, side with the excluded, or side with the excluders. I do not label the points here as they are open to change as the gossipers and gossipees manipulate one another; this model forms a slightly less rigid understanding of gossip than the triangular model, although it still distinguishes between gossipers and gossipees, the boundary between the two is hazy. I will discuss this model more specifically later in this chapter in relation to *Ulysses*.

A more appropriate and less limiting model of gossip is to look at gossip as circular, like the children's game "telephone." Since a circle has no points, the participants do not remain in a fixed spot; rather, gossipers and gossipees can move around the circle at will, putting gossip in a constant state of flux:

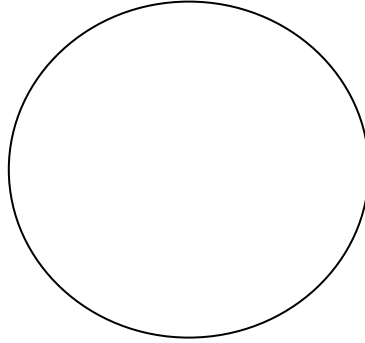


Figure 4: The Circular Model of Gossip

The old paradox, obsessively interesting to Joyce in *Finnegans Wake*, that it is impossible to square a circle seems particularly applicable here. According to mathematicians of Joyce's time, the area of a circle cannot ever be reconfigured as a square because there will always be an irrational remainder left.⁷ By looking at gossip as a circle, it becomes possible to include different permutations of gossip that are not available in the triangular or rectangular models. Figure 4 demonstrates the circular model of gossip.

Joyce's attitude towards gossip follows the path of these three models of gossip as does his writing process. And his interaction with his reader also changes as his career progresses. At the beginning of his writing career, he approaches both gossip and writing using primarily a triangular model in *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a*

Young Man, and *Exiles*. The rectangular model comes to the fore in *Ulysses*, and with *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce begins to embrace the circular model.

***Dubliners*: Joyce's Tricky Triangular Gossip**

According to Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz, editors of the standard edition of *Dubliners*, there is relatively little extant manuscript material for the stories.⁸ Based on their manuscript findings they speculate that Joyce must have composed the stories fairly completely in his imagination before committing pen to paper. When he did cut from a text, he generally cut extensively. Even though so few extant manuscript pages exist, extrapolations can be made from what is available. For most of the stories, what remain extant are galleys, page proofs, and printed pages from two different publishers, Maunsel and Company and Grant Richards. Maunsel and Company never published the stories, but Joyce used some of their page proofs as the printer's copy for Grant Richards when he finally published it after a delay of many years.⁹ For a couple of the stories, there is a more complete textual history, since they were published in the *Irish Homestead*, usually under the pseudonym of Stephen Dedalus. I will discuss the evolution of one of the stories originally published in the *Irish Homestead*, "The Sisters," in order to demonstrate how Joyce's early writing process leads critics to participate in the triangular form of gossip as he removes materials from the story.¹⁰

Joyce significantly revised "The Sisters" after it appeared in *The Irish Homestead*. The earlier version contains no mention of one of Joyce's major themes—paralysis. Famously, paralysis has become one of the most prevalent critical lenses through which to read the stories of *Dubliners*. The other interesting change is the

removal of much of the description and conversations of the eponymous sisters. Critics familiar with the more plentiful manuscript material of Joyce's later period argue that his technique at this stage was accretive, involving primarily the inclusion of new material. While critics who have looked at the manuscripts of *Dubliners* have recognized his early technique of removal, the stories of accretion and accumulation (e.g, Joyce added nearly 1/3 of *Ulysses* in page proofs) are more notorious, but they represent only a later stage in his writing practice. In his early writing practices, Joyce's method of economy creates a desire in the critic to uncover what he has removed. By deleting so much of his characterization of these figures, and cutting back on their actual words, Joyce controls what his critics will know about the sisters.¹¹ By making critics feel that they can uncover the secrets of his writing, Joyce creates a kind of "inner circle" that makes critics feel privileged to know this knowledge even as it creates outsiders of first-time readers who do not have the necessary tools to uncover his secrets. In making first-time readers feel like outsiders, Joyce creates a situation in which they must either choose to seek more knowledge or they must write the story for themselves.

The title of the story has often been the subject of debate as readers have been confused about why two characters who do not seem central to the story merit the title. The earlier version of the story indicates clearly why the story is called "The Sisters":

He used to sit in that stuffy room for the greater part of the day from early morning while Nannie (who was almost stone deaf) read out the newspaper to him. His other sister, Eliza, used to mind the shop. These two old women used to look after him, feed him and clothe him. The task

of clothing him was not difficult for his ancient priestly clothes were quite green with age and his dogskin slippers were everlasting. When he was tired of hearing the news he used to rattle his snuff-box on the arm of his chair to avoid shouting at her and then he used to make believe to read his prayerbook. Make believe because whenever Eliza brought him a cup of soup from the kitchen she had always to waken him.

As I stood looking up at the crepe and the card which bore his name I could not convince myself that he was dead. He seemed like one who could have gone on living for ever if only he had wanted to; his life was so methodical and uneventful. I think he said more to me than to anyone else. He had an egoistic contempt for all women-folk and suffered all their services in polite silence. Of course neither of his sisters was very intelligent. Nannie, for instance, had been reading out the newspaper to him every day for years and could read tolerably well and yet she always spoke of it as the *Freeman's General*. (240-241)

In this passage, the two sisters receive more attention than they do in the version that is normally read today. Father Flynn's attitude in this version is much more revealing because, in the later version, his misogyny is less immediately evident than it is in the earlier version. More detail is also included about the sisters here as their everyday activities are discussed. In the later version, Joyce removes much of this detail. By restricting the critic's knowledge of the sisters and muddling Father Flynn's misogynist

attitude, Joyce paradoxically gives the critic more room for interpretation—thus, by using a method of economy, Joyce creates room to play.¹²

One other small change Joyce made indicates his ever-evolving attitude towards gossip. In the earlier version of the story, the narrator’s aunt is described as “a gossip, a harmless one” (243). This description is left out of the final published version. I would like to argue that Joyce left out this description because at the time he was writing *Dubliners*, he was very critical of gossip, and specifically of Dublin gossip. He removed the description of the narrator’s Aunt because he in no way saw gossip as harmless, and this is indicated by his treatment of gossip in the series of stories. Various approaches to triangular gossip abound in the stories,¹³ but it is perhaps most significant in Joyce’s manner of making the reader complicit in gossip as he encourages his readers to judge the characters in his stories harshly. Figure 5 illustrates how the triangular model of gossip is at work in *Dubliners*:

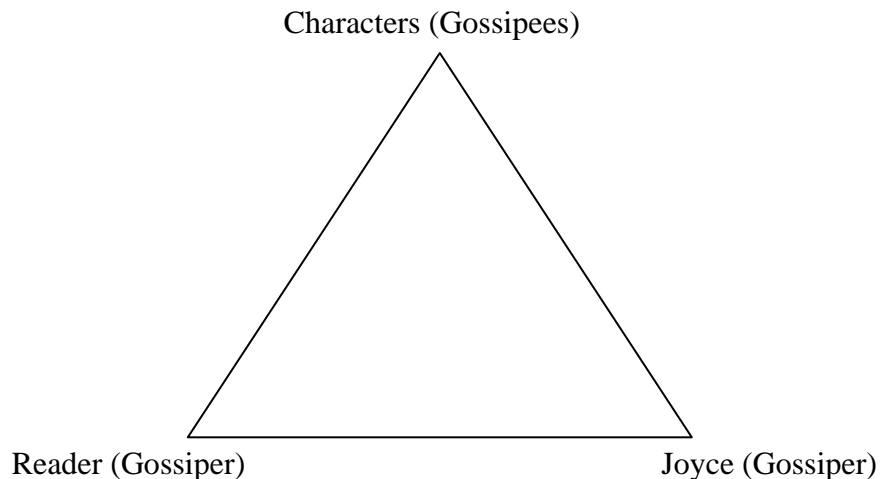


Figure 5: Triangular Gossip in *Dubliners*

By making the reader a gossip, Joyce establishes a sense of community between himself and his reader.

Intriguingly, one of Joyce's harshest criticisms in the stories is the way in which the characters deal with gossip and create outsiders in order to build themselves up. Joyce participates in what he is criticizing when he encourages his readers to judge the characters in the story. The reader is often made to feel contempt for the characters. In "The Boarding House," for example, Mrs. Mooney and Polly are characterized quite critically, and Joyce seems to be encouraging his readers to judge their actions. "Eveline," too, encourages the readers' judgment as Joyce criticizes her inability to escape. It is almost as if he is forming a bond with his readers as both they and Joyce criticize, judge, and exclude the characters in the stories. Joyce creates a distance between readers and the characters in the stories since readers often side with Joyce's critical view of paralyzing Dublin and its inhabitants. Although Joyce tries to step outside the bounds of gossip and create sympathy for characters like Little Chandler and Bob Doran, who are victims of the process of gossip, he fails because he is still working within the constructs of triangular gossip.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: The Trap of Judging Stephen

Joyce's strategy when writing *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* resembles his process in writing *Dubliners*.¹⁴ The notes that I will be examining here are from one of Joyce's notebooks at the National Library of Ireland and list several quotes and phrases from different authors. The list of quotations that I want to look at begins with Ben Jonson. Joyce mentions the song "I Was not Wearier Where I Lay," and it later

appears in chapter 5 of *Portrait*. Immediately after the Ben Jonson quotation, there is an extremely long list of quotations from Aristotle, many of which end up in either *Portrait* or *Ulysses*. These quotations are either the origin or product of the following passage from *Portrait*, which demonstrates the interaction between the two authors clearly:

passing a grimy marine-dealer's shop beyond the Liffey he would repeat the song by Ben Jonson which begins:

I was not wearier where I lay.

His mind when wearied of its search for the essence of beauty amid the spectral words of Aristotle or Aquinas, turned often for its pleasure to the dainty songs of the Elizabethans. His mind, in the vesture of a doubting monk, stood often in shadow under the windows of that age, to hear the grave and mocking music of the lutenists or the frank laughter of waistcoaters until a laugh too low, a phrase tarnished by time, of chambering and false honour, stung his monkish pride and drove him on from his lurkingplace.

The lore which he was believed to pass his days brooding upon so that it had rapt him from the companionships of youth was only a garner of slender sentences from Aristotle's poetics and psychology and a *Synopsis Philosophioe Scholasticoe ad mentem divi Thomoe*. (180)

Jonson, then, provides Stephen a break from his more theoretical thoughts about beauty. This very romantic and exaggerated view of Jonson's poetry demonstrates Joyce's ridicule of both Stephen and possibly his earlier self as he also was quite caught up in

both Aristotle and Jonson at around the same time Stephen is in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. The “garner of slender sentences” resembles Joyce’s note-taking process, and Joyce appears to be criticizing Stephen here, implicitly arguing that his obsession with beauty and Aristotle and Jonson has “rapt him from the companionships of youth.” That is, Stephen has rejected the intimacy of his fellows for the intimacy of words on a page. This criticism is a one of Joyce as he also isolated himself, only allowing communication and interaction with dead authors, cutting himself off from the modern community. In a letter written to his mother on March 20, 1903, right around the time Joyce was taking the notes in the notebooks I am discussing, Joyce explains his isolation:

I am at present up to the neck in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and read only him and Ben Jonson (a writer of songs and plays). Gogarty wrote to me a day or two [ago] and tells me that ‘John Eglinton’ said the other day (Stannie will tell you who he is) ‘There is something sublime in Joyce’s standing alone.’ My book of songs will be published in the spring of 1907. My first comedy five years later. My ‘*Esthetic*’ about five years later again (This *must* interest you!) (19)

The innocent ambition in this letter mirrors Stephen’s hopes for himself, but both Stephen and Joyce had rude awakenings (Stephen never really gets anything published and Joyce later didn’t achieve these particular goals) Earlier that year, Joyce had written a letter to his brother indicating his interest in Aristotle’s *Psychology*: “I am feeling very intellectual these times and up to my eyes in Aristotle’s *Psychology*. If the editor of the ‘*Speaker*’ puts in my review of ‘*Catilina*’ you will see some of the fruits thereof” (13).

Joyce almost seems to wallow in his isolation much as Stephen does near the end of *Portrait*. Joyce criticizes this isolation in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, making it clear that Stephen is entirely too wrapped up in his aesthetic theory, suggesting that he has moved away from the aspects of himself that Stephen represents.

While Joyce still kept being influenced by the writing of the two authors, especially Aristotle, he grew beyond them, but Stephen never does as is evidenced by his thoughts in the “Nestor” chapter in *Ulysses* which contain passages from Aristotle collected in the notebook I have been discussing:

It must be a movement then, an actuality of the possible as possible.
 Aristotle’s phrase formed itself within the gabbled verses and floated out into the studious silence of the library of Saint Genevieve where he had read, sheltered from the sin of Paris, night by night. By his elbow a delicate Siamese conned a handbook of strategy. Fed and feeding brains about me: under glowlamps, I impaled, with faintly beating feelers: and in my mind’s darkness a sloth of the underworld, reluctant, shy of brightness, shifting her dragon scaly folds. *Thought is the thought of thought*. Tranquil brightness. The soul is in a manner all that is: the soul is the form of forms. Tranquility sudden, vast, candescent, form of forms.
 (2:67-76)

This passage contains three quotations adapted from the list in the notebooks: “Thought is the thought of thought,” “The soul is in a manner all that is,” and “the soul is the form of forms.” Joyce leaves out the word “intellectual” in the final quote, slightly changing

the quotation. The incorporation of these quotations from his notebook is intriguing, especially since so much of the information from these pages went into *Portrait*. He may have come back to these notes for *Portrait* to find material for Stephen in *Ulysses*, which suggests that little change has taken place in Stephen's character. That is, Stephen has not evolved. What is interesting here is that Joyce has Stephen think of some of the most abstract and isolating quotes from Aristotle that he has written down. That is, Joyce alters the story by limiting Stephen's thoughts. Much like gossip, Joyce is selective about what he tells the reader, just like a gossip can skew a story's facts to influence the listener. Once again, Joyce creates a triangulated form of gossip, making Stephen the outsider; Figure 6 demonstrates this phenomenon:

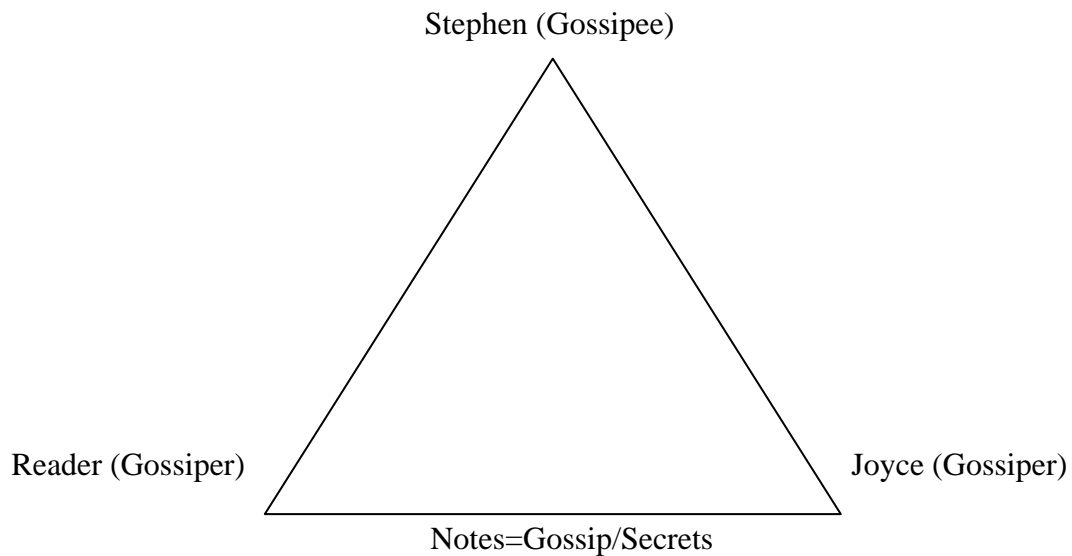


Figure 6: Triangular Gossip in *Portrait*

Hiding some of his thoughts from the reader by not using all of the quotations, Joyce thus creates secrets, encouraging the reader to “gossip” about Stephen. That is, the reader of Joyce’s notes begins to find out secrets about Stephen, affecting and changing his or her understanding of Stephen. The notebooks mimic the “rumor” as different readers interpret Joyce’s writing process in different ways, just as rumors fluctuate depending on the gossipers’ perspective.

It is intriguing to look at the quotations that were left out, which include the following: “That which acts is superior to that which suffers,” “The principle which hates is not different from the principle which loves,” and “In the sense of touch man is far above all other animals and hence he is the most intelligent animal.” (National Library of Ireland) These quotations are much more tactile, suggesting a relationship to the world that Stephen just does not have. Perhaps he thought that these quotations might not be as thought-provoking for Stephen, who certainly suffers more than he acts. Joyce’s technique also relates to gossip in that when different people say the same words they can mean completely different things—in this instance, quotation works much like rumor because meaning depends on context.

Joyce often uses this selective strategy, keeping parts of his notes secret, and the secret is never revealed until researchers approach his notebooks to examine his writing process. That Joyce wanted readers to look at his notes, especially later in his career, is indicated by the access he gave to friends and scholars to his private papers. Joyce allowed Herbert Gorman access to the notebook I have been discussing when he was writing his biography of Joyce in the 1930s.

Early on, however, as he was writing *Dubliners* and *Portrait*, he was a bit more protective of these secrets. In the notebook, Joyce has a list of questions that Stephen asks Lynch at the end of *Portrait*. The questions address Stephen's—and maybe Joyce's—concerns with art and beauty and result from Joyce's percolating thoughts on Aristotle and Aquinas. Of the eight questions in the notebook, not all of them make it into the novel. Joyce makes changes to the questions, indicating his desire to distance himself from Stephen and holding back information:

--I have a book at home, said Stephen, in which I have written down questions which are more amusing than yours were. In finding the answers to them I found the theory of esthetic which I am trying to explain. Here are some questions I set myself: *Is a chair finely made tragic or comic? Is the portrait of Mona Lisa good if I desire to see it? Is the bust of Sir Philip Crampton lyrical, epic, or dramatic? Can excrement or a child or a louse be a work of art? If not, why not?*

--*Why not*, indeed, said Lynch, laughing.

--*If a man hacking in fury at a block of wood*, Stephen continued, *make there an image of a cow, is that image a work of art? If not, why not?*

--That's a lovely one, said Lynch, laughing again. That has the true scholastic stink. (216)

Aside from small changes made in the diction of the questions, these five questions mirror the notes in the notebook. Joyce has left the following three questions out of the novel: “Why are statues made white for the most part?” “Can a photograph be a work of

art?” and “Are houses, clothes, furniture, etc. works of art?” The question now becomes, why did Joyce choose to leave out these three questions in particular? What’s more, why did he choose to use the questions he did? The question about furniture, clothes, and houses is quite similar to the question about the chair, so he could have thought he was being redundant there. But the other two questions have few similarities to the questions Joyce chose to use. The question about statues being white may be easily explained as maybe Joyce thought that is the color the sculpting medium most commonly came in, but it could have other, more intriguing answers. Perhaps, however, he discovered that the Greeks who initiated the art form painted their statues, but, over time, the colors faded and white had become a convention based on a mistaken imitation. The question about the photograph is not one many people would ask these days as photography is seen as an art form, but when photography was a relatively new form, these kinds of questions probably abounded . These notes indicate that he was constantly creating distance between himself and the character most commonly assumed to represent him.

That the questions change when put in a more informal context indicates how the interaction between texts produces a conversation of a sort. These notes signal the beginning of a technique Joyce was to hone as his writing career evolved. He began merely by juxtaposing thoughts of others and ended up creating pathways and lines of communication between both what the other authors said and his own writing. By allowing different texts to converse with his own, Joyce created a kind of gossip between authors that were long gone, reinvigorating Aristotle’s words with Ben Jonson’s and

with his own. As Joyce's technique changed, the boundaries between his own work and other authors' works become increasingly permeable.¹⁵

Joyce's early version of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Stephen Hero*, further indicates how Joyce constantly desired to keep the more intimate parts of Stephen's character and life secret. For anyone who has read *Stephen Hero*, the differences are obvious and enormous. One of the most significant differences is the absence of Stephen's brother from the final version. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen's brother, Maurice, provides Stephen an ear and often a sympathetic shoulder. When Joyce removes Maurice from *Portrait*, he eradicates most of the moments of intimacy that Stephen experiences, limiting his connection with others and thus making him isolated, beginning the process of turning him into a gossipee as Stephen develops the inability to be part of a community. Stephen's personality seems to change miraculously when he is with Maurice:

Every evening after tea Stephen left his house and set out for the city, Maurice at his side. The elder smoked cigarettes and the younger ate lemon drops and, aided by these animal comforts, they beguiled the long journey with philosophic discourse. Maurice was a very attentive person and one evening he told Stephen that he was keeping a diary of their conversations. Stephen asked to see the diary but Maurice said it would be time enough for that at the end of the first year. Neither of the youths had the least suspicion of themselves; they both looked upon life with frank curious eyes (Maurice naturally serving himself with Stephen's

vision when his own was deficient) and they both felt that it was possible to arrive at a sane understanding of so-called mysteries if one only had patience enough. On their way in every evening the heights of argument were traversed and the younger boy aided the elder bravely in the building of an entire science of esthetic. (36)

By deleting almost all vestiges of Maurice, Joyce, once again, keeps secrets about Stephen by not letting the reader see all of his sides. Here, Stephen's theory of aesthetics is created with the help of Maurice and their conversation. In *Portrait*, Stephen only shares his theories after he has decided what he thinks. In *Stephen Hero*, he seems to develop his theories with the help and companionship of Maurice. In this instance, it seems as if Stephen is able to benefit from companionship in a way that never exists in *Portrait*.

In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen is much more vulnerable to exposure since Joyce allows him intimacy after intimacy. By giving Stephen experiences of intimacy, Joyce makes him an insider and able to participate in the community of gossip. Stephen's relationship with his mother fascinates critics,¹⁶ and *Stephen Hero* provides more specific, explicit detail about their relationship than either *Portrait* or *Ulysses*. Perhaps the most revealing moment between mother and son occurs after Stephen reads his essay on aesthetics to his mother:

However as the essayist's recent habits were not very re-assuring she decided to combine a discreet motherly solicitude with an interest, which without being open to the accusation of factitiousness was at first

intended as a compliment. While she was nicely folding a handkerchief she said:

--What does Ibsen write, Stephen?

--Plays

--I never heard of his name before. Is he alive at present?

--Yes, he is. But, you know, in Ireland people don't know much about what is going on out in Europe.

--He must be a great writer from what you say of him.

--Would you like to read some of his plays, mother? I have some.

--Yes. I would like to read the best one. What is the best one?

--I don't know . . . But do you really want to read Ibsen?

--I do, really. (84)

Here, Stephen shares with his mother in a way that contradicts his character in both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. He shows a willingness to trust that is basically nonexistent in the later works, demonstrating a naïveté about the way communication, and, more specifically, gossip works. Once again, Joyce removed a part that makes Stephen vulnerable. Furthermore, by removing material like this, Joyce once again encourages his readers to gossip with each other to try to discover Stephen's background. Although reading is usually thought to be a private activity, the shift from *Stephen Hero* to *Portrait* encourages readers to form a community by leaving so many questions in his texts unanswered. Joyce, thus, produces gossip in his readers by extracting details producing gossip in the earlier sense of the word: community¹⁷; however, while he

attempts to produce gossip he is also judgmental of it and nervous about its malicious potential.

There are two other relationships that are also much more clearly defined in *Stephen Hero*: Stephen's friendship with Cranly and his relationship with Emma Clery. In *Portrait*, the reader sees Stephen's relationship with Cranly from Stephen's totally insular point of view. The friendship represents for Stephen a disturbing point of intimacy as he repeatedly thinks of Cranly after their friendship ends. In *Stephen Hero*, the friendship seems much more concrete as Cranly is described in more detail and as having faults. In *Portrait*, Stephen's admiration for Cranly makes him appear like an overly devoted friend; in *Stephen Hero*, the reader is invited to criticize Cranly. The disturbing intimacy that haunts Stephen in the later works is absent here. In this case, Joyce has added intimacy rather than taking it away as he has revised, but the intimacy he adds indicates Stephen's inability to gossip or to be part of an intimate conversation because he is so disturbed by his intimacy with Cranly.

As for Emma Clery, she barely surfaces in *Portrait* and doesn't even have a full name, but is a complete and full character in *Stephen Hero*. One of Stephen's most embarrassing moments occurs with Emma, as he reveals his feelings to her too boldly. He sees Emma on St. Stephen's Green from the window of his classroom and excuses himself so he can run after her. This action startles Emma, and where once she had been quite receptive to him, she rejects him. In *Portrait*, the reader does not get to see this embarrassing event, but only its after-effects as Stephen stands on the steps of the library thinking about Emma. By cloaking the details of the relationship between Emma and

Stephen, Joyce, once again, limits both Stephen's intimacy with other characters and the reader's intimacy with Stephen, inviting communal speculation.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man develops an even more complicated perspective on gossip. As the book develops Stephen's life, his reactions to gossip and understanding of it undergo a slight evolution as he sees gossip in different ways depending on how old he is. Most of the gossip Stephen experiences when he is younger takes place at school. His reaction to the gossip of the schoolboys is usually innocent surprise. A few of the older boys attempt to run away from the school near the end of the first chapter, causing a stir at the school about why they ran away. It is important to note that this discussion occurs directly after Stephen's Christmas dinner with his family. The two conversations are juxtaposed with each other, making it clear that Stephen's perspective on the gossip at school is skewed by his experience of the discussion at the Christmas dinner. Conjecture ensues as the boys discuss the event. Cecil Thunder suggests that "they had fecked cash out of the rector's room," but Wells, after being encouraged and begged to gossip, argues that the boys drank wine from the press in the sacristy (51). This conversation also demonstrates the unstable nature of gossip. The fellows begin with one explanation for why the boys ran away and end with an entirely different reason. The first, nameless boy who speaks comes round in the end to agreeing with Wells's assertions as the power in the group favors the stronger, more confident members. Thunder's theory is immediately doubted as Wells presents a more exciting theory. This characterization of the conversation also indicates the group mentality that

often occurs with gossip as Stephen fails to recall all the fellows involved and the fellows respond in a group rather than individually.

Although Stephen is part of the group in this instance, he refuses to participate fully in the gossip. He resists the gossip not because he wants to subvert it, but because he simply doesn't understand why someone would do something that he sees as immoral: "The fellows were all silent. Stephen stood among them, afraid to speak, listening. A faint sickness of awe made him feel weak. How could they have done that?" (51). Stephen's awe indicates his inability to understand the outlandish actions of the others. As it turns out, that the boys stole wine is not the final conclusion the group comes to as Athy tells another version of the story:

--Tell us, Athy. Go on. You might if you know.

Athy lowered his voice and said.

--Do you know why those fellows scut? I will tell you but you must not let on you know.

He paused for a moment and then said mysteriously:

--They were caught with Simon Moonan and Tusker Boyle in the square one night.

The fellows looked at him and asked:

--Caught?

--What doing?

Athy said:

--Smuggling.

All the fellows were silent: and Athy said:

--And that's why. (51)

This even more scandalous event shocks the other boys as they gaze across the square, but Stephen doesn't even know what Athy means. He doesn't understand what "smuggling" is and is too ashamed to ask what it means. This passage once again indicates the collective nature of gossip as most of the dialogue could come from any of the boys in the group. The eagerness to know why the five boys are in trouble indicates the group's desire to have control of the scandal. None of the other boys admits to being confused by the events, and the reader only really sees Stephen's thoughts, but, once again, he places himself outside the group with his inability to understand the other boys' language. The other boys in the group go on to enjoy the fact that the five boys are going to be punished as the group relishes the fact that they have escaped punishment.

As Stephen matures, he begins to feel the effects of gossip differently. At times, he reacts with indifference to the malice of his peers, but at other times, Stephen is obviously quite affected by the gossip. In the second chapter, Stephen's father reveals a bit of gossip that completely changes an earlier event in Stephen's life. When Stephen was at Clongowes, one of his only moments of triumph is when he went to the rector to complain about Father Dolan. This event helped to form Stephen's view of himself; however, a while later this view is put into question by his father's gossip when Simon tells Mary that the rector and Father Dolan laughed about Stephen behind his back. That the Jesuits were laughing at Stephen takes away the little amount of power he had tried to gain for himself. And it's even worse that Stephen had to hear this from his father and

be humiliated not only because an event he thought was empowering was actually belittling, but also because his father also joined in the laughter. Stephen is, once again, made to feel like an outsider even in his own family.

The view of gossip in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is much more subtle and complex than in Joyce's earlier work. Joyce creates a character who is scared of intimacy but who also wants the power that knowing the secrets of others gives him. The conflict Stephen feels between his desire to avoid intimacy and his desire to exercise power over others produces an intriguing view of gossip. Stephen wants to gain the information contained in the gossip while avoiding being a part of a group. In reaction to being a gossipee as a young child, he creates an attitude of superior isolation, but he cannot ever quite let go of his desire to feel both power over and intimacy with others, creating ambivalence about gossip. His attitude towards gossip evolves as he matures, but he always is reacting to gossip instead of controlling it. As the book comes to a close, Stephen rejects intimacy and, as a result, rejects gossip, but he does it to protect himself, not to question or play with gossip itself. When we encounter him again in *Ulysses*, his attitude is not much changed. Stephen's slowly evolving attitude towards gossip and intimacy mirrors Joyce's attitude. For the most part, although Joyce has developed a complicated view of gossip and its effects, in his earlier work, he still sees gossip as mostly negative.

***Exiles*: The Manipulation of Triangular Gossip**

The play, *Exiles*, indicates the development and change of both Joyce's writing process and his attitude towards gossip. Although his understanding of gossip is still

triangular, his characters are beginning to manipulate the relationships this model produces. In a process that is remarkably similar to that of *Portrait*, as Joyce was revising *Exiles*, he removed many of the moments of intimacy between Bertha and Richard. Based on notes and fragments from when he was writing *Exiles*, Joyce seems to have had much of the play mapped out long before it was written; however, unlike his later works and similarly to his early works, much of his revision consisted of removing material rather than adding it. This is demonstrated in John MacNicholas's textual companion to *Exiles*, in which he explains how the pagination of the first act indicates that Joyce removed about 11 pages from the final version. These pages are lost, but some fragments of dialogue that Joyce chose not to include in the play reveal once again the tight hold he kept on the information he wanted to be known about his characters.

Many of the extant fragments of dialogue that were not included in the published version of the play indicate Joyce's desire to constrain both his characters' abilities to feel intimacy and a sense of community and his readers' abilities to connect with his characters. Much of the dialogue that was removed reveals more about the character's intentions and personalities than the dialogue that Joyce chose to leave in the play. Richard, who appears to be quite controlled in the play, has many lines in the fragments that indicate his passion for Bertha and his almost maternal feelings towards her:

Richard

I feel as if I had carried her within my own body, in my womb.

Robert

Can a man feel like that?

Richard

Her books, her music the fire of thought stolen from on high out of whose flames all ease and culture have come, the grace with which she tends the body we desire—whose work is that? I feel that it is mine. It is my work and the work of others like me now or in other times. It is we who have conceived her and brought her forth. Our minds flowing together are the womb in which we have borne her. (167-68)

Here, Joyce allows for an intimacy between both Richard and Bertha as Richard describes Bertha as having come from his womb and Robert and Richard as Richard describes that womb as the coming together of the two men's minds. Richard's common attitude of disinterested detachment is not in evidence here.

Another fragment demonstrates even more clearly the removed intimacy between Richard and Robert:

Robert

Then it was not jealousy you felt.

Richard

I felt what I tell you—longing.

Robert

No hatred of me? But how?

Richard

And for all I know jealousy, as you call it, may be this longing. (170)

By removing this passage, Joyce makes the intimacy between Richard and Robert less visible, suggesting he was uncomfortable with the idea that when two men love the same woman they are hiding a homosocial desire for each other, even though there are still hints of this problematic relationship in the published version of the play.

Throughout the play, Richard breaks the rules of gossip in not allowing anyone to keep secrets. He plays with the boundaries of gossip, making the other characters feel uneasy. Richard knows that he is the subject of gossip, but he takes control over his status as a gossipee. He uses the other characters to take control of the rumors surrounding him, and he takes further control of them by using his knowledge of their secrets as he makes them feel guilty for transgressing social conventions. Richard both participates in gossip and is the subject of gossip, so he can understand both sides, but still can only change between gossiper and gossipee and cannot get outside of the triangle that gossip creates.

In the intermission, the audience participates in gossip voyeuristically as they determine whether Robert and Bertha had sex, and any determination they come up with can only be rumor. The play's silence about one of the most important events in the characters' lives forces the audience to become active participants. The audience becomes the "everyone" that Bertha so vehemently complains about. The play's treatment of gossip is significantly different than the stories in *Dubliners* as the negative connotation of gossip is not entirely reinforced. For the most part, Joyce still does have a negative attitude towards gossip, but there is a glimmer of hope about gossip as it creates intimacy between the characters. Joyce creates a complex relationship with

gossip for the audience and the reader as they become complicit in the act of gossiping. He creates a tension between audience and character: the audiences are the gossipers and the characters are the gossipees. The knowledge that the audiences have of the secrets of the characters makes them feel as if they are superior to the characters. This distance allows the audience to look down on the characters, and all of the characters become gossipees. The way each of the character works in his or her role as a gossipee reveals specific problems with the dichotomy created between the audience and the characters. The audience never quite feels intimacy with the characters in the play as a result of this dichotomy. The audience shares a secret about the characters, uniting against them. The clearest moment of complicity on the audience's part is when they have to decide what happens at the end of Act 2 as the end of the Act elliptically leaves a question in the viewers' minds.

Ulysses: The Embrace of the Outsider

The model of gossip changes slightly when Joyce begins writing *Ulysses*, as does his writing process. He begins to allow for a rectangular view of gossip as his writing process becomes increasingly inclusive. This inclusiveness is demonstrated by the material meant for earlier works that finds its way into *Ulysses*. Besides the Aristotle quotations mentioned above that became part of the "Proteus" episode, Joyce used a lot of draft material from his earlier work to create characters, such as Buck Mulligan, and to structure his story about Stephen. A. Walton Litz, who argues that "no writer ever revised more carefully or used his rough notes and sketches more economically than Joyce," demonstrates Joyce's inclusion of material from his earlier work by examining

five manuscript pages (51). He points out how the character of Buck Mulligan was developed much earlier during the writing of *Stephen Hero* and *Dubliners*. While I don't think there is a substantial connection between Joyce's writing process for *Dubliners* and for *Ulysses* beyond the fact that Joyce originally thought of *Ulysses* as one of the short stories in *Dubliners*, there is a definite connection between the processes Joyce uses in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and the earlier chapters of *Ulysses*, and this connection is demonstrated in the manuscript pages that Litz discusses. Interestingly, while Joyce left out information in *Portrait*, he goes back and includes this information in *Ulysses*, suggesting a growing willingness to reveal information that he had previously concealed. In creating Mulligan, Joyce was picky about what he took from his earlier notes. The manuscript pages read:

But the echo of his laughter had been the remembrance of Doherty, standing on the steps of his house the night before, saying:
 --And on Sunday I consume the particle. Christine, *semel in die*. The mockery of it all! But it's for the sake of the poor aunt. God, we must be human first. Doherty meets his afflicted aunt. I am writing a mystery-play in half an act. Scene: Heaven. Enter two bouzes from Leitrim wearing blue spectacles. From Leitrim! "What was it at all? Was it an electric light or the *aurora borealis*?" "That was himself" "Glory be to God! It is the grandest thing I ever saw." I think that's a lovely touch. The mockery of it! Ireland secretes priests: that's my new phrase. I must

go. A woman waits for me. God, the humanity of Whitman! I contain all. I embrace all. Farewell. (qtd. in Litz 52)

Both Litz and J. Mitchell Morse have pointed out the connections between this passage and Mulligan in *Ulysses*, such as the similar uses of Whitman by both Doherty and Mulligan and the mention of Mulligan's aunt, but they don't discuss the significance of these similarities. Joyce's pilfering of these notes for the character Mulligan indicates his willingness to let his texts interact with each other. They also indicate changes in his writing. In the manuscript, Doherty is a memory of Stephen's, so the language is possibly skewed by Stephen's thought processes and biases. Additionally, although this early version of Mulligan greatly resembles the later version, the style of writing is not quite as sophisticated and advanced as Joyce's writing in *Ulysses*. In *Ulysses*, instead of stating something outright as he does in the manuscript, he creates his characters more subtly. Even Mulligan, one of the least subtle characters in his work, is here characterized more through suggestion than specific description. Joyce picks and chooses the words from his early manuscript that best create the character of Mulligan rather than letting Mulligan totally overwhelm the scenes he is in.

Because Joyce was using a similar, but more inclusive, technique to what he had used in *Portrait*, the first three chapters of *Ulysses* reinforce the image of Stephen that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* had created. While he thinks about his interactions with people quite intensively, he appears unable to make any kind of real connection with the characters he encounters. He barely acknowledges the conversation of Mulligan and Haines and becomes an exile of sorts as Mulligan takes away his key; he

attempts to relate to his students, but worries about them forming a malicious group of gossipers, turning him into an outsider; he does not really engage with Mr. Deasy; and he finally isolates himself by walking along the strand by himself, deciding not to go see his aunt. Throughout these chapters, Stephen is preoccupied with how others see him and with secrets. He feels substantial guilt for how he treated his mother, acting like the gossipee as he believes Mulligan gossips about his treatment of his mother.

He sympathizes with one of his students when he recognizes his status as an outsider:

Like him was I, these sloping shoulders, this gracelessness. My childhood bends beside me. Too far for me to lay a hand there once or lightly. Mine is far and his secret as our eyes. Secrets, silent, stony sit in the dark palaces of both our hearts: secrets weary of their tyranny: tyrants, willing to be dethroned. (24)

Stephen's characterization of secrets here demonstrates his conflicted relationship with gossip and intimacy. He wants his secrets to be "dethroned," but he won't allow anyone the power over him in order for those secrets to lose their power. He keeps secrets close to him in order to protect himself, giving those secrets "tyranny." His sympathy with the student is also quite restricted since he doesn't communicate it. The language of "Proteus" also isolates Stephen as his thoughts distance him from the reader as many readers find this to be one of the most difficult chapters to get through. On the whole, at the beginning of the novel, Stephen has not changed his attitude towards intimacy and

gossip. Comparatively, Leopold Bloom has a much more relaxed attitude towards intimacy and gossip than Stephen, but this attitude sometimes gets him into trouble.

“Scylla and Charybdis,” another episode that focuses on Stephen, indicates, once again, how Stephen is the same gossipee as in *Portrait*. The language of this chapter is definitely inflated, and the communication between Stephen and his companions could hardly be seen as gossip. This discussion, then, must be the opposite of gossip—serious talk with a serious purpose. It appears this literary and philosophical debate might be seen as a higher form of communication than gossip, but, on a closer look, Stephen’s discussion with his companions is one of the only times Stephen actually gossips. That he is gossiping about a dead man, Shakespeare, indicates his intimacy issues once again. His argument about *Hamlet*, which is based on the so-called facts of Shakespeare’s life, relies heavily on gossip. George Russell even accuses him of inappropriately gossiping about Shakespeare: “But this prying into the family life of a great man . . .” (155). This criticism of Stephen’s argument indicates a prevalent attitude towards gossip. It is easy to criticize someone’s argument about an author when they base it on biography because it is seen as being based on something trivial; that is, it is based on gossip. Why, after all, do I tell my students in my introductory literature classes that they should not write a paper based on the biography of an author? It is seen as trivial and almost too easy. Joyce is trying to point out the importance of trivial gossip to interpretation. For good or ill, almost all perceptions of authors are colored by rumors we have heard about them. In this chapter, Joyce complicates his view of gossip, arguing that it should not be dismissed just because it is seen as trivial.

Joyce's research for "Scylla and Charybdis" indicates his desire for exactness about Shakespeare's history. Although much of what the characters discuss in this chapter seems to be merely silly rumor, Joyce began drafting the chapter by detailing the events of Shakespeare's life. In Buffalo notebook V.A.4, which Joyce has labeled "Shakespeare Dates," Joyce notes the specific years Shakespeare's plays were written or performed and makes other historical notes for 1564 and from 1593-1616. These notes, which also include a list of Shakespeare's bequests in his will, indicate Joyce's desire to be precise in his discussion of Shakespeare—a desire that is masked by the complicated and sometimes faulty theory that Stephen espouses. The changing of the supposed "facts" of Shakespeare's life from Joyce's notes to the interpretation Stephen performs of these facts (most notably, the fact that Shakespeare left his second-best bed to his wife Anne Hathaway in his will) acts once again like gossip. However, instead of making one of his characters the gossipee, he has a character produce gossip about someone else. Thus, the rectangular model of gossip is at work here as Joyce makes Stephen gossip about Shakespeare to both his companions at the library and the reader using his notes as a starting point for the rumor.¹⁸

Going from the inflated, difficult and distancing language of "Proteus" to the ordinary, intimate language of "Calypso" jolts the reader as the character of Leopold Bloom is introduced. Bloom does not necessarily participate freely in gossip or control what others say about him, and he is often put in the position of a gossipee, but he is not as reactive as Stephen. The power of gossip is demonstrated when Bantam Lyons approaches Bloom to discuss the upcoming horse race. Lyons misunderstands what

Bloom is saying, thinking that Bloom is imparting secret knowledge of who will win the horse race. The conversation the two have works like the game gossip. Lyons does not understand what Bloom is actually saying. He reads too much into it, highlighting an important characteristic of gossip. When people gossip, their subject almost always significantly strays from how it started. People often misunderstand intentions behind words just as Bantam Lyons does in this conversation. This is one of the only instances where Bloom has control over a rumor, but he does not realize the control that he has.

Bloom is constantly put in the position of gossipee, but the gossip does not seem to affect him as strongly as it affects Stephen. In “Hades,” the other men at the funeral treat Bloom as if he doesn’t quite belong. Mr. Power, Martin Cunningham, and Simon Dedalus are all cordial to Bloom, but they never let him be part of their group.

Comments that are seemingly meaningless demonstrate Bloom’s status: “—We have all been there, Martin Cunningham said broadly. His eyes met Mr Bloom’s eyes. He caressed his beard, adding: --Well, nearly all of us” (78). Cunningham’s flippant remark showcases Bloom’s position as an outsider, emphasizing the fact that Bloom is Jewish as the previous remarks had been about a Jewish figure.

The other item of gossip that weaves itself throughout the narrative of “Hades” is the rumor about Bloom’s father. As they are driving to the cemetery, the men discuss suicide. Mr. Power and Simon do not yet know that Bloom’s father committed suicide, but Cunningham does and he tries to divert the others. His knowledge of Bloom’s secret makes him change what he would say, which suggests that gossip is always colored by environment and context. The men’s gossip is curtailed by Cunningham’s knowledge,

and if Bloom had not been there, the conversation would have been significantly different. This is supported by the later conversation Cunningham has with Mr. Power about Bloom's father:

--I was in mortal agony with you talking of suicide before Bloom.

--What? Mr. Power whispered. How so?

--His father poisoned himself, Martin Cunningham whispered. Had the Queen's hotel in Ennis. You heard him say he was going to Clare. Anniversary.

--O God! Mr Power whispered. First I heard of it. Poisoned himself?

(84)

This conversation, unlike the previous one where Bloom was present, has the tone of gossip. Cunningham and Power are not constrained in what they say, and Cunningham especially has changed his earlier defensive stance about suicide. The fact that they are both whispering indicates how secretive they want to be, and they both are very judgmental of Bloom's father. Bloom is thus an outsider and gossipee as a result of his father's actions. He is seen as different because he does not have the same theology of suicide as his companions. Bloom recognizes that his friends are critical of suicide, but his reaction is subdued as he thinks calmly about the Catholic position on suicide:

"Refuse christian burial. They used to drive a stake of wood through his heart in the grave. As if it wasn't broken already" (80). Unlike the other three men, Bloom has sympathy for people who commit suicide; he refuses to judge his father, thinking to himself, "No more pain. Wake no more. Nobody owns" (80). While these are probably

words remembered from an important letter in Bloom's life, they indicate his willingness to accept his father's suicide and understand the reasons why his father did it.

Throughout the novel, Bloom reacts uniquely to gossip, allowing it to infiltrate his thoughts. Different items of gossip repeatedly surface as he free-associates. His thoughts have become a confluence of voices that he hears throughout the day and earlier. In "Aeolus," he thinks of William Brayden through the lens of Simon Dedalus's gossip: "All his brains are in the nape of his neck, Simon Dedalus says. Welts of flesh behind on him. Fat folds of neck, fat, neck, fat, neck" (97). Dedalus's passing comment colors the ways Bloom sees Brayden. This process happens repeatedly throughout the book, especially when Bloom thinks about Molly and Blazes Boylan. Bloom's thoughts, thus, function like gossip. Later, in "Sirens," Bloom combines numerous pieces of gossip into one thought:

Tenors get women by the score. Increase their flow. Throw flower at his feet. When will we meet? My head it simply. Jingle all delighted. He can't sing for tall hats. Your head it simply swirls. Perfumed for him. What perfume does your wife? I want to know. Jingle. Stop. Knock. Last look at mirror always before she answers the door. The hall. There? How do you? I do well. There? What? Or? Phial of cachous, kissing comfits in he satchel. Yes? Hands felt for the opulent. (225)

Bloom's thoughts function like gossip, juxtaposing different rumors to create new ones. This thought can be associated with Martha, as he thinks about her asking what perfume Molly wears, Milly as he thinks of the song "Seaside Girls" associated with her letter

(“your head it simply swurls”), and Molly, as he hears the jingling of the bedsprings. He cannot let go of what others have said or done, so he tries to create a new way of looking at it. This inability to let go of others’ words indicates his worry about how others see him, but his reaction is quite different from Stephen’s reaction as he isolates himself. Bloom still allows intimacy into his life, but it is a strangled kind of intimacy that constrains how he acts with those he is closest to.

As he walks towards Grafton St. in “Lestrygonians,” he encounters Mrs. Breen and engages in what can be seen as typical “women’s” gossip with her:

--What? Mr Bloom asked.

Let her speak. Look straight in her eyes. I believe you. Trust me.

--Woke me up in the night, she said. Dream he had, a nightmare.

Indiges.

--Said the ace of spades was walking up the stairs.

--The ace of spades! Mr Bloom said.

She took a folded postcard from her handbag.

--Read that, she said. He got it this morning.

--What is it? Mr Bloom asked, taking the card. U.P.?

--U.p. up, she said. Someone taking a rise out of him. It’s a great shame for them whoever he is.

--Indeed it is, Mr Bloom said.

She took back the card, sighing.

--And now he's going round to Mr Menton's office. He's going to take an action for ten thousand pounds, he says. (130)

Bloom allows Mrs. Breen to vent some of her frustrations about her husband as he listens to her. He thus participates in the "healing" kind of gossip Spacks has discussed. The familiarity between Mrs. Breen and Bloom is surprising as it makes the pair appear as if they have an intimate friendship. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the conversation is one-sided. Bloom shares nothing about himself, and Mrs. Breen plies Bloom with information. He is trying to have a polite conversation, and she takes it a step further by trying to form a sense of companionship with him. While Bloom is concerned with being sympathetic here, the conversation is not going how he wanted, as Mrs. Breen controls what is said.

Bloom is sensitive to her talk and wants to provide a listening ear, which encourages her to give him more intimate information about Mrs. Purefoy. It is interesting that Mrs. Breen misunderstands whom Bloom was asking about as she starts off on another round of gossip:

--Do you ever see anything of Mrs Beaufoy? Mr Bloom asked.

--Mina Purefoy? she said.

Philip Beaufoy I was thinking. Playgoer's Club. Matcham often thinks of

Masterstroke. Did I pull the chain? Yes. The last act.

--Yes.

--I just called to ask on the way in is she over it. She's in the lying-in

hospital in Holles street. Dr Horne got her in. She's three days bad now.

--O, Mr Bloom said. I'm sorry to hear that.

--Yes, Mrs Breen said. And a houseful of kids at home. It's a very stiff birth, the nurse told me.

--O, Mr Bloom said.

His heavy pitying gaze absorbed her news. His tongue clacked in compassion. Dth! Dth!

--I'm sorry to hear that, he said. Poor thing! Three days! That's terrible for her. (130)

Here, Mrs. Breen once again communicates information to Bloom that would commonly be reserved for a group of women. Once again, Bloom hears of others' plights and has no chance to air his own dirty laundry, but still unselfishly sympathizes. Bloom participates in gossip, allowing himself to be drawn into groups, but he never quite becomes part of the gossip. What's more, if Bloom were to participate in gossip, he might feel better as the thoughts swirling in his mind would be easier to take since someone had commiserated with him. Bloom refrains, however, from saying anything partly because he has always been a gossipee and partly because he respects Molly too much to tell any of her secrets.

Bloom's most violent experience as a gossipee occurs in "Cyclops," as he is forced to run away after the men in the pub become so upset with him based on an untrue rumor. The entire chapter focuses on gossip and has an overall tone of gossip as the narrator is telling the events to someone else. The reader thus hears the events of the

story through someone else's words and someone else's perspective. The narrator has his own biases and concerns which obviously skew the events of the chapter, making the reader unsure of whether or not he or she should trust this version of the events of the chapter. Bloom is obviously an outsider from the beginning of the chapter. As the chapter goes on, the attitude towards Bloom becomes increasingly malicious as the Citizen makes barely veiled anti-Semitic remarks towards Bloom, who tries to ignore them. Bloom's behavior, while it might have helped the situation by not exciting the Citizen more, only serves to annoy him, eventually leading to violence.

Bloom discusses persecution and immediately becomes victim of it as the men make fun of him, and the Citizen implies that Bloom is not Irish. Bloom leaves to try to find Martin Cunningham, and the men in the pub immediately begin to gossip about him and laugh at him. As he is gone, Lenehan spreads the rumor about *Throwaway* that had begun earlier, telling everyone that Bloom actually went to collect his money. Bloom returns as the resentment towards him reaches its apex, and when he doesn't tell the men about his nonexistent money from betting on the horse race, the Citizen reacts vehemently, calling him names, and eventually resorting to violence as he throws a biscuit tin at Bloom and sics his dog on him. This is the only time in the novel that Bloom reacts to gossip, goading the Citizen, which may be why it leads to violence. Later, in "Nausicaa," Bloom remembers this event and wonders whether he handled it correctly: "Then that bawler in Barney Kiernan's. Got my own back there. Drunken ranters what I said about God made him wince. Mistake to hit back? Or? No. Ought to go home and laugh at themselves" (311). Bloom's attitude here suggests that

he feels as if he had provoked the cruel treatment from the men at Barney Kiernan's, especially the Citizen. Bloom has forgotten what it means to be a gossipee, momentarily trying to gain power for himself. Bloom escapes physically unharmed, but his status as an outsider and gossipee is confirmed as his physical, ethnic, and mental differences from the other men are highlighted. The men finally resent Bloom because of a rumor that has no basis in fact, indicating the danger of gossip and the danger of language in general as Bloom's innocent comment about throwing away his paper has led to malicious and violent attitudes towards him. Here gossip has no positive effects, and Joyce is criticizing the blind adherence to a silly rumor. This chapter indicates the violent nature of the triangular model of gossip, which demonstrates Joyce's growing rejection of the model.

It is surprising that since gossip is generally considered to be the purview of women, in *Ulysses*, most of the gossipers are men. That is, Joyce reverses the perception that gossip is a woman's activity by portraying gossip primarily among men's circles. The male characters in the novel often reinforce conventional ideas of gossip. There are two female characters, however, that actually subvert conventional views of gossip both knowingly and unknowingly—Gerty MacDowell and Molly Bloom. Before I begin to discuss the final episode and its play with gossip, I will briefly discuss Gerty MacDowell and her relation to gossip.

Gerty MacDowell, like Bloom and Stephen, is isolated and the subject of malicious gossip. Unlike Bloom and Stephen's isolations, Gerty's isolation is romanticized, but it is still tainted by the specter of gossip:

. . . it was not true that she used to wear kid gloves in bed or take a milk footbath either. Bertha Supple told that once to Edy Boardman, a deliberate lie, when she was black out at daggers drawn with Gerty (the girls chums had of course their little tiffs from time to time like the rest of mortals) and she told her not to let on whatever she did that it was her that told or she'd never speak to her again. (286)

Here, a prototypical, yet romanticized view of gossip is outlined; Gerty makes herself into a martyr as her friends gossip about her, and the gossip is reduced to a silly “little tiff.” Gerty maintains her status as martyr in her interaction with her friends during “Nausicaa,” acting superior because she dare not sink to the petty squabbles that her friends do: “For an instant she was silent with rather sad downcast eyes. She was about to retort but something checked the words on her tongue. Inclination prompted her to speak out: dignity told her to be silent” (286). Cloaking herself in superiority, she acts as if she is above her friends. Joyce is parodying the gossip of Victorian novels in this chapter, questioning the simple way many novels address the idea of gossip. He complicates the view of gossip by having Gerty criticize Edy for gossiping while gossiping about her at the same time: “Irritable little gnat she was and always would be and that was why no-one could get on with her poking her nose into what was no concern of hers” (295). Gerty thus participates in gossip as she makes Edy the outsider that no one can get along with.

Throughout the novel, Molly Bloom is often gossiped about, especially by men. In “Sirens,” when the actual act of adultery is about to take place, Simon Dedalus and some of his friends gossip about Molly:

--By God, she had some luxurious operacloaks and things there.

Mr Dedalus wandered back, pipe in hand.

--Merrion square style. Balldresses, by God, and court dresses. He wouldn't take any money either. What? Any God's quantity of cocked hats and boleros and trunkhose. What?

--Ay, ay, Mr Dedalus nodded. Mrs Marion Bloom has left off clothes of all descriptions. (221)

This bawdy gossip about Molly is common ; she is always placed in the position of gossipee. Her reactions to this position are not clear until the final chapter, but, by keeping Molly silent until the end of the novel, Joyce skews his readers' perceptions of her, making them complicit in the gossip about her. Readers may enjoy the joke Simon makes at Molly's expense, participating in the laughter about her.

The last chapter, “Penelope,” finally shows Molly's perspective as she remembers gossip. The tone of the final chapter is extremely informal, and, although it is unclear whom Molly is talking to, the chapter is definitely a dialogue and not a monologue.¹⁹ Throughout the novel, Molly is described as being unintelligent and unsophisticated, but her understanding of gossip and intimacy is much more sophisticated than either Bloom's or Stephen's. Molly understands that gossip is something to be manipulated: “I pretended a coolness on with her over him because he

used to be a bit on the jealous side whenever he asked who are you going to and I said over to Floey and he made me the present of lord Byrons poems” (612). Here Molly manipulates Bloom by pretending she has secrets. She also uses secrets to make her women friends jealous: “youre always in great humour she said yes because it grigged her because she knew what it meant because I used to tell her a good bit of what went on between us not all but just enough to make her mouth water” (612-13). Molly understands that she can control Mrs. Breen and her emotions by imparting knowledge to her. Molly, however, does not quite establish emotional intimacy with any of her female friends, because she has almost constant disdain for women and how they communicate: “Ill let that out full when I get in front of the footlights again Kathleen Kearney and her lot of squealers Miss This Miss That Miss Theother lot of sparrowfart skitting around talking about politics they know as much about as my backside anything in the world to make themselves someway interesting” (627). Molly recognizes that people gossip to make themselves appear to be important, and she is critical of conventional “women’s” gossip. She repeatedly insults women throughout her dialogue: “shes as bad as a woman always licking and lecking but I hate their claws” (628-29). Although she is ostensibly talking about her cat here, her comment about claws can also be applied to women. Molly also welcomes gossip about her as she imagines an affair with Stephen: “then hell write about me lover and mistress publicly too with our 2 photographs in all the papers when he becomes famous” (638). Molly wants to be part of scandal, and she would like to be a gossipee because it will give her fame. She recognizes the power being gossiped about will give her as long as she controls what

people say. Molly, then, sees gossip as a tool for controlling people, but also criticizes the petty gossip of women, reflecting a sophisticated attitude towards gossip as a whole.²⁰

“Molly Bloomagain”: Molly, the Censorship of *Ulysses* and Gossip

As Joyce was writing *Finnegans Wake*, he also wrote some occasional poems, one of which has significant implications about his attitude towards the concept of gossip, *Ulysses*, *Finnegans Wake*, and Molly Bloom. The poem has several different versions and two different titles: “Post Ulixem Scriptum” and “Molly Bloomagain.” Although the poem seems to be an insignificant parody of a traditional Irish song (“Molly Brannigan”), it provides insight into what Joyce was preoccupied with at the time (1925-1934) he was defending *Ulysses* and composing *Finnegans Wake*. The first existent versions of the poem are dated March 12, 1925: one is handwritten and one is typed.²¹ There is also a version that appears to have been written sometime in May of 1925, although the date is unclear.²² These versions are all essentially the same; the only differences that exist between these versions are changes in punctuation.²³ A copy of the 1925 versions of the poem has been published in *Poems and Shorter Writings*, which was published by Faber and Faber in 1991, and there is no sign that the 1934 version of the poem was consulted when he was preparing this poem for publication.

The latest and most interesting version of the poem is located at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. It is on the back of a letter to Mr. Martinez²⁴ that is dated, July 14, 1934. This version of the poem is typed, but it has corrections made in Joyce’s hand. The letter provides some insight into the poem.

Joyce writes Martinez, “Here’s the silly verses you asked for. I do not think they have much interest apart from a strange dream I had” (Joyce Collection, University of Texas). Joyce treats the poem as if it is trivial, indicating both its informality and significance to my argument about gossip; that is, that the poem is “silly” demonstrates its differing status from his other work, allowing it to become a piece of gossip that shares secrets about *Ulysses* with *Finnegans Wake* and vice versa.

The 1925 version seems to be merely an afterthought to *Ulysses*, since the title of the poem literally means “After Writing Ulysses” or “Postscript Ulysses.” I quote the entire poem, since it is not well known:

Post Ulixem Scriptum

(Air: Molly Brannigan)

Man dear, did you never hear of buxom Molly Bloom at all,

As plump an Irish beauty, Sir, as any Levi-Blumenthal?

If she sat in the vicereagal box Tim Healy’d have no room at all,

But curl up in a corner at a glance from her eye.

The tale of her ups and downs would aisy fill a handybook

That would cover the two worlds at once from Gibraltar ‘cross to Sandy Hook.

But not that tale is told, ochone, I’ve lost my daring dandy look:

Since Molly Bloom has left me here alone for to cry.

Man dear, I remember when my roving time was troubling me

We picknicked fine in storm or shine in France and Spain and Hungary

And she said I'd be her first and last while the wine I poured went
 bubbling free
 Now every male you meet with has a finger in her pie.
 Man dear, I remember with all the heart and brain of me
 I arrayed her for the bridal but, O, she proved the bane of me.
 With more puppies sniffing round her than the wooers of Penelope
 She's left me on her doorstep like a dog for to die.
 My left eye is wake and his neighbour full of water, man.
 I cannot see the lass I limned for Ireland's gamest Daughter, man,
 When I hear her lovers tumbling in their thousands for to court her, man,
 If I was sure I'd not be seen I'd sit down and cry.
 May you live, may you love like this gaily spinning earth of ours,
 And every morn a gallant sun awake you with new wealth of gold
 But if I cling like a child to the clouds that are your petticoats
 O Molly, handsome Molly, sure you won't let me die!

(330)

That this poem is based on a drinking song indicates its trivial nature; much of Joyce's poetry mimics or parodies extremely informal forms of poetry such as the limerick. Joyce liked to work with these forms to communicate something serious that often appears extremely trivial. In this way, the choices that Joyce made when writing poetry mimic gossip as gossip often addresses serious problems or issues in the guise of informal or idle talk. Joyce was preoccupied with this poem also, as he came back to it

several years later and revised it. Something about the poem attracted him and stayed on his mind for at least ten years. The later version of the poem indicates Joyce's changing attitude towards the poem, Molly Bloom, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

Several significant changes were made between the 1925 versions of the poem and the 1934 version. Joyce seems to have originally written this poem as merely a postscript to *Ulysses*; however, when we look at the 1934 version, the poem becomes more complicated and intriguing:

Molly Bloomagain

(Air: Molly Brannigan)

Man an dear, did you never hear of buxom Molly Bloom at all,

As plump an Irish beauty, Sir, as any Levi-Blumenthal (.

If she sat in the vicereagal box Tim Healy'd have no room at all,

But curl up in a corner at a glance from her eye.

The tale of her ups and downs would aisy fill a handybook

That would cover this wide world of purs from Gib across to Sandy

Hook.

But not that tale is told, (ochone (correction)), I've lost my daring dandy

look

Since Molly's gone and left me here alone for to die.

Man dear, I remember when my roving time was troubling me

We picknicked fine in rain or shine in France and Spain and Hungary

And she swore I'd be her first and last while the wine I poured went
 bubbling free
 Now every male you meet with has a finger in her pie.
 Man dear, I remember with all the heart and brain of me
 I arrayed her for the bridal but, O, she proved the bane of me.
 With more puppies sniffing round her than the wooers of Penelope
 She's left me on her doorstep like a dog for to die.
 My left eye is wake and its neighbour full of water, man.
 I cannot see the lass I limned for Ireland's gamest Daughter? Man.
 When I hear her lovers tumbling in their thousands for to court her, man,
 If I was sure I'd not be seen I'd sit down and cry.
 May you live, may you love like this gaily spinning earth of ours,
 And every morn a gallant sun awake you to fresh wealth of gold
 But if I cling like a child to the clouds that are your petticoats
 O Molly, handsome Molly, sure you won't let me die!
 (James Joyce Collection, University of Texas)

The overall tone of the poem is gossipy, as the speaker in the poem tells stories about Molly. The poem is funny, immediately turning Molly into the gossipee, but the poem does not seem to be entirely critical of Molly. It is almost as if the poem is celebrating Molly's status as gossipee, appearing to revel in malicious gossip at the same time it privileges Molly. The speaker of the poem appears to admire Molly, desiring her favor, but, at the same time, catalogs her faults—she is promiscuous, she's heavy, she lies, etc.

The speaker of the poem could possibly be Leopold Bloom because of the speaker's obvious status as a cuckold. This poem creates a bond between gossiper and gossipee that is rare, creating a view of gossip that is even rarer. Sometimes the gossiper gossips about the gossipee not out of malice or even out of the desire to have power, but out of admiration and love. The gossip in this poem is not exactly nice, but it is loving, almost excusing Molly for her faults. In addition to the tone and content of the poem, the changes Joyce made in the poem also reflect his evolving attitude towards gossip.

The changes to the poem are small but significant. The title, obviously, is the most noticeable change. There could be several possible reasons why he chose, in 1934, to change the title from "Post Ulixem Scriptum" to "Molly Bloomagain," and this change reveals his ambivalent feelings towards *Ulysses*. He was both delighted because it was finally being published and weary because of the numerous hassles he went through. In 1934, the United States finally allowed *Ulysses* to be published. The court ruling occurred in December of 1933 and initiated the free distribution of *Ulysses* throughout the English-speaking world.²⁵ Joyce felt a sense of renewal because of this wide-ranging publication, so instead of calling his poem, "Post Ulixem Scriptum," which makes the poem appear to be merely an afterthought, he renamed the poem "Molly Bloomagain" to show how his novel was being reborn because it was being published once again and for the first time in some places. Joyce's excitement about the overwhelming success of his novel in the United States further emphasizes the delight he felt, which is demonstrated in a letter to Frank Budgen on April 25 1934: "Yes, the sales of *U* in the U.S.A. are remarkable. 33,000 in 10 weeks" (303). The sense of relief in

this passage is clear; after several years of waiting, his book was finally widely available, and he thought he would no longer have to worry about money; however, the happy news of the successful publication of *Ulysses* was immediately met with problems. In a letter to Carola Giedion-Welcker on April 25, 1934, Joyce writes: “I met my publisher from the U.S. here and he informed me that the sales now stand at 35,000 but that my compatriot correlative religionists and the puritan prohibitionists are infuriated and have compelled the state attorney to file an appeal at the eleventh hour” (302). This letter demonstrates the ambivalence Joyce was feeling about *Ulysses*. He was happy at its success, but frustrated by yet another complication in its publication.

Given the numerous problems Joyce encountered with the publication of *Ulysses*, he was beginning to feel tired of *Ulysses* and all of the craziness surrounding its publication. Many of the letters that he was writing in 1934 demonstrate this growing frustration. For example, in a letter to Harriet Weaver written on July 10, 1934, the stress Joyce was enduring is revealed: “My forty months of wandering in the wilderness must come to an end. It is risky for I don’t know how the appeal court will rule in N.Y. and my rent-paying power depends on the judges” (308). Thus, Joyce was relying on the outcome of the case in the United States for money, and the never-ending process of the trial contributed to his increasing irritation with *Ulysses*. In another letter written on August 13, 1934 to Frank Budgen, Joyce writes: “The government can still carry the case to the U.S. equivalent of the House of Lords. But I doubt it. A pity that when I win after 18 years struggle the \$ drops 50%. Such is life” (317). Obviously, Joyce’s attitude about finally being able to publish *Ulysses* legally in the United States is quite flippant in

this passage; however, this letter also demonstrates his irritation at the long trial. Additionally, Joyce was frustrated by the numerous attempts to pirate his book, and he was constantly inundated with legal issues regarding the novel.²⁶ The title, “Molly Bloomagain” may signal his growing weariness with having to deal with the legal issues and questions from readers about the text. Joyce feels like he must deal with *Ulysses* again and again, and his irritation with the problems with the novel’s publication is clear in his letters. The word “again” can signal both rejuvenation and weariness.

Furthermore, the first title seems to look to the past and *Ulysses*, while the second looks to the present and future of *Finnegans Wake*. It is obvious that this title can be specifically related to *Finnegans Wake*. “Molly Bloomagain” puns on the new title: “Finnegan” or “Finn Again.” That is, just as he transforms the hero Finn’s name to the recurrent “Finnegans” in *Finnegans Wake*, in the poem he recycles *Ulysses*, allowing the book to “Bloomagain.” Ellmann’s discussion of Joyce’s ideas about the title of *Finnegans Wake* helps to demonstrate how these two titles are intricately related; Joyce had already decided on the title in June of 1923:

Actually he did know the title at least, and had told it to Nora in strictest secrecy. It was to be *Finnegans Wake*, the apostrophe omitted because it meant both the death of Finnegan and the resurgence of all Finnegans. The title came from the ballad about the hod-carrier who falls from a ladder to what is assumed to be his death, but is revived by the smell of whisky at his wake. (556)

Thus, the words “Finnegans” and “wake” represent both death (i.e., a funeral wake) and rebirth (i.e., waking in the morning or rebirth of “all Finnegans”). When the word “wake,” which appears in the poem also, is related to the title “Molly Bloomagain,” we can see the ambivalence Joyce felt about *Ulysses*. He was both weary and invigorated by the novel; that is, it represented both death and the “resurgence” of all Blooms. He felt that *Ulysses* was no longer alive for him because he was finished writing it, but the Blooms kept resurfacing in his life, especially with the final resolution of the trial in the United States in 1934.

Joyce’s moving on to *Finnegans Wake* that is signaled in the poem also signals a change in attitude towards gossip. Although *Ulysses* makes efforts to question and subvert conventional views of gossip, these views are, for the most part, reinforced throughout the novel almost immediately after they are questioned. Even Molly, with all her sophisticated knowledge of gossip, still participates in conventional gossip as she insults and ridicules other women. The poem, with its embracing of gossip and all its negative aspects suggests that Joyce had begun to view gossip in an entirely different way, which is, in turn, reflected in *Finnegans Wake* in the gossip of the washerwomen and treatment of the dreaded letter that is both a defense and a criticism of H.C.E.

***Finnegans Wake*: Inclusive, Circular Gossip**

The washerwomen on the banks of *Finnegans Wake* gossip, and they gossip a lot, but their gossip has a different tone than the gossip in Joyce’s previous works. The washerwomen embrace people’s faults, talking about A.L.P and H.C.E. with no

boundaries and for no malicious reasons. Their talk resembles both song and prayer, mirroring the poem about Molly Bloom and its questioning of gossip:

O

tell me all about

Anna Livia! I want to hear all

about Anna Livia. Well you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now. You'll die when you hear. Well, you know, when the old cheb went futt and did what you know. Yes, I know, go on. Wash quit and don't be dabbling. Tuck up your sleeves and loosen your talk-tapes. And don't butt me—hike!—when you bend. Or whatever it was they threed to make out he thried to two in the Fiendish park. He's an awful old reppe. Look at the shirt of him! Look at the dirt of it! He has all my water black on me. And it steeping and stuping since this time last wik. How many goes is it I wonder I washed it? I know by heart the places he likes to sale, duddurty devil! Scorching my hand and starving my famine to make his private linen public. Wallop it well with your battle and clean it. (196)

Interestingly, this chapter begins with two of the symbols of gossip that I have been discussing in this chapter. The first three lines form a triangle, echoing the idea of triangular gossip, but the “O” at the beginning of the triangle reveals a much more inclusive theory of gossip. That these symbols begin a chapter that focuses much of its attention on gossip and its effects indicates Joyce's mutable attitude towards gossip. The

combination of the triangle and the circle reveal a willingness to expand on earlier ideas about gossip. Additionally, these symbols can be related to Joyce's sigla for *Finnegans Wake*, the siglum for ALP is a triangle, and the symbol for Shaun is a triangle that is missing one of its lines. This betrays Joyce's ambivalent attitude about gossip as he connects a symbol for gossip, the triangle, to both Shaun and ALP. The connection with ALP signals a desire to embrace gossip, and the connection with Shaun, who is often treated negatively in the text, indicates a criticism of gossip, especially since he is the postman who delivers news, messages, and possibly gossip. The reflection of gossip is further reflected by the fact that the siglum for the twelve is a circle. These twelve can be seen as the gossipers of the *Wake* who sit in a circle perpetuating rumors. In the above passage, the washerwomen both physically and linguistically clean up the mess that H.C.E. has made. Interestingly, this passage begins with the request to gossip about A.L.P, but the washerwomen immediately turn to the rumors about H.C.E. The washerwomen, speaking in a relatively plain fashion, clean up the language, washing away the dirt of confusion. The washerwomen also literally wash away the stains on H.C.E.'s clothing, creating an obvious metaphor for gossip. Throughout Joyce's work, there is a resistance to things being cleaned. This is especially true in the case of Stephen Dedalus, who barely even allows water to touch him. The suggestion in Joyce's earlier work is that it is impossible to be washed clean, but the washerwomen provide a new perspective—scandal and sins that someone has committed can be washed away, but only through the positive, healing process of gossip. Gossip, thus, becomes a positive force in the book; only when things have been aired in the open and gone

through the process of the washerwomen's gossip and cleaning can the healing begin. It is also interesting to note that as the washerwomen "clean," they are washing the dirt into the River Liffey. As the Liffey is both figuratively and literally A.L.P. in the novel, this means that all of the dirt the washerwomen eradicate gets washed into the river. In this sense, A.L.P. can never be entirely clean, suggesting that Joyce has developed a much more complicated view of gossip. Joyce recognizes the difficulty of ever truly erasing a stigma once it has been applied, but, at the same time, he embraces that stigma by having the river passively welcome the dirt. The passage abounds in thinly veiled names of rivers, suggesting that Joyce sees the river as a metaphor for gossip. Just as the cliché says, water is always changing, just as gossip is always changing. The flow of the river can be related to the flow of language that encompasses gossip. The river reaches all sorts of different locations also, connecting people and places that might never have been connected before. The river mimics gossip, picking up dirt or silt from one location and depositing it elsewhere.²⁷ Seeing gossip as a river indicates the changing model of gossip that Joyce is using. While he strictly maintains a triangular model of gossip in his earlier works and begins to question gossip in *Ulysses* by adding one more point to the equation to create a rectangular model, in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce creates a circular model of gossip that suggests an inclusiveness that had previously been absent. Because there is no possibility of creating an us vs. them dichotomy within a circular model, Joyce embraces all kinds of gossip and all of its effects as he eliminates the role of gossiper and gossipee, allowing his characters to be both.

The evolution of the *Anna Livia Plurabelle* chapter is perhaps one of the most well-known and well-documented instances in the textual evolution of *Finnegans Wake*.²⁸ Fred Higginson has collected all of the versions of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, clearly demonstrating the history of the chapter. Published separately before the novel, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* has an interesting textual history. One of the first appearances, as Higginson points out, of text from the chapter comes in an early notebook from 1923 (B.M. Add. MS 47471B.68A) and is very brief: “O, tell me now about Anna Livia. I want to hear all about Anna Livia. Well you know Anna Livia. Yes of course I know Anna Livia. Tell me now Tell me now” (qtd. in Higginson 3). The process this small beginning goes through to become finally the text of Book 1, Chapter 8 of the *Wake* mimics the process of gossip and rumor as things change and evolve as Joyce adds to his text and makes it more complicated. The evolution of this passage works much like the game “telephone” or “gossip,” mimicking the circular process of sharing secrets that alters that secret until it barely resembles the original secret. I will trace the development of one small section of the chapter in order to demonstrate its more “gossipaceous” aspects. The section I will be discussing went through seven major revisions until it became the version published in *Finnegans Wake*. The first version is relatively straightforward:

O go on and tell me more. Tell me every [little bit.] I want to know every single thing. Well, now comes the childer’s part. How many childer has she at all? [I can’t rightly tell you that.] God only knows. I hear she has 111. [She can’t remember half their names.] A hundred and

how? The did well to [christen] her Plurabelle. O, my! Such a flock! She must have been a gadabout in her day, so she must. So she was, you bet. Tell me, tell me, [how did she come through all her fellows], who was the 1st [that every burst? That's a thing I always wish to know.] She says herself she [hardly] knew who he was or what he did or where he crossed her. She was a young thin pale slip of a thing then and he was a heavy lurching Curraghan [as strong as the oaks there used to be that time down in killing Kildare] that first fell across her. You're wrong there. You're all wrong. It was ages before [that] in the county Wicklow the garden of Erin before she ever dreamt she'd end in [the barley-fields and her pennylands of] Humphreystown and lie with a landleaper, well on the wane. Was it, was it? [Are you sure?] Where in Wicklow? Tell me where, the very first time. [I will if you listen²⁹ (Higginson 24-25)]

As Joyce revised this section, he continually added words and revised words, complicating the text. Unlike his earlier works, where he kept secrets, Joyce wants to include everything as he had become willing to embrace a circular, inclusive model of gossip. As the passage goes through revision, Joyce adds clichés and puns that allow for varied interpretation, demonstrating Joyce's desire to encourage his readers to create their own gossip, to find their own way through the text. Like a game of telephone, the later versions contain echoes of the earlier version—they are all connected—but the meanings fluctuate as Joyce allows his words to change as they confront each other. One common reaction to *Finnegans Wake* is to believe that Joyce began with a clear text

and then made the passages increasingly more complicated; however, while that is partially true here, his texts were often already complicated and diffuse in the early stages. This reaction demonstrates the readers' desire to get back to the secret, the original rumor, of Joyce's writing, but he denies this desire, encouraging them rather to play their own game with the text, create their own gossip, rather than relying on him for the rumor. By encouraging his readers to actively create the text, Joyce has become more inclusive.

In the final, published version of the passage demonstrates Joyce increased the length by about two thirds. Some of the most significant changes between the first version and the last version include the changing of the word "God" to "Close" in the phrase "Close only knows," and the addition of river names and puns on river words (such as "Dell"). Perhaps one of the most significant comparisons between the two passages is a phrase that doesn't change: "I will if you listen." Throughout all of the versions of this passage, the phrase never changes, providing an anchor of sorts. After all of the complicating, confusing words that come before the phrase, "I will if you listen" sticks out, catching the reader's attention. Joyce wants to attract the reader's attention here, indicating to the reader that he or she needs to be listening. That he never changes this phrase is amazing, as almost every single other word in the passage goes through some kind of evolution. Listening, then, becomes privileged in this passage about gossip. Listening may just be the way to make gossip inclusive.

It has become commonplace to talk about the language of Joyce's final work, and how he 1). creates a new language, 2). plays with the boundaries of semiotics, and 3).

allows for a Derridean play between words. But Joyce's language in the novel is also like gossip, changing its meaning depending on who is reading it and when they are reading it. When Joyce plays with the spelling and meaning of words, creating something more than puns, he participates in the game "gossip" that I mentioned in my introduction. It is as if there are multiple Joyces sitting in a circle whispering in each others' ears, or Joyce is sitting in a circle with his source materials as fellow gossipers/gossipees. One of the most famous, yet apocryphal, examples of another person influencing the content of Joyce's work occurred when Samuel Beckett was his amanuensis. Beckett was taking notes for Joyce, writing down his thoughts, when someone knocked on the door, and Joyce said, "come in." Beckett wrote this down as part of the dictation, and when Joyce discovered it later, he decided to leave it in the text. This example indicates Joyce's willingness to let others influence his text as he adapts his plans to include a mistake. By seeing Joyce's language in the *Wake* as gossip, a slightly altered perception of what he is doing is possible. Obviously, all of the now commonplace arguments that have been made are in some way applicable to the text, but by seeing Joyce's technique as gossip, it enriches and reinvigorates these arguments. Joyce's language in *Finnegans Wake* uses both the positive and negative effects of gossip. Quite often, Joyce's play with language produces a feeling in the reader of being the gossipee; that is, the reader is not in on the secrets that Joyce is putting behind the words. That the novel begins in the middle of a sentence suggests to the reader that he or she has interrupted a conversation, making him or her feel even more like an outsider. His language then creates a distance between his book and his reader. This distance,

though, encourages the reader to become actively a part of the gossipy world of the text. At the same time, the language of the novel produces an intimacy that is rare as it lets the reader see the inner workings of Joyce's mind. Additionally, Joyce's language in the novel can be seen as trivial as he plays with meanings and spellings, creating new words. But, as in gossip, triviality often disguises serious topics.

Joyce's attitude towards gossip evolved along with the experimentalism of his writing. At the beginning of his writing career, Joyce reinforced conventional attitudes about gossip. Even in *Ulysses*, he had difficulty escaping the dominant opinion about gossip as he has characters both embrace gossip and are damaged by gossip at the same time. *Finnegans Wake*, finally, allowed Joyce the space to question gossip, creating a positive view of even the most malicious kind of gossip. Gossip is all about manipulating language and Joyce recognizes this in his final work. Joyce's increasingly complex and ambivalent attitude towards gossip is also reflected in the changes in his writing technique. As he evolves as a writer, his techniques and drafting process change as he allows gossip to invade his work. Both his earlier works and other people become increasingly more integral to his work. His note-taking also becomes more haphazard and confused as he tries to allow for the intimacy of gossip to distort and affect his language. Joyce goes from creating binaries and excluding people in his early work to including everyone and encouraging participation from his friends and his audiences. He negotiates the difficult world of modernism by first isolating himself, but, in the end, he allows for connection with others as he recognizes the possible benefits of the modernist community.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Gillespie, "Aesthetic Evolution: The Shaping Forces behind *Dubliners*," Gabler, "Towards a Critical Text of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," Litz, "Early Vestiges of Joyce's *Ulysses*," Slotte, "Preliminary Comments on Two Newly Discovered *Ulysses* Manuscripts," Schork, "By Jingo: Genetic Criticism of *Finnegans Wake*," and Ferrer, "The Freudful Couchmare of L: Joyce's Notes on Freud and the Composition of Chapter XVI of *Finnegans Wake*."

² Two classic, single text studies of Joyce's manuscript material are Hayman, *The Wake in Transit* and Groden, *Ulysses in Progress*.

³ In a class I taught on James Joyce in the summer of 2004, I had my students play this game with a quote from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: "I got to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race" (pg. #). By the end of the game the quote had become: "Go to the counter four times, said the priest."

⁴ See Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences" for more discussion of his concept of "play."

⁵ See Freud's *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* for more discussion of his theories about jokes.

⁶ This model of gossip brings to mind René Girard's theories about the triangulation of desire. That is, when a love triangle exists it is almost always more about the connection between the two people who are competing than it is about the love for the object of their desire.

⁷ The problem of squaring the circle has had an extensive history. With the aid of computers, it is now possible to square a circle, but, because of π , it is impossible to square a circle using a compass and a ruler.

⁸ For a more specific discussion of the textual history of *Dubliners*, see the following articles by Robert Scholes: "Some Observations on the Text of *Dubliners*: 'The Dead,'" "Further Observations on the Text of *Dubliners*," and "Grant Richards to James Joyce."

⁹ Joyce and Richards had a very contentious relationship about the stories. Richards repeatedly asked Joyce to remove or revise material because he was afraid of the book being censored. Joyce usually resisted, but sometimes gave into Richards' requests. Their history is also marred by the fact that Richards kept losing copies of Joyce's manuscripts, and he repeatedly told Joyce he was about to publish the stories, but then kept delaying publication. Part of this was due to Richards' financial woes. For more information on the relationship between Richards and Joyce see Robert Scholes' "Grant Richards to James Joyce." Scholes collected several letters that Richards wrote to Joyce throughout the complicated publication history of *Dubliners*.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the evolution of the stories in general see Michael Patrick Gillespie's "Aesthetic Evolution: The Shaping Forces Behind *Dubliners*." Gillespie argues that the evolution of *Dubliners* is an early stage in Joyce's artistic development that should not be ignored. He asserts that the writing and revision of these stories demonstrates Joyce's growing sophistication in his writing.

¹¹ Robert Scholes' discussion of the textual history of *Dubliners* supports this idea, as he argues, "[t]hrough countless little changes of this kind, Joyce carefully eliminated his own personality from *Dubliners*, as he developed a system whereby the events and characters presented in the narrative rather than any assumed narrative persona determine the diction and syntax of the narrative prose. This elimination of the narrator as a personality does away with the need for consistent idiom and paves the way for the experiments of Joyce's later fiction" (1964, 113).

¹² In a course I taught on James Joyce, my students and I compared these two versions, and, with few exceptions, students preferred the earlier version because it made them more comfortable. I feel that they liked this earlier version because in the later version Joyce removed information that results in uncertainty in the reader. A common reaction to this uncertainty is to desire certainty, which is something the earlier version gives to the readers.

¹³ In "The Boarding House," Mrs Mooney and her daughter turn Bob Doran into a gossipee as they subtly threaten to cost him his job. In "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" Parnell becomes the ultimate gossipee

as the men criticize and defend him. In “A Little Cloud,” Little Chandler makes himself into a gossipee as he criticizes himself for not being like Ignatius Gallaher.

¹⁴ J. Mark Heumann supports this assertion in his article “Writing—and Not Writing—in Joyce’s ‘A Painful Case.’” He argues that Mr. Duffy functions similarly to Stephen in that he demonstrates Joyce’s view of the world at the same time he is masking that view. That is just as Joyce removes material in *Dubliners*, he removes it in the transition from *Stephen Hero* to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The most interesting removal of information Heumann points out is the excision of Duffy’s only instance of direct discourse: “I, he said, will receive with disdain every advance on the part of this civilization which is unworthy of me but which seeks to entrap me” (85). Heumann argues convincingly that Joyce removed this line to create more distance between both himself and Duffy and Duffy and the reader.

¹⁵ The way his notes actually look on the page also changed as the interaction between texts increased. These notes are very orderly and neat looking, but as Joyce become more involved in writing *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, the notes become increasingly messier and the gossip between texts increases as Joyce takes more liberties with the authors’ words, playing with meaning just as gossip plays with rumor. The more Joyce writes, juxtaposition increasingly becomes interaction, as Joyce becomes the ultimate gossip, skewing the words of others to his own purposes.

¹⁶ See, for example, Mark Morrison’s “Stephen Dedalus and the Ghost of the Mother,” Margot Norris’ “The Last Chapter of *Finnegans Wake*: Stephen Finds His Mother,” Brenda Oded’s “The Maternal Ghost in Joyce,” and Suzette Henke’s *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire*.

¹⁷ This technique has, after all, worked. The Joyce industry is alive and well today, and Joyce’s readers have definitely created a gosspaceous community of sorts.

¹⁸ There are numerous studies of the textual evolution of *Ulysses*. See, for example, Sam Slote’s “Preliminary Comments on Two Newly Discovered *Ulysses* Manuscripts,” in which he discusses a “Circe” manuscript and an “Eumaeus” manuscript. His discussion of the “Eumaeus” manuscript, which has come to be known as “Eumeo,” is most revealing as it indicates the similarities in Joyce’s writing process in the later stages of *Ulysses* and in the early stages of *Finnegans Wake*. See also Arnold Goldman’s “Two New *Ulysses* Working Drafts,” and Michael Groden’s “Criticism in New Composition: *Ulysses* and *The Sound and the Fury*.”

¹⁹ Although it is usually assumed that “Penelope” is a monologue, I would like to argue that it is a dialogue. Molly’s voice in this chapter sounds as if she is talking to someone else, and there are definite moments when she addresses someone else. Additionally, through a Bakhtinian perspective, Molly uses multiple voices instead of one, participating in heteroglossia.

²⁰ In her article, “Penelope, or, Myths Unravelling: Writing, Orality, and Abjection in *Ulysses*,” Gerardine Meaney discusses the relationship between Molly Bloom and Joyce’s textual processes. She argues that “[i]dentification of *Ulysses*’ textual strategies with Molly Bloom’s infidelities begs an identification between Joyce and Penelope. Like Molly, Penelope is an artist, and like Joyce, she is an artist primarily concerned with undoing. Weaving and unweaving, making decision and desire wait upon an achievement she constantly undoes, Penelope is more than a figure for the novel’s ‘alduterations’ of tradition. She provides a myth of writing which will supersede Dedalus to become central to *Finnegans Wake*” (522). The process of weaving and unweaving that Penelope, Molly, and Joyce participate in resembles the process of gossip.

²¹ The handwritten version is located at the special collections at Buffalo, and the typed version is located at Princeton.

²² This version is held at the British Library.

²³ Facsimile copies of these versions of the poem can be found in the “Occasional Verse” volume of the James Joyce Archive. I would like to thank Michael Groden for making me aware of these versions.

²⁴ I have yet to figure out who Mr. Martinez is, even though I looked at several biographies and other sources. Additionally, this letter is not published in the collection of Joyce’s letters, which leads me to believe that few people know about this edition of the poem.

²⁵ Joyce’s happiness at the ruling is made clear in a letter written to T.S. Eliot on December 18, 1933: “*En somme*, one half of the English-speaking world has given in. The other half, after a few terrifying bleats from Leo Britannicus, will follow—as it always does” (Joyce 295). See Joyce’s *Letters*.

²⁶ Several attempts were made to pirate *Ulysses*, and many of them were successful. In Japan, a pirated edition was published in February of 1932. Samuel Roth also published a pirated version in the United States. Joyce had to endure 18 years of legal hassles until he could see his book published in most of the world. See Richard Ellman's *James Joyce*, pgs 665-666 and pg 691.

²⁷ Gerardine Meaney points out one of the folkloric sources for A.L.P: "The Alp Luachra in Irish folklore gets into the stomachs of men who lie down in the cut grass and breeds there. She and her children can only be expelled through regurgitation over a stream" (528). A.L.P., thus, becomes both the source and subject of gossip as she gets into men's stomachs, making them vomit rumors, and is the river that rumors swirl around in.

²⁸ *Finnegans Wake*, more than any of Joyce's other texts, lends itself to a genetic examination of its manuscript material. See, for example, David Hayman's "From *Finnegans Wake*: A Sentence in Progress," R.J. Schork "By Jingo: Genetic Criticism of *Finnegans Wake*," Daniel Ferrer's "The Freudful Couchmare of Ad: Joyce's Notes on Freud and the Composition of Chapter XVI of *Finnegans Wake*," and Sam Slote's "Reading *Finnegan's Wake* Genetically."

²⁹ The brackets in this passage indicate handwritten additions. I follow Higginson's example in using the brackets.

CHAPTER III

“THE WAR, SO BLINDLY WAGED ON THE WRITTEN WORD, HAS LEFT ITS
MARK”: DJUNA BARNES AND THE STIGMA OF LEGITIMACY

It is no secret that Djuna Barnes had problematic relationships with her many editors. From *Ryder* (1928) to *The Antiphon* (1958), Barnes faced criticism and sometimes censure in order to have her books published.¹ Barnes's works were heavily edited before going to press. She often succumbed to her editors' suggestions at the expense of her own artistic integrity, hoping her works would be published and receive critical acclaim. This desire was often at odds with her equal desire to question the legitimization of normative sexualities. None of Barnes's works was free from the mark of the pen, and all of her editors significantly altered her texts to have them published legitimately. Although almost all scholarly attention has focused on T. S. Eliot and his editing of *Nightwood*, Barnes encountered similar problems with her two other widely-known texts, *Ryder* and *The Antiphon*. *Ryder*, which was published in 1928, was expurgated before publication, and Barnes worked on revising *The Antiphon* for several years, with the editorial help of Eliot and Edwin Muir, before it was published in 1958. Barnes's reaction to editing changed as the years passed. Beginning with *Ryder*, her attitude was one of horrified disgust at the expurgation of her manuscript. With *Nightwood*, she became a bit more willing to have passages cut and words changed. Finally, with *The Antiphon*, although she still had some resentment towards Eliot, her attitude changed from outright resistance to a desire both to please and to create a

legitimate place for her literary work. This changing attitude indicates Barnes's increasing desire for literary legitimacy, and her ambivalent feelings about legitimacy are reflected in both the actual texts and her diverse reactions towards the editing of her work.

Legitimacies: Some Definitions

What does it mean to be legitimate? One of the most common, but now somewhat old-fashioned, ways to think of legitimacy is in terms of birth. A child is not legitimate unless his or her parents were married before conception or birth. Legitimacy can also be related to both authenticity and authority. A law becomes legitimate when it has been passed by some authority. Authority, here, is important in that whoever has the power usually decides what is legitimate. Think, for example, about the recent debate and activism surrounding gay marriage. As homosexual men and women seek to legitimate their relationships by getting married, both conservative and progressive legislators and judges are affecting the outcome with their authority. While some judges have legitimated gay marriage, many people in Congress are protesting the judges' authority by asserting their own. This clash in legitimating authorities demonstrates the difficulty of making something that has typically been seen as illegitimate legitimate. Legitimacy, thus, invokes entrenched beliefs and laws—etymologically, legitimacy stems from the word “law.”

The word “authority” also immediately brings to mind the word “author.” What makes an author or a work legitimate? Traditionally, one might argue that a work gains legitimacy by being connected to its author. What, for example, would happen if a new

play were discovered that was believed to be authored by Shakespeare? First, there would be the usual arguments about the document's authenticity. After the text's authenticity was certain, the play would garner much attention and might even be read widely. If this play were discovered and not connected to Shakespeare, it would have a significantly different path. What, also, would happen if years later it was discovered that the entire incident was a critic's hoax? What value would the play then have?² A work, thus, can gain legitimacy by being connected to an author.

Within the community of modernism, ideas of legitimacy and authenticity are even more complicated. For Barnes, her involvement with T. S. Eliot helped to define the rules she had to follow in order to gain acceptance within modernism. Barnes turned to Eliot to help her gain legitimacy as a modernist author. It was a canny decision, since Eliot's critical voice could often endow its subject with more authority. Eliot, along with others, such as Pound, was involved in building a modernist canon, and Barnes knew that if she turned to him, he could help her to establish herself. Barnes's collusion with Eliot came at cost—a cost that is revealed in her manuscripts. Barnes paradoxically sacrifices one kind of legitimacy for her text—its honesty—as she seeks authorial legitimacy. The more she desires attention for her work, the more she is willing to compromise what she thinks her work should entail. Thus, for Barnes, being an established, modernist author could only happen at the sacrifice of her own artistic integrity—a sacrifice she was increasingly willing to make.

Barnes' work also reveals her concern about legitimacies that are not quite so conventional, such as sexual legitimacy. Michael Warner addresses how sexuality

attains normativity in his book *The Trouble with Normal*. He chronicles the history of sexuality and how different desires gain validity as time passes and attitudes about sexuality change:

Through long processes of change, some desires too stigmatized to be thought about gradually gain legitimacy, such as the desire for a homosexual lover. Others lose. Even desire now thought to be natural and normative, such as equal romantic love, only came into being relatively late in human history; they depend just as much on politics and cultural changes as do the stigmatized ones (11).

Sexual legitimacy, then, is an ever-changing phenomenon, and what most people consider to be legitimate sexuality now, was not legitimate fifty or even twenty years ago. And sexualities that used to be legitimate can become stigmatized also (e.g., relations between men and boys in ancient Greece). Thus, Barnes was writing in a time when common ideas about sexual legitimacy, specifically homosexuality, were significantly different from present ideas about homosexuality. Warner goes on to discuss normativity as a new phenomenon, arguing that “[w]hen people want to be normal they might be partly under the influence of an association of the term that has become somewhat archaic in English, in which normal means certified, approved, as meeting a set of normative standards” (56). Thus, being normal and having a normal sexuality confers legitimacy. As Warner asserts “[w]hat could be a better way of legitimating oneself than to insist on being seen as normal?” (60). And Barnes sought to become a “normal” modernist by subjecting her work to Eliot’s editorial authority. The

normativity she sought as a writer was complicated, however, by her equal desire to question sexual and social norms.

Warner further argues that people who are judged sexually illegitimate will always have some sort of stigma attached to them. He discusses the idea of stigma, evoking its etymology: “Stigma . . . refers to a mark on the body, like a brand or a tattoo or a severed ear, identifying a person permanently with his or her disgrace” (27). A stigma always marks the body; that is, shame is, quite literally, written on the body. Conversely, legitimacy is the very absence of a mark, identifying the person as normal because he or she seems like everybody else. Ironically, it is this absence of a mark that is very difficult to maintain, and it would seem that almost everybody has been marked by some kind of stigma. The question now becomes: is there a possibility of someone who existed without stigma, without some mark that shows that they are abnormal? Is there such a thing as the unmarked body, and if that body does exist, isn’t the absence of a mark itself a stigma? The visibility of a stigma may manifest itself in many different ways, the most obvious of which are physical, as Warner mentions. Stigmata, however, do not always have to be physical. A group of people can become stigmatized just for being in that particular group, and someone can bear a mental mark from having said something that goes outside the norm. A stigma can also appear on the page rather than on the body, which we will see in Barnes’ work.

Ladies Almanack: A Telling Portent

Two of Barnes’s works—*Ladies Almanack* and *Ryder*—were published in the same year, and Barnes experienced publication difficulties with both. Although Barnes

seems to have looked upon *Ladies Almanack* as a diversion that she never really intended to publish, written to distract herself while her lover, Thelma Wood, was hospitalized, the difficulties she encountered when she did try to publish it were an omen of the struggles that were to come. In his “Afterword” to the Dalkey Archive edition of *Ladies Almanack*, Steven Moore recounts the text’s publication history, indicating that Edward Titus’s Black Manikin Press was originally contracted to publish the work, but Titus annoyed Barnes by demanding money and copyrights (88). Robert McAlmon paid for the publication as a gift to Barnes, and it was eventually published by Darantière Press (the press that published *Ulysses* a few years earlier). The text had no distributor so it was “merrily and effectively hawked along the Left Bank by bold young women” (Field qtd. in Moore 88). This difficulty in getting her work published must have frustrated Barnes, but at least she did not have to change or censor her text before publication. Unfortunately, this thorny encounter with publication was minor when compared with her later problems. Barnes was thus conditioned to expect a struggle in her future publication endeavors, which only served to increase both her insecurity and her anger at the treatment her texts were to receive. Although the text was published for a coterie audience, it is not marked as her future texts are by her desire for widespread acceptance. The text does, however, betray other needs: the desire for legitimacy within the lesbian community of Paris and the hope to validate this community. Barnes gains a lesbian credential by publishing her book in this manner, creating an exclusive readership even as she seems to be arguing for inclusiveness in her work. Barnes may have desired a wider audience not only because she wanted her work to gain recognition

within the modernist community, but because she felt the need to address a wider audience.

As a result of the lack of editorial intervention and her narrowly defined readership, *Ladies Almanack*, more than any other text by Barnes, privileges “illegitimate” sexuality without compromise. The text is often seen as “an affectionate lampoon,” but has become increasingly prized as a “celebration of lesbianism” (Moore 91).³ Buried underneath the difficult style of *Ladies Almanack* is a complex argument about homosexuality and its legitimacy. Barnes even parodies the Christian creation story in order to espouse a creation myth for lesbians:

This is the part about Heaven that has never been told. After the Fall of Satan (and as he fell, Lucifer uttered a loud Cry, heard from one End of Forever-and-no-end to the other), all the Angels, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, Pisces, all, all gathered together, so close that they were not recognizable, one from the other. And not nine Months later, there was heard under the Dome of Heaven a great Crowing, and from the Midst, an Egg, as incredible as a thing forgotten, fell to Earth, and striking, split and hatched, and from out of it stepped one saying “Pardon me, I must be going!” And this was the first Woman born with a Difference. After this the Angels parted, and on the Face of each was the Mother look. Why was that? (25-26)

By giving lesbianism an origin, Barnes, in some way, seeks to make it valid. That this passage is, of course, a parody does not diminish the fact that it betrays a desire for acceptance of what has often been seen as questionable sexuality.

In another section of the text, the characters discuss marriage and how two women should be allowed to marry legally:

What has England done to legalize these Passions? Nothing! Should she not be brought to Task, that never once through her gloomy Weather have two dear Doves been seen approaching in their bridal Laces, to pace, in stately Splendor up the Altar Aisle, there to be United in Similarity, under mutual Vows of Loving, Honouring, and Obeying, while the One and the Other fumble in that nice Temerity, for the equal gold Bands that shall make of one a wife, and the other a Bride? (19)

The argument continues: women should be able to get married so that they have the protection of the law; that is, so that if something happens, the damaged party can receive restitution. Although Barnes is being slightly parodic, this section of the *Almanack* makes many of the same arguments as the current debate about gay marriage. These two legitimating forces in the text indicate Barnes's ambivalent attitude about homosexuality and its legitimacy. She likes the marked nature of being a part of the lesbian circle around Natalie Barney, but she also wants to be able to substantiate her sexuality. This confusion is further reflected in her later publications as she seeks acceptance for her work while she explores the fraught nature of homosexuality.

***Ryder*: Expurgation and Barnes's Reaction**

Horace Liveright published *Ryder* in 1928. Liveright and his company expurgated the text, even though Liveright fought against censorship in the case of other books that he published, risking prosecution and even jail time for publishing potentially obscene texts such as George Moore's *The Story of a Modern Lover* and an unexpurgated edition of Theodore Dreiser's *The "Genius."*⁴ Edward de Grazia describes Liveright as "a legend in his time because he scorned the moralists, fought passionately for the freedoms of the twenties, and expressed huge delight whenever one of his books was banned in Boston" (130). Given Liveright's radical practices, it is surprising that the idea of expurgating Barnes's text ever surfaced. It is difficult to say whether Liveright just didn't want to stand up for an unknown author or whether *Ryder* contained such offensive material that he felt it must be expurgated. The reasons the text was expurgated will probably never be known because the original manuscript does not survive, but the question remains: why did such a radical publisher insist on censoring Barnes' text? Whatever the causes, the effect the expurgation had upon Barnes followed her for the rest of her career.

The manuscript of *Ryder* does not survive today because it was "destroyed during the second World War" ("Note" viii). The publisher's note in the Dalkey Archive version states that a few of the "original illustrations were also censored, but happily these survive" ("Note" viii). Thus, the only materials that can be examined in relation to *Ryder* are the actual published editions and the illustrations. In her foreword

written on August 8, 1927, Barnes explains why her text was censored and her reaction to it:

This book, owing to censorship, which has a vogue in America as indiscriminate as all such enforcements of law must be, has been expurgated. Where such measures have been thought necessary, asterisks have been employed, thus making it matter for no speculation where sense, continuity, and beauty have been damaged. (vii)

Barnes's tone is obviously one of outrage, and she quite apparently did not appreciate her book being censored. Her reaction also indicates the prevailing attitude during the early twentieth century towards books that were seen as obscene.⁵ De Grazia maps much of the prevailing attitude, discussing the decency leagues and prosecutions of several authors, including D. H. Lawrence and Radclyffe Hall. Everyone writing or publishing a book that was even a little bit racy in the 1920s knew what he or she was up against. Barnes laments the necessity of having to eliminate passages, but at the same time she highlights these deleted passages by pointing them out in her foreword and by using asterisks to indicate their absence. She sees the text presented as an imperfect text, stigmatized with the mark of the censor, and she wants her readers to see that too.

Indicating the prevalence of editorial censorship, she argues that most readers never read a book as it was originally intended; rather, they read a "reconstruction":

Hithertofore the public has been offered literature only after it was no longer literature. Or so murdered and so discreetly bound in linens that

those regarding it have seldom, if ever, been aware, or discovered, that that which they took for an original was indeed a reconstruction.

In the case of Ryder they are permitted to see the havoc of this nicety, and what its effects are on the work of imagination. (vii)

The alterations Barnes was forced to make angered her because she thought her artistic integrity and the authenticity of her book were in jeopardy. That she thought her book was less genuine than an unexpurgated version highlights a key tension that is going on between her attitude towards the legitimacy of her book and her attitude towards legitimacy in her writing. She is upset because her book has lost some of its legitimacy as a result of being expurgated, but, in her book, she has an ambivalent attitude towards legitimacy, questioning both the illegitimate and legitimate characters. It is also interesting to note that she does not believe any kind of reconstruction is as authentic as what she had originally written. And, of course, after reading the foreword and expurgated text, most readers would want to read the expurgated passages. Readers would feel that they are missing an important part of the text, and the absence of the words serves as a highlighting technique that makes the passages seem more significant than the rest of the book. It is almost as if the reader is faced with a mystery that must be solved: the reader can either supply his or her own words in order to complete the text, becoming active participants in the text, or allow the absences to speak for themselves. In this instance, evidently, Barnes sees the original, unaltered version as the most legitimate version. Her passionate and angry foreword indicates that she feels that she is compromising her artistic integrity in order to get her work published. Another

intriguing aspect of her reaction is that she doesn't seem to care whether her book is well-received or a bestseller; rather, she is worried about the authenticity of the text and whether the cuts have ruined her text. Of course, she did allow the cuts to happen; whereas, she could have tried to publish the text with the expurgated passages and risk a trial similar to the ones Joyce faced with *Ulysses*.⁶ These cuts marked the text in a way the original words could not; paradoxically, the cuts have the effect of legitimizing and illegitimizing her text at the same time. The text becomes legitimate in the sense that it will reach a wider audience, but Barnes sees it as a mere reconstruction of her intended work.

Another part of Barnes's foreword to *Ryder* better illustrates her feelings about the marked nature of her text:

That the public may, in our time, see at least a part of the face of creation (which it is not allowed to view as a whole) it has been thought the better part of valour, by both author and publisher, to make this departure, showing plainly where the war, so blindly waged on the written word, has left its mark. (vii)

The "mark" that Barnes mentions might be productively viewed as a kind of literary or sexual stigma.

Ryder was also loosely autobiographical; her father led a similar life to that of Wendell Ryder. The expurgation of her text disallows her record of childhood trauma and undermines her complaint. In doing so, the cuts mark her with the stigma of abnormality. Barnes recognizes that *Ryder* will always have a stigma because of the

asterisks, but by choice. She could very well have replaced the deleted passages or just deleted the passages entirely, and her readers would not have known. Rather than trying to remove the traces left by the expurgation of her text, Barnes reveled in the attention to her plight that the stigma could cause. She further highlighted the changes to her text by providing a key in her foreword. For Barnes, the expurgations are both a sign of disgrace and a mark of distinction. Thus, the asterisks and foreword become a mark of disgrace, but not of Barnes's disgrace. Rather, the disgrace belongs to a culture of suppression and censorship on the rise in the late 1920s and 1930s.⁷ Barnes makes it clear that the anti-vice leagues and legislators have marred her work. Some of the disgrace could also belong to Liveright himself for not standing up for her novel when he was willing to stand up for some many other authors' work. The mark of distinction is that Barnes would not allow her work to be completely compromised by deleting all signs of the expurgation. Every reader who approaches her book will see this mark and know that Barnes did not easily bow down to the censors. Thus, the stigma that the asterisks create is both positive and negative: evidence of her "abnormality" and of her dissent from presiding norms. Creating a stigma was the only thing Barnes could do in order to proclaim publicly her outrage about censorship.

In total, six illustrations were censored from the 1928 publication by Liveright. In 1979, St. Martin's published a version to which two of the deleted illustrations were added. The Dalkey Archive edition, published in 1990, restores all six of the original censored illustrations. The first censored picture appears at the beginning of chapter three:

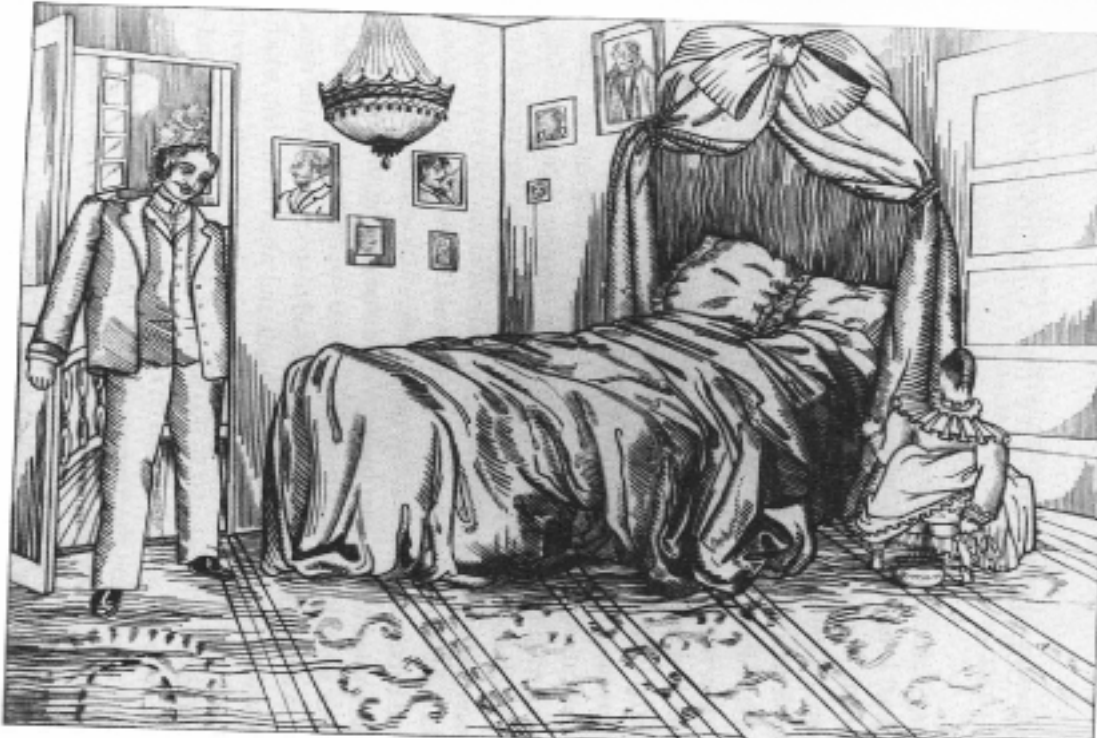


Figure 7: “Chamber Pot” Picture Censored from *Ryder*⁸

Figure 7 presents a private act of urinating in a public manner in two ways: Sophia’s husband, Alex, invades her privacy and so does the viewer. The act itself is not daring or subversive, but the viewing of the act is; both the reader and Alex participate in subverting conventionality by exposing it. It is difficult to tell from the illustration that Sophia is urinating into a chamber pot marked with the word “Amen,” but the accompanying passage indicates this fact:

The fifth of these bowls was dedicated to her own use, and was for her eye, and for no other (showing, as will presently be noted, that Sophia was, beneath everything, a good Christian), yet one night in the first year of her second marriage—for husbands have that privilege by the unwritten law—Alex, coming upon her suddenly, and possibly for no good, startled her into a premature rising and commotion of ruffle, and saw what she had indeed been brooding upon, the single word “Amen,” and when breaking into hearty laughter (for though he was a foreigner still he had ripened wonderfully), she answered him somewhat tartly: “He marketh the sparrow’s fall!” (11)

By showing something pictorially, rather than just through words, Barnes was daring someone to censor her. Additionally, the juxtaposition of religious imagery with scatological imagery could have been seen as especially offensive. Her comment, “He marketh the sparrow’s fall!” indicates her reasons for having a chamber pot with the word “Amen” inscribed on it. Sophia is here arguing that God notices every mundane occurrence; even bodily functions are significant. By highlighting the conventionality of private urinating and juxtaposing it with religious diction, Barnes subverts both the act of urinating making it seem daring and the idea that God notices everything and cares for every being.

Barnes did not give any indication that this illustration or any of the other illustrations were deleted from her text. That she does not mark the expurgation of these pictures as she did the censoring of her words indicates her privileging of the written

word. Her illustrations may not have been quite so important to her, or she may have found it difficult to mark the text to indicate the absence of an illustration.

Another of the deleted pictures, which occurs at the beginning of chapter twelve, repeats this bawdy, religious imagery. The illustration shows several angels, one of whom is naughty:



Figure 8: “Angel” Picture Censored from *Ryder*

In Figure 8, the angel looks up the dress of another angel while picking his nose and revealing his behind which has a feather stuck in it. The other, conventional angels are oblivious to the naughty angel, but once again the viewer is encouraged to participate in

the subversion that the illustration encourages. The naughty angel is secretive, but this secret is shared with the viewer.

Barnes creates grotesque, disturbing, yet compelling imagery in another expurgated illustration, which occurs in chapter 27, and is entitled “The Beast Thingumbob”:



Figure 9: “The Beast Thingumbob” and “The Cheerful” Censored from *Ryder*

“The Beast Thingumbob” is a fairy tale of sorts that Wendell tells to his children, and Figure 9 illustrates the tale. Thingumbob is a perverse hero who kills murdering lions by making them dizzy, and who falls in love with the strange creature pictured here, “The Cheerful”:

And this was the likeness of his love. She was, as he was also, of large limbs and of a beauty outside of the imagination and quite beside what men would call the point. She was terrible in her ways, which simply means that her ways were not our ways,--and she was fettered to the earth for a season of harvesting, after which she was to return to the gods. Her feet were thinly hoofed, and her hair was many coils, and her face was not yet, and her breasts were ten. (119)

Wendell tells his children the love story of “The Cheerful” and “The Beast Thingumbob”: “The Beast Thingumbob” falls in love with “The Cheerful,” and she accepts his love and gives him her virginity (which she had maintained for thousands of years). She dies after giving him ten children. Wendell ends the tale with his idiosyncratic view of love:

And so it was that Thingumbob rose up in the dawn and plucked his sons from her belly, and carried them to his nest, and there daylong and nightlong her sits above them, the smoke of his sorrow boiling above the trees, his eyelids shaking under, for her knows her gift to him was the useless gift of love. (121)

This end belies traditional romantic fairy-tale endings as Wendell emphasizes the senselessness of love, questioning its power. This tale and the picture that accompanies it question the nature of the fairy tale, creating a tale both literally and figuratively about illegitimacy as the children are born out of wedlock and the tale discusses characters that are fantastically grotesque and who do not quite belong. These two characters straddle

the line of acceptability. It is, once again, not surprising that this picture was censored as it illustrates a collision between Christian and pagan imagery, which some might have found offensive. The removal of several illustrations indicates how something visual may be more immediately affecting than words on a page. The fact that the words accompanying the censored images were not also censored demonstrates this phenomenon.

The deleted passages do not occur frequently, and, quite often, only words or phrases appear to have been deleted. There are a total of twelve deleted passages, four of which are apparently lengthy and eight of which probably contained single words or short phrases. The short phrases or single words occur in the middle of sentences and are indicated by a smaller number of asterisks. For example, the following passage has two small sections that have been censored:

Alex, breast to my breast (mouth, nose, etc., disposed of *a priori*, as must be evident to the hardest sceptic of the most ferociously caviling mind, that no otherwise could it be, without contortion and miscarriage of nature), his right hand (the ring finger thereof encircled with a dragon in fine silver and set with emeralds in mouth and tail), to be placed upon the half of the side that sees not, the index finger (or finger as may be particularly specified and requested, according to the mandates of his most exceeding nice taste—and feasibility) touching *** as the evening star rests upon the finger of the dawn, his left hand to be placed, palm in

*****, as the evening star rests upon the finger of the dawn (as per request). (79)⁹

This passage appears damaged as a result of the expurgation. Unlike earlier texts, such as *Tristram Shandy*, that used asterisks to create a group of insiders who knew the secrets of a text, Barnes's asterisks only produce outsiders as none of her readers knew the secret behind the asterisks.¹⁰ Even the removal of seemingly small parts of this passage affects the reader's understanding of the passage. The expurgation has the twinned effects of frustrating the reader by presenting him or her with a damaged text and intriguing the reader as he or she tries to guess what words have been deleted, encouraging the reader to participate actively in the text.

One of the longer deleted passages occurs in a poetic section and asterisks seemingly represent each of the deleted lines:

But got her hence, with scorne none awane,
 Saying: "It shower never ever but it rain
 In this y-great despond you feign call nest,
 Wherein, algate, no peahen getten rest,
 But brent must be with hookes and bright fire,
 For hounding down the game of her desire."

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
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(Barnes 56)

From the context of the poem, it looks as if the deleted passage was seen as potentially offensive or obscene. When the reader sees the passage on the page, it is definitely jarring, just as Barnes intended. All of the other long passages that Barnes deleted are represented by one line of asterisks. That Barnes got so angry about a total of twelve deleted passages, most of which are single words or short phrases, demonstrates her reluctance to expurgate *Ryder*—any changes that were forced upon her text somehow marred her artistic vision. The asterisks, then, represent a mark upon not only Barnes's novel, but also upon her legitimacy as a writer in that she felt a more established writer would not have had to make the same kind of changes that she did.

In addition to the issues of legitimacy and authenticity in the problematic censoring and subsequent publication of Barnes's text, the text itself also addresses her attitude towards legitimacy and authenticity. The text is told using a parody of earlier Elizabethan language, which demonstrates how Barnes sought legitimacy for her work by using an established style at the same time that she questioned that style's legitimacy. *Ryder* tells the story of a man, Wendell Ryder, with two families under the same roof. He is married to one of the women, Amelia, and the other, Kate, is his mistress; both of these women have born his children. Kate's children, who are illegitimate, are treated badly in the text.¹¹ Wendell is also criticized for having created illegitimate offspring. His wife and legitimate children also do not receive fair treatment in the text.¹² It is clear that while the readers may be tempted to side with Amelia and her children because they have a legal claim to Wendell, Barnes does not take sides so easily. She

complicates the idea of legitimacy by portraying the difficulties of both sides. At one point in the text, both Amelia and Kate try to leave Wendell and run into each other along the way. After a skirmish between the two women, Amelia explains the difference between legitimate and illegitimate:

“That,” said Amelia, “nicely illustrates the differences between the legitimate and the illegitimate. As we’ve fought, it is meet to come upon philosophy. Take this, then, to your mind and mull it: the sole difference between the bastard, per se, and the child of wedlock is, that the wife may leave but the mistress cannot, yet but listen to the nice point of the argument, it is the wife who may enter the house and the mistress who should stay out. So had you any matter in your head, or any turn for mathematics whatsoever, you would never have made it necessary for me to worry myself on these points, and happier we both should have been, nor this day had I entered into the saddle of a horse, or you been scratched from a cow, an you had not gone the wrong direction all the days of your life.” (148)

In Amelia’s description of their differences, it is clear that Kate has no power in the situation. She cannot leave and she cannot stay in the house, making it clear that as the mistress, she has no legal in Wendell’s life. The wife, then, seems to have all the power in the relationship because she has respect. The mistress must bow to the wishes of her lover and her lover’s wife in order to maintain her position. This passage basically switches the roles of wife and mistress. Amelia, however, believes that a life without

respect is a life of being stuck in an impossible situation. Kate does question Amelia's point of view, arguing that "Had it not been for me and my slightly vice versa mode of conduct, where would your philosophy be bedded? Not in your head, I warrant, but in the head of some other wife that I might have helped to it. For were it for such as me, there would be no such as you" (148). This speech complicates Amelia's ideas, indicating the dependence of legitimacy on the concept of illegitimacy. That is, Amelia feels legitimate and righteous because of Kate's illegitimacy.

The text's complex attitude towards illegitimacy is further emphasized by the differing descriptions of Amelia and Kate as they leave the house. Amelia, who is riding a horse, is described as "grim and cheerful to think how long she had bided at home, listening to falling china and strife of children and mistress" (145). The character described here has a certain grace and charm about her, and the reader feels pity for her plight, but the ordinary Amelia is also quite boring, especially when compared to Kate. Thus, even though the reader may feel sorry for Amelia, Barnes does not necessarily come down on either side. Her characterization of Kate is much funnier, and Kate possesses a certain strength that Amelia does not have. When Amelia runs into Kate, the reader gets quite a different description of Kate. They both get off their mounts in order to fight with each other: Amelia "with a lean leap came thudding from her horse," and "Kate in like manner tried to pitch herself headlong from her steed, but whether it was that she was too fat of instep, and so clung to the stirrup like a bride to the wedding band or whether she was quite unable to lift such great weight of shaking indignant flesh, would be hard to say" (147). Here Amelia easily and leanly leaps off of her horse, but

Kate, rather comically, cannot get off of her cow. She is stuck on the cow because she is too fat. The way Kate ironically clings to the cow highlights her desire for legitimacy. She does not have the wedding band that she so badly desires, and Barnes ironically emphasizes this fact by using a simile indicating Kate's lack of a ring. In this scene, Amelia is depicted quite respectfully, and Kate is treated as a joke. That Kate does not even get to ride a horse adds to her humiliation. Kate cannot even have a legitimate mode of transportation. However, Kate does make do with what she has and, rather than remaining stuck in an unhappy life, she uses any means necessary to get out of that life, even riding a cow. Kate shrewdly creates a way to escape; whereas, one wonders what Amelia would have done if she did not have the horse.

When the reader first encounters Kate, she is presented as a clever, though long-suffering character. From living on the street accompanying her mother's singing on the street-organ to having to live the demeaning life of Wendell's mistress, Kate has never really had a comfortable life. At one point, the narrator wonders if Kate is illegitimate: "Does it seem to follow that Kate-Careless was a bastard? It would seem to follow, and yet who can tell how craftily a child makes legitimacy prey upon her condition?" (83). In this passage, Barnes' ambivalence about legitimacy is emphasized. It seems that legitimacy is something that can be slyly obtained by acting a certain way. She makes it clear the legitimacy is a false notion, since it is so easy to fake.

Another way that Barnes' attitude towards legitimacy is revealed is through Dr. Matthew O'Connor, who appears in both *Ryder* and in *Nightwood*. In *Ryder*, Dr. O'Connor has not yet quite become the infamously scandalous character that he is to

become in *Nightwood*. There are some clues to O'Connor's sexuality (e.g., "holding my satin robe against my backsides" [137]), but he does not seem as flagrant in his sexuality as he does in her later novel. O'Connor is also more respected as a physician in *Ryder* than he is in *Nightwood*. In *Nightwood*, O'Connor does not even seem to perform his duties as a doctor anymore, and his medical instruments lie in his room rusty and unused. In *Ryder*, O'Connor helps deliver one of Amelia's babies, and the other characters even look up to him a little bit and listen to his advice. Towards the end of *Ryder*, Barnes describes the respectability of O'Connor in a chapter entitled "Three Great Moments of History":

As told by Dr. Matthew O'Connor to a young man he saw legging it over a fence with an earthenware pot in his arm, whereupon Dr. O'Connor did catch him amid his crotches, and brought him down to partake of a sup of such education in the ways of the world as might, in some hereafter, set him in the strait path once again. For that good man did hold strongly by wit and wisdom where it drops off the thin edge of the centuries, and had held argument on this business in the portico of man a church from land's end to land's end. (227)

Quite a few aspects of this description stand out: O'Connor wanted to set the young man "in the strait path once again" and he has been discussing these "great moments of history" in several churches, yet his attraction to the boy indicates his leaning towards the illegitimate. This characterization of a somewhat more legitimate O'Connor suggests that he is hiding the more risqué O'Connor of *Nightwood*.

Ryder contains an illustration of O'Connor that contrasts his masculine appearance with his sexuality, hinting at his later forays into cross-dressing:



Figure 10: Matthew O'Connor, Illustration from *Ryder*

His exaggerated muscles and moustached face demonstrate a hyper-masculinity that is belied by his posture and lace hat . Figure 10 indicates the way O'Connor plays on both

sides of legitimacy. Later in *Nightwood*, he will abandon any claims to legitimacy he once had in *Ryder*, embracing his unusual sexuality.¹³

Nightwood: The Stigma of Editing

Nightwood went through several editing stages before it was finally published in 1936. Originally, the book was 190,000 words long, but, with the editorial intervention of Emily Holmes Coleman and T.S. Eliot, Barnes cut the novel down to 65,000 words. Only a comparatively few manuscript pages are still available to scholars, and they can be found in the Dalkey Archive Press's edition that was published in 1995 and in the Djuna Barnes Papers at the University of Maryland at College Park. Barnes began writing the novel sometime between 1927 and 1931, working on it doggedly until its publication.¹⁴ Her early plan for the novel was much different from the final text. Cheryl Plumb explains: "Barnes' Guggenheim application of November 1930 gives some insight into her plans: she outlined two projects: one was 'to research the relationship of the Jew and the court for a book in progress whose chief figure is an Austrian Jew'" (x). Felix's place in the novel became less central as she wrote. However, from the early stages of her novel, she was concerned with questions of legitimacy: she wanted to explore how a Jew was treated in court. Several people read Barnes' manuscript of *Nightwood*, including John Holms who, according to Barnes's editor and friend Emily Holmes Coleman, "had found a part that was quite wonderful," but "five years later is a diary entry recording a far less positive response: 'John sitting with the ms. of *Nightwood* on his knee at Hayford Hall and groaning: 'Its awful. Its impossible. I ought to do something to it. I cant. I cant.'" He found 70 pages so awful

that he didn't think he'd ever see Djuna again" (qtd. in Plumb x). Holms's reaction mirrored many of the publishers' reactions; Barnes received five rejection letters, including a letter from Horace Liveright, the publisher of *Ryder*. According to Catherine Hollis, Barnes had become so frustrated by the lack of interest in her novel that she again considered publishing it privately (245). These rejections deeply depressed Barnes and encouraged Coleman to contact Eliot about publishing the novel at Faber and Faber.

Coleman was to have great influence over Barnes and her text. Barnes cut much of the material out of her novel at Coleman's request, and Coleman recognized the difficulty of her role concerning the novel:

Coleman—college-educated, author of the published novel *Shutter of Snow*, and writing a second—encouraged Barnes, offered her support and suggestions, finally taking on the role of collaborative reader. Asserting that she had had the “greatest reverence” for the text, she wrote that Barnes wouldn't change anything if “she didnt believe it. . . . But the trouble was first she wouldnt believe a word I said and then she would believe everything.” Coleman expressed her realization that she had to be “careful.” (Plumb viii)

Coleman clearly provided Barnes the support and editorial guidance that she needed. Furthermore, Coleman was not as authoritarian as Eliot in her role as a “collaborative reader.” As the first reader to see the value of the novel, she played a very important role in finally getting the book published. She was very persuasive with Eliot, hounding him until he agreed to work on the novel. Coleman was essential in using Eliot's

influence to get the novel published. Thus, while much of the critical response to the history of *Nightwood* has focused on Eliot's role,¹⁵ Coleman actually was more involved in the editing.

Coleman did, however, make some changes that were not exactly sanctioned by Barnes. As Hollis points out, Coleman reordered the chapters "Night Watch," "The Squatter," and "and "Watchman, What of the Night?" without consulting Barnes first (242). Originally, "The Squatter" was the last chapter, and "Watchman, What of the Night" was the second chapter. Coleman switched the order of the chapters immediately before she sent her copy to Eliot, and Barnes did not find out until later. Thus, Hollis questions the idea that Coleman was a truly collaborative reader and editor, calling Barnes's reaction to Coleman's editing "silent acquiescence" (242). The argument that both Eliot and Coleman somehow marred the text is significant in that, without investigation into the textual history of the novel, the marks that they left are invisible. There are no asterisks or indications within the novel that highlight the editing that has been done to the text. When readers approach this text, they will not know that it has been edited, unless they look at the 1995 Dalkey Archive edition. The text, nonetheless, is marked by an absence rather than a presence. *Nightwood* appears more legitimate than *Ryder* because of the absence of any stigma that marks the text as obscene. *Nightwood*, however, becomes stigmatized by the very lack of editorial marks. Earlier, Barnes could assert that her text had artistic integrity by protesting the changes made within the text; with *Nightwood*, there is no sign of a protest. *Nightwood*, then occupies a contradictory position—it has become legitimate because of the lack of any marks, but

it is also illegitimate because Barnes was unable to proclaim publicly her indignation at some of the changes that had been made. Her character's sexual integrity, and her own desire to expose sexuality in all its variations, was sacrificed to her desire for literary legitimacy.

Though Coleman was the most influential collaborator in the text, Eliot also played a very important role in the creation of *Nightwood*. He helped to prepare it for publication, and the publisher for which he worked, Faber and Faber, finally did publish the novel after years of struggle. He also "credited himself and Frank Morley [with the editing], apparently forgetting much of what he and Morley had taken out had been marked or suggested by Coleman" (Plumb ix). While he tried to take credit for some of the editing that was actually Coleman's, he was mainly involved with anticipating censors' objections by cutting items out of the text. He wrote to Coleman and notified her that "I really believe that we are now getting to the point at which something can be done about 'Nightwood,'" but the possible problem was that "the book might be taken up by the censor" (qtd. in Plumb xxii). He suggested changes, such as changing "buggers" to "boys," to expunge the more explicit homosexual content. Barnes reacted scathingly to some of the changes including the above change, saying "Imagine trying to wake Eliot up" (209), which suggests that she thought Eliot was too conservative to accept the underlying issues in her text. This comment also suggests that Barnes did protest some of the changes made to her text, though she eventually acquiesced. Because Barnes desperately wanted to have her novel published, she went along with most of Eliot's suggestions.

As someone who came to the text much later than Coleman, Eliot asserted his authority over the text differently. He wrote the introduction to the novel, which has great influence over how a reader might approach this text. This introduction is as much a part of the book as the editorial choices that Coleman and Eliot made, and that he wrote an introduction to the text gives it even more legitimacy, as he was an arbiter of modernism.¹⁶ Introducing Barnes's book as a work of great complexity, he writes, "it took me, with this book, some time to come to an appreciation of its meaning as a whole" (Eliot xi). By emphasizing the text's complexity, Eliot gives the novel high modernist credentials:

When I first read the book I found the opening movement rather slow and dragging, until the appearance of the doctor. And throughout the first reading, I was under the impression that it was the doctor alone who gave the book its vitality; and I believed the final chapter to be superfluous. I am now convinced that the final chapter is essential, both dramatically and musically. (xii)

This reading makes it clear that he stills finds the doctor to be the central character, and when a reader reads the introduction he or she will probably be more likely to believe that the doctor is the character they should pay the most attention to. Eliot's introduction provides the only instance of a visible mark upon *Nightwood* that reveals some of the problematic issues that went into the creation of the novel. His introduction has left a stigma of legitimacy upon Barnes' work that has affected the reception of her novel. Almost every reader who reads his introduction will look at it differently and will view

the book as more legitimate because Eliot endorsed it, even though Eliot's endorsement is extremely ambivalent.

Two contemporaneous reviews of *Nightwood* demonstrate how Eliot defined the novel's reception. In 1936, Helen Fletcher, reviewing the novel for *Time and Tide*, resists the defining nature of Eliot's introduction:

The manufacturers of a well-disguised chocolate laxative, traduced by their own cunning, and stricken with a vision of Greedy Gregory in a worse plight than any cautionary tale imagined, have inserted in each packet the warning: "Stop! This is not really chocolate. Kindly place beyond children's reach." Similarly, Messrs. Faber & Faber, by publishing *Nightwood* (a short book) at 10s. 6d., by robing it in pale grey and by printing a tart warning to optimists inside its cover, have done all that any human publishers could do to keep this novel from the hands of that overprotected child, the average reader, and themselves from the wrath of his governesses—The Mother's Union and the Public Morality Council. (qtd. in Marcus, "Mousemeat," 202)

Fletcher here recognizes the elite method of framing the novel.

A year later, a review in the *New Yorker* repeats similar objections to how the book was presented:

One hopes devoutly that Djuna Barnes' "Nightwood" may not be visited with a succès de snobisme or served up as caviar to the general. The portents, however, are dire: it arrives upborne on the rare incense of such

intellectual English critics as Edwin Muir and T.S. Eliot; its pitiless concision may make it seem obscure, and therefore destined only for the lofty-browed; its language is on occasion scatological; the central character is a homosexual, and the three chief female characters are dominantly sapphic. Only by a miracle, it would seem, can “*Nightwood*” escape the affectionate, destroying hands of some twittering literary cult. (qtd. in Marcus, “Mousemeat” 203)

The reviewers are hoping that *Nightwood* will have a wide audience, but, at the same time, they recognize how its proponents are severely limiting its scope.¹⁷ Eliot and others, then, have created a kind of coterie reading group for Barnes; something she seems to have wanted as she allowed them to fashion her novel into a “laxative” only meant for a certain audience.¹⁸ Paradoxically then, even though Barnes is seeking more widespread acceptance of her book by allowing Coleman and Eliot to edit her work so extensively, her audience is still narrowly defined by Eliot’s introduction. By submitting to Eliot’s influence, Barnes allows her novel an exclusivity that defines it as modernist as it creates a coterie readership.

As the reviews I have quoted above demonstrate, Eliot’s involvement with *Nightwood* can be credited with lending a certain legitimacy to the text that Barnes would have had difficulty finding elsewhere. Because of his position in the literary world, Eliot was able to get something published that Barnes had found impossible to publish. If Eliot commended a text, people were more likely to read it, and Eliot certainly did admire the text, even though he was skeptical about it at first. In the

introduction, he describes *Nightwood* as a parallel to Elizabethan tragedy, echoing his famous argument from “Tradition and the Individual Talent”: “What I would leave the reader prepared to find is the great achievement of style, the beauty of phrasing, the brilliance of wit and characterisation, and a quality of horror and doom very nearly related to that of Elizabethan tragedy” (Eliot xvi). Readers were likely to pick up *Nightwood* merely because Eliot’s name was on it. Later in her career, Barnes was appreciative of the legitimacy Eliot gave her as a writer, telling him in a letter written on May 9, 1949: “I do not know if you know it, but you and that book and that foreword are the three things that have pleased me in ten, twelve years” (Barnes qtd. in Fleischer 407). Obviously, Barnes was pleased with the influence Eliot had on her text and its reception.

Thus, with *Nightwood*, Barnes has significantly changed her attitude towards editing and legitimacy. With few exceptions, she allowed her text to be edited without obvious anger. As she allows her work to become conventionally legitimate, her attitude about her character’s sexuality becomes increasingly ambivalent as she begins to feel the need to disguise her work’s daring nature with difficult diction and elliptical style.

At Eliot’s suggestion, Barnes willingly removed passages explicitly describing homosexual sex. In a story told by Matthew O’Connor in his last scene, for example, she excised a troubling description of sex in the World War One trenches:

Like that subaltern in the trenches one night, a sweet boy at that, but so fearful, he wouldn’t, because, he said, he was afraid any minute that he was going to meet his maker—that’s a Protestant for you! Would he do a bit with his doing part? He would not. So in the thick of the battle, with

the bullets whistling for their man, I screamed above their calling,
 ‘Nancy,’ and I kept it up, as comrade after comrade slipped down my arm
 and into nothing, --thinking of the priest among the wranglers who said,
 ‘You all seem so surprised that sinners should sin.’ (134-5)

Eliot marked this passage for removal, and Barnes obediently removed it. Eliot seemed to think that this passage would not get past the censors, although other parts of the novel are much racier. Perhaps Eliot thought that the passage would offend people because it is about a “sweet boy.” The censors may have objected to the characterization of a young boy engaging in a homosexual act with someone older than him.

Additionally, the combination of the violence of war and sex could have caused the censors to object. The fact that violence and sex are brutally juxtaposed may also have been why Eliot felt the passage should be removed. This passage suggests that O’Connor associates sexuality and violence. Barnes deletion of this passage without objection may demonstrates her growing willingness to alter her text in order to make it more acceptable to the censors and her readers, or it could signal her desire to have her book published at any cost.

Perhaps the most intriguing deletion from the 1937 text occurs in the same passage. Matthew tells a story of meeting an old woman. This story has quite a different tone than most of the other stories that Matthew tells. The section was deleted because Coleman and Eliot felt that the doctor was already talking too much, but if the story had been included, the doctor’s character would be slightly altered. The story takes up about five pages in the manuscript, so I cannot quote it entirely here; rather, I

will give a summary of the story. Matthew meets the old woman and finds her to be very beautiful. He describes everything she does as being different than how everyone else does things because she is old. It is almost as if he finds hope in this old woman, which is surprising since Matthew seems to be so hopeless. He goes to have tea with her several times, and he seems to fall in love with her, but he must leave to go home to his mother. While he is at home with his mother all he can think of is the old woman. He finally goes back to her (three years later), and she does not remember him. She treats him in the exact same way she treated him before, making it clear that she did not really attach any significance to Matthew when she first met him.¹⁹ This story seems significant to Matthew because it might have been his one chance for love:

When I went away she came to the peach with me and took it down; and like our life together, I broke it open, beautiful and round. But she didn't see what I saw at the core, a little serpent, and I ate the peach, peels serpent and all so that she wouldn't guess, and I never saw her again because I knew that she would always be trying to remember and that it would give her pain to know that the companion who could have lived her dissolution could not be recalled long enough to go with her. And she was like you might have been if you had ever been loved and could have cried for love going the right way in your heart just once. (319)

Surprisingly, this passage betrays a belief in love that the cynical Dr. O'Connor usually doesn't espouse. Of course, it is a love that he loses, but it still reveals a bit of hope in O'Connor's life that otherwise is not present in the novel.

Although this story does have the same element of despair (i.e., the lady he loves so much does not even remember him), it provides a slightly different way of seeing Matthew. In the 1937 text, Matthew seems to believe there is no possibility for love, and no one loves him. The old woman in this story demonstrates what might have happened if he had been loved, and it parallels Robin and Nora's relationship, since Robin also cannot seem to remember her past loves. Additionally, Matthew's love for the old woman makes him open to as much weakness as the other characters have about Robin. He loves the old woman so much that he obsesses about her, just as Nora, Felix, and Jenny obsess about Robin. His obsession with the old woman demonstrates why he can so easily understand the obsessions of others. This story also lends complexity to his character. He is not merely the man who wishes to be a woman; he has also loved a woman. Thus, if this story had been left in the novel, the reader might have had a different understanding of Matthew.

In one of Eliot's letters to Barnes, he advised her to remove much of the doctor's dialogue: "Not that the Doctor's conversation flags at all, but simply because I think that too much of it distorts the shape of the book. There is a good deal of the book besides the Doctor, and we don't want him to steal everything" (qtd. in Fleischer 412). In a letter to Coleman, Barnes wrote that Dan Mahoney (the model for Dr. O'Connor) had asked Barnes to return this section: "I'd forgive you—in case I don't sue you—if you would put my old lady back" (qtd. in Plumb 242). Barnes reply was, "So there you are—I'll have to send it to Eliot, as Dan really seems to feel her loss so bloody bitterly—heaven knows why" (qtd. in Plumb 242-3). This letter makes it clear that Barnes

intended to return the old woman to the text, but for some reason, she did not. The letter also has a tone that makes it sound as if Barnes did not really care if the old woman was in the text or not, since she questioned Mahoney's feelings about her. However, she did want to return her to the text, if only to please her friend. Thus, as the two major editors of the novel, Eliot or Coleman asked Barnes to remove this story, and Barnes complied without much objection. That Eliot or Coleman was able to make such a significant change demonstrates that Barnes was willing to compromise when it came to editing *Nightwood*. Because Barnes was willing to compromise, Eliot was able to sell Barnes as a “‘modernist writer’ whose treatment of perverse material is literary—not deviant” (Chisholm 175). In doing this, Eliot helped stave off the censors who would have immediately noticed the deviance of the perverse material without Eliot's emphasis on the novel's literary nature. Thus, by giving Barnes an identity as a “modernist writer,” Eliot guides reactions to her novel.

In *Nightwood*, Barnes is highly critical of her own characters' bids for legitimacy, but she also seems to question entirely embracing illegitimacy. Jenny Petherbridge provides a good example of a character trying to become legitimate. Jenny tries, first, to gain some sort of historical legitimacy for herself by marrying four different men who she hopes will provide her with a lineage: “she had been like a squirrel racing day and night in an endeavour to make them historical; they could not survive it” (65). The metaphor of the squirrel suggests that Jenny feels she needs to store all the legitimacy she can find in order to be socially acceptable. The chapter in which she first appears, “The Squatter,” makes it clear the Jenny tries to possess other

people's things and loves in order to fit in. Specifically, she tries to inhabit Nora's persona, trying to take over every aspect of Nora and Robin's love. She forces her way into people's lives by buying people. Barnes is extremely critical of Jenny:

Her walls, her cupboards, her bureaux, were teeming with second-hand dealings with life. It takes a bold and authentic robber to get first-hand plunder. Someone else's marriage ring was on her finger; the photograph taken of Robin for Nora sat upon her table. The books in her library were other people's selections. She lived among her own things like a visitor to a room kept "exactly as it was when—" (66)

Clearly, Jenny has nothing of her own, and the only way she can find some sort of legitimacy is to create a life out of other people's pasts. Jenny is treated viciously in the novel by Robin and even by O'Connor. The kind of identity that Jenny is trying to claim is also second-hand at best.

Another character that Barnes criticizes for wanting to gain some kind of legitimacy is Felix Volkbein. Since Felix is the character that Barnes's Guggenheim grant application lists as the central focus of her novel, his obsession with legitimacy is telling in that it was something Barnes was thinking about even in the early stages of the text. Felix is obsessed with his lineage, and he tries to find this ancestry in several ways. Felix's problems stem from the fact that both his parents are dead, his father was Jewish and his mother was Christian. He immediately feels alienated from the world and does not know his place in it. He tries to mimic the behavior of the aristocracy, calling himself Baron Volkbein and trying to change the past:

From the mingled passions that made up his past, out of a diversity of bloods, from the crux of a thousand impossible situations, Felix had become the accumulated and single—the embarrassed.

His embarrassment took the form of an obsession for what he termed “Old Europe”: aristocracy, nobility, royalty. He spoke any given title with a pause before and after the name. Knowing circumlocution to be his only contact, he made it interminable and exacting. . . . He felt the great past might mend a little if he bowed low enough, if he succumbed and gave homage. (9)

This obsession with the past is an obsession with legitimacy. The most intriguing and desperate way he tries to gain legitimacy is by marrying Robin Vote. He thinks that by marrying her, he will be able finally to find a place in the world. The marriage, however, results in him being even more lost. Barnes’ attitude towards Felix is quite different than her attitude towards Jenny: Felix does elicit sympathy from the reader. Jenny wants to gain legitimacy in order to own other people’s things, but for Felix, legitimacy is identity. Felix’s unsuccessful attempts, however, illustrate that Barnes thought seeking out legitimacy was a pointless endeavor.

O’Connor has become a bit different from the character the reader first encounters in *Ryder*, embracing and wallowing in his illegitimate status. . . In *Nightwood*, he dresses up like a woman when he is alone in his apartment, and he makes a point of his outsider status. On the other hand, O’Connor drives himself crazy by living life too authentically. He tries to tell the truth in what he says, and he ends up

drunk and ranting: “‘Now,’ he said, ‘the end—mark my words—now *nothing, but wrath and weeping!*’” (166). Barnes is criticizing the extremes her characters will go to as she becomes increasingly ambivalent in her reaction to and characterization of legitimacy and illegitimacy. With O’Connor she attempts to pull the reader in by making the reader like him, only to disappoint the reader in the end by making O’Connor’s life as pathetic as that of Felix and Jenny. Barnes appears to be arguing that O’Connor’s illegitimacy may be just as damaging as the desire for legitimacy. O’Connor’s need for illegitimacy is not the opposite of Felix and Jenny’s need for legitimacy; rather, they are quite similar. Rather than seeking conventional acceptance for himself as Felix and Jenny do, O’Connor seeks unconventional acceptance, but he still wants to be accepted.

O’Connor also reveals how illegitimacy can be both physically and mentally visible. He is constantly marked by some sign of his sexuality. As he tries to wake Robin up, he is also applying her makeup. His room carries the visible signs of his character:

On a maple dresser, certainly not of European make, lay a rusty pair of forceps, a broken scalpel, half a dozen odd instruments that she could not place, a catheter, some twenty perfume bottles, almost empty, pomades, creams, rouges, powder boxes and puffs. From the half-open drawers of this chiffonier hung laces, ribands, stockings, ladies’ underclothing and an abdominal brace, which gave the impression that the feminine finery had suffered venery. A swill-pail stood at the head of the bed, brimming with abominations. (78-79)

Barnes collides medical equipment with the beautifying equipment of women.

O'Connor's medical equipment, rusty with disuse, questions his skills as a doctor, while the women's equipment, which has obviously been used quite frequently—the perfume bottles are “almost empty” and the “feminine finery had suffered venery”—interrogates O'Connor's gender identity. And the final image of the swill-pail dirties the previous images, questioning the masks O'Connor creates with both the medical and feminine equipment. Barnes's description of O'Connor further reveals these masks:

In the narrow iron bed, with its heavy and dirty linen sheets, lay the doctor in a woman's flannel nightgown. The doctor's head, with its over-large black eyes, its full gun-metal cheeks and chin, was framed in the golden semi-circle of a wig with long pendent curls that touched his shoulders, and falling back against the pillow, turned up the shadowy interior of their cylinders. He was heavily rouged and his lashes painted.

(79)

Once again, there is a juxtaposition here that seems odd; O'Connor's very masculine, almost violent, face is framed in a quite feminine wig. And his masculine body is engulfed by a flannel nightgown. Much like the illustration in *Ryder*, Barnes is purposely emphasizing the contrast created by O'Connor's masculinity and his feminine accoutrements. By mixing conventional categories like women's clothing and makeup and masculine features, Barnes questions the legitimacy of both. The appearance of O'Connor in clothing and makeup that he is not conventionally supposed to wear jars the reader into seeing that conventions are not always what they appear to be.

Robin Vote, more than any other character in *Nightwood*, demonstrates Barnes's increasingly complex attitude towards legitimacy and its twin illegitimacy. Many of the characters in *Nightwood* believe they have found legitimacy in Robin. For Felix and Jenny, Robin represents the missing piece they need in order to gain legitimacy. Felix needs a wife and child to continue his trumped up ancestry, and Jenny needs someone else's life, so she takes Robin from Nora. Robin is used in many different ways in the novel because she is almost a blank, inert figure. The other characters can project their desires onto her, and she becomes what they want, reflecting the treatment Barnes received as she was trying to publish her work. Because Robin is so easily pliable, she has no agency. Even when she is wandering around at night, it seems as if she is doing so through no compulsion of her own. The idea that Robin is blank is also intriguing because she has no marks upon her. She is not marked, so she is lacking a stigma, which may be why everyone is so intrigued by her. Robin seems to escape all judgment,. Robin's character comments on what happens when someone submits to others' rules, which is what Barnes had to do in order to become a legitimate modernist author. Robin's unmarked nature reflects the unmarked nature of Barnes' later work. And Robin's lack of agency mirrors Barnes's inability to publish her works without the editorial intervention of others. Just as the characters in *Nightwood* write their own desire onto Robin, Barnes's editors write their desires onto her work.

The Antiphon: Barnes's Final Compromise

With *The Antiphon*, Barnes compromised the most. Once again, Eliot helped edit her work, but this time their relationship was even more problematic. Barnes began

working on *The Antiphon* following the publication of *Nightwood* in 1937, but the play was not published until 1958. Throughout this time, Barnes wrote almost nothing else, and she was communicating with Eliot about the play and other aspects of her life. After the problems she had with *Nightwood*, Barnes was very dependent on Eliot and his standing for publication. Once again, she wanted the legitimacy Eliot gave to her work, and she sacrificed some of her own artistic integrity for this legitimacy. By the time *The Antiphon* was published, Barnes had removed more than three hundred lines from her play and revised over seventy pages.²⁰

Barnes, however, was not willing to compromise her works entirely for the sake of Eliot's approval. Eliot wrote a dismissive blurb that was to appear on the jacket of *The Antiphon*:

From the point of view of the conventionally minded, *The Antiphon* will be still more shocking—or it would be if they could understand it—and still more tedious—because they will not understand it—than *Nightwood*.

It might be said of Miss Barnes, who is incontestably one of the most original writers of our time, that never has so much genius been combined with so little talent. Her writing shatters the normal structure of the English (or of the American) language. Nevertheless, *The Antiphon* is the nearest thing written in our time, to the grimmer and grislier masterpieces of Jacobean tragedy: the author has more in common with Middleton, Ford and Tourneur, than with any living writer. (qtd. in Herring 276)

Although this blurb may have given the play the same sort of stigma of legitimacy as Eliot's introduction to *Nightwood*, Barnes refused to use the blurb and, on January 9, 1957, wrote Eliot an offended letter castigating him for his insensitive and boorish blurb:

May I tell you what I feel on reading "Mr. Eliot's blurb for *The Antiphon*"?

Why, at the moment that you say *Nightwood* is considered a "classic of its period" is it essential to speculate on the improbability of any other publishing house than Faber and Faber touching it?

Why bring in the "conventionally minded" to tear down both *Nightwood* and *The Antiphon* with such words as "tedious and incomprehensible"?

I can't believe that you know how this "blurb" reads, or what effect it will inevitably have. I cannot recall seeing a "blurb"—which I had always thought was a means of promoting a book—so tailored to a jacket that so resembles a shroud; and with such fine crewel work of approval and displeasure. (Barnes qtd. in Fleischer 409)

Part of her reaction is to public reception of this blurb: that it might decrease the acceptance and popularity of her text. This letter also addresses Barnes insecurity about the publication of her texts, since she is especially offended by Eliot's suggestion that no other publishing house would even look at her text. Her anger here also mirrors the anger in her "foreword" to *Ryder*, indicating that the earlier anger still existed even though it is not marked on the page.

According to Lynda Curry, Barnes' play went through five extensive revisions before its publication (286). In a letter to Eliot written on February 21, 1956, Barnes indicates her frustration at the long process of writing and rewriting her play :

I am sorry that the typescript is now in some scratch about. I did not think you would mind if I did not retype the whole thing all over again, as undoubtedly you, or someone at Faber and Faber, will see occasion to further pencil it, when and if, I will this time have it attacked by a proper stenographer, if it calls for it.

And Tom, do take mercy on the author who has been twenty months in a fairly gruesome state of tension. (qtd. in Curry 286)

That Barnes has to ask Eliot to "take mercy" indicates his numerous interventions. Barnes expected that when she got the typescript back from Eliot it would be entirely marked up, and she didn't even provide a fresh copy of her text because she thought it pointless.

Curry argues that, at Eliot's prompting, Barnes removed important scenes that would have explained the tensions going on within the text; in Act 2, the cuts affect understanding of Miranda's rape and her father's complicity in it. Curry gives an example of speeches that have been cut that emphasize Titus' horrible treatment of his daughter:

Dudley: She's been knocked into the stubborn ever since
 The hour she drove between our father and the gate,
 Where he tried to make her mutton at sixteen—

Initiated vestal to his “cause”!
 Self anointed Titus, Little Corporal,
 Horn mad after false gods; madder still
 For her wild teeth and even wilder kicking.
 And having failed in that, what did he then?
 Hauled her, in an hay-hook, to the barn;
 Left her dangling; while in the field below
 He offered to exchange her for a goat
 With that old farm-hand, Jacobsen. (qtd. in Curry 290)

The deletion of this passage significantly alters the text. Eliot asked Barnes to make these cuts in order to make *The Antiphon* more acceptable to a reading public who might have been offended by the sexually marked nature of the text. Then, in his blurb, Eliot encouraged readers not to read the play because it was “tedious,” and, if the blurb had been published, Barnes’ play would be avoided. Thus, Eliot altered the play for a public that he never thought should read the text.

One of the smaller changes Barnes makes is intriguing as it indicates a turn towards more conventionality. In a short speech by Augusta, she is talking of the Trinity. In the published version, the speech appears as follows:

Of course, there’s always snaffle in opinion.
 Say I was sitting on an ottoman
 Swallowing, in a gulp, the Trinity—
 Father, son, and unholy cause. (75)

In a manuscript from June of 1956, the speech differs slightly:

Of course there's always a snaffle on opinion.

Say I was sitting, ignorant, on an ottoman,

Swallowing at a gulp the Trinity,

Mother, son and unholy cause. (61-62)

There are two significant changes in this speech. The deletion of the word “ignorant” changes the meaning of the speech significantly. The speech in the manuscript makes it seem as if Augusta, quite accidentally and out of ignorance, was blasphemous. The more interesting change here is the change from “Mother” to “Father.” In the first version, Augusta is questioning the foundation of Christianity by substituting the word “Mother” for “Father.” The second version is still questioning since it changes “Holy Ghost” to “unholy cause,” but it is not as specific. By using the word “Mother,” Barnes creates an “illegitimate” view, privileging women over men as she suggests that god is a woman, mirroring earlier attitudes from her other texts. That she changes this word indicates how she conventionalized her text, making it less daring in the process.

The notes that Eliot made for this play and Barnes’ reaction to them are quite telling as she betrays conflicted feelings towards Eliot’s help. Quite often, she relied on Eliot’s knowledge to help her revise her text. Her manuscripts are peppered with small notes such as “Tom knows it” and questions about whether her spelling are correct (Barnes Papers, Box 4, Folder 5). She often leans on Eliot, relying on him to help her and give her advice. At the beginning of one of the manuscripts, Barnes asks for his advice: “Note: I have made the former Bewick into Beewick—because I hear there is a

real Bewick in England and I want an imaginary place. Is there also a Beewick?” (Barnes Papers, Box 3, Folder 7). This reliance on Eliot is belied by other notes in the margins. At one point Eliot questions Barnes’ spelling of the word “llama,” and Barnes writes “I mean lama!” (Barnes Papers, Box 3, Folder 7). This comment demonstrates how Barnes did resist Eliot when she needed to. The change from “lama” to “llama” would have distinctly altered her text as a “lama” is a Buddhist monk and a “llama” is an animal. This comment also demonstrates how little attention Eliot paid to the text, which is demonstrated by some of Barnes’ other comments: “Tom paid no attention here” (Box 4, Folder 4), and “Eliot’s copy which he did not go over it for punctuation as he promised” (Box 4, Folder 11). Barnes was increasingly frustrated by Eliot’s lack of attention, yet she took his advice to cut Act II significantly because she desperately wanted her play to be published.

The most telling evidence of Eliot’s influence on Barnes’ text is three pages of typed notes asking for explanations of different lines in the play or questioning the spelling. For example, he commented that there was “no such word” as “Tabber” and asks “How can a compass be blunt?” (Reel #18) Eliot is quite fastidious in his notes, although his notes aren’t very extensive. In reaction to the confusing line “The orchid, onion and confessional have many layers . . .,” Eliot asks: “I understand the onion, and I am willing to assume that you mean something by layers of the confessional, but what about orchids?” (Reel #18). Barnes comes up with two answers: “I know confessions, artichokes, and onions” and “Orchid of onion family, tuber” (Reel #18). Barnes’ willingness to justify herself in response to Eliot’s question here demonstrates her

willingness to bow to him, but in the same set of notes, Barnes also says of Eliot:

“Idiotically TSE says there was no such time,” recalling Barnes earlier attitude towards Eliot. Her conflicted feelings indicate how difficult she found relying on Eliot for acceptance of her work, but she did think it was necessary in order to make her work more legitimate, so she compromised even when she felt Eliot was being ridiculous. She did not, after all, write to Eliot and tell him to leave her text alone; rather she asked him to “take mercy” (qtd. in Curry 286).

The opening scene of the play immediately frames the questionable nature of the location of the play and its characters. The entire action of the play takes place in the Great Hall of Burley, which is the ancestral home of Augusta. Barnes describes the setting as an amalgam of the trappings of the aristocracy and the props and costumes of the stage:

Over the balustrade hang flags, gonfalons, bonnets ribbons and all manner of stage costumes. . . . The table is laid in formal order, dominated by heavy candlesticks, a large tureen, a brass curfew bell, and a battered gilt mardi-gras crown. To the left, standing before a paneless Gothic window, a dressmaker’s dummy, in regimentals, surrounded by music stands, horns, fiddles, guncases, bandboxes, masks, toys and broken statues, man and beast. (7)

This juxtaposition is quite similar to the juxtaposition that occurs in O’Connor’s room in *Nightwood*. The presence of the stage implements puts the aristocratic nature of the hall into question, which makes the reader wonder at its legitimacy. It is not clear whether

the people who live there are really aristocratic or just playing at being aristocratic. The hall itself has seen better days, and it has fallen into disrepair. It is almost as if the stage props are there to make the hall look more legitimate, but they just end up making the hall look ridiculous. Once again, Barnes combines two seemingly legitimate conventions and questions their legitimacy by juxtaposing them. The aristocracy of the house is called into question by the stage props, and the validity of stage performance is complicated by the “real” hall in which they are placed.

The question of legitimacy also comes up in relation to Titus, the absent father of the play. Jack describes him as a polygamist, who was surrounded by his wives and children:

In my mind’s gallery he sits entire;
 In tip-top belly-leather, watch-swig swinging
 At his bulk, like ferry chains on docks.
 Stickler for the freedom of the sexes,
 There ranged behind his easy seated bum,
 Fearfully detained, and standing up.
 (You’ve told me he believed in Brigham Young)
 His pack of wives, in Concord cameos,
 Flushed out in tabby, chatelaines and bugles,
 Their bustles close upon them, like a grudge;
 Flanked by warming-pans, bassoons and bastards. (13)

Titus, then, is quite similar to Wendell Ryder in that he, too, has several families. Barnes is quite critical of Titus, and later he is characterized as a rapist and child molester. She questions his polygamous way of living. She does not, however, criticize his children for being illegitimate. She puts all the blame on Titus for creating the situation. He has marked each of his children with the stigma of illegitimacy by refusing to give legitimacy to any of his families. In the play, Barnes seems to have changed her attitude about illegitimacy in that she is much more critical of Titus for how he acts. She also does not have any of Titus' other families in the play. Her treatment of Titus makes it clear that she has moved from a more ambivalent criticism of the illegitimacy of characters like O'Connor to a more critical attitude towards illegitimacy.²¹

Throughout Barnes' career, she had to deal with questions about her works' legitimacy and about her own legitimacy as an author. All of her works have somehow been marked by these questions. Barnes efforts to legitimize her work have given each of her texts a stigma of legitimacy, which sometimes exists as a lack of a mark. At the same time, Barnes questioned the very idea of legitimacy in her work, by examining characters who had to deal with the effects of illegitimacy upon their lives. Thus, she both wanted legitimacy for herself as an author, but she complicates the idea of legitimacy in her actual texts, creating an ambivalent tension between how she lived her life and the lives of the characters in her texts. As her career progressed, Barnes became willing to compromise her work in order to gain acceptance within modernism, and she began to find ways to hide her daring through a complex, elliptical style. Finally, then, what has marked Barnes' work the most is the necessity to remove material in order to

have her work accepted; this mark, which is not visible on her later work, comes to the surface when we look at the editing of her work. The “mark” she had once so vehemently protested in her “foreword” to *Ryder* became a necessity, and she hid this mark by allowing her texts to be edited as she hid her questioning of legitimacy under her difficult diction and elliptical style.

NOTES

¹ The most highly-contested editorial relationship is, of course, that between Barnes and T.S. Eliot. He was involved in editing both *Nightwood* and *The Antiphon*, and many critics have discussed the implications of his editing. For the most part, these critics fall in two camps: those, such as Miriam Fuchs, who believe Eliot asserted patriarchal control over Barnes and her texts, and those, such as Cheryl Plumb, who believe that Eliot’s editorial influence was light. Much of what has been said about Eliot’s editing has been based on the limited evidence provided in the drafts of *Nightwood*, and recently, more critics have come to believe that Eliot did not exert as much control as was once thought over *Nightwood* as more critics have focused on the role of other people, such as Emily Holmes Coleman, in the creation of the novel. Eliot’s editorial control over *The Antiphon* is not quite as clear; few critics have addressed this text, although some have argued briefly that the editorial relationship between Eliot and Barnes had changed by the time Barnes began writing her play.

² This anxiety about authenticity and fakes recently surfaced at a Joyce conference that I attended. The panel focused on some recently discovered Joyce manuscripts, and one of the audience members questioned the legitimacy of the manuscripts, suggesting they might have been fake. The panelist, Michael Groden, who happened to have been the one who authenticated the manuscripts, was momentarily taken aback by this question, probably more because it was insulting, than from any doubt about the manuscript’s authenticity. Nonetheless, questioning a work’s legitimacy often results in such reactions: people become uncomfortable and defensive.

³ For more discussion of perceptions of *Ladies Almanack* see Lanser, “Speaking in Tongues: *Ladies Almanack* and the Discourse of Desire,” Michel, “All Women Are Not Women All: *Ladies Almanack* and Feminine Writing,” and Jay, “The Outsider among the Expatriates: Djuna Barnes’ Satire on the Ladies of the *Almanack*.”

⁴ See Chapter 8 of Edward de Grazia’s *Girls Lean Back Everywhere: The Law of Obscenity and the Assault on Genius*.

⁵ Other authors encountered similar difficulties, having to remove material or not have their work published. Richard Aldington, for example, used much the same technique. His novel, *Death of a Hero*, contains a foreword that is similar to Barnes’ foreword for *Ryder*:

To my astonishment, my publisher informed me that certain words, phrases, sentences, and even passages, are at present taboo in England. I have recorded nothing which I have not observed in human life, said nothing I do not believe to be true. I had not the slightest intention of appealing to any one's salacious instincts.... But I am bound to accept the opinion of those who are better acquainted with popular feelings than I am. At my request the publishers are removing what they believe would be considered objectionable, and are placing asterisks to show where omissions have been made.... In my opinion it is better for the book to appear mutilated than for me to say what I don't believe. (vii)

For more information, see J.H. Willis Jr.'s "The Censored Language of War: Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero* and Three Other War Novels of 1929." He details how, along with Aldington's *Death of a Hero*, three other novels were also subject to similar kinds of expurgation: Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and Frederick Manning's *The Middle Parts of Fortune*.

⁶ Her options for publication, however, were limited. She was already having the most radical publisher available publish her work, so her only other option would be to self-publish, which would undermine the legitimacy of her text.

⁷ According to De Grazia, anti-vice leagues started appearing with alarming frequency. John Sumner, Anthony Comstock's replacement as the head of the obscenity war, was targeting several writers, such as Joyce and Lawrence, and Liveright was worried that the authors he published were going to be next. Quite often, just the threat of a trial would make publishers pull a text from their list, since they did not want to go through the high expense and bad publicity that a trial would cause. If threats failed, Sumner and his colleagues were always more than willing to pursue the case in court.

⁸ All illustrations are taken from the 1990 Dalkey Archive edition of *Ryder*.

⁹ The number of asterisks here could indicate that the first word is shorter than the second deleted word or that the second passage was a phrase rather than just one word. These asterisks could also indicate the number of letters in the missing words since Barnes does not use a uniform number of asterisks throughout.

¹⁰ The asterisks also participate on another level in Barnes legitimacy game. Parodying the style of 17th century texts, she also imitates the appearance of 18th century classics.

¹¹ For example, Elisha, Kate's son, tries to chisel Hannel, Amelia's son. Amelia grabs Elisha and starts shaking him and yelling at him. Wendell's reaction to this scene is only to say, "There's nothing right in this house, or on this land, because of you and your children" (142).

¹² An example of this occurs shortly after the fight between Elisha and Hannel when Julie, Amelia's daughter jumps on Kate and starts attacking her. Wendell's reaction is, once again, odd: "To this added bit of tragedy Wendell turned a charmed eye. Cock-fight or dog-fight, woman at woman, he had a liking for the outcome" (143).

¹³ For more critical discussion of *Ryder* see Marie Ponsot's "A Reader's *Ryder*" and Cheryl Plumb's *Fancy's Craft: Art and Identity in the Early Works of Djuna Barnes*.

¹⁴ For more discussion of *Nightwood* and its difficult history see Cheryl Plumb's "Revising *Nightwood*: 'A Kind of Glee of Despair,'" and Plumb's Introduction to the Dalkey Archive version of *Nightwood*.

¹⁵ Two articles focus specifically on T.S. Eliot's relation to Barnes and *Nightwood*: "Djuna Barnes and T.S. Eliot: The Politics and Poetics of *Nightwood*" by Georgette Fleischer, and "Djuna Barnes and T.S. Eliot: Authority, Resistance, and Acquiescence" by Miriam Fuchs. Fuchs also discusses Barnes, Eliot and Coleman in her "The Triadic Association of Emily Holmes Coleman, T.S. Eliot, and Djuna Barnes."

¹⁶ Eliot also wrote an introduction to Marianne Moore's *Selected Poems* in 1935, establishing her as a modernist in much the same way as he did with Barnes. Moore felt that Eliot's introduction protected her: "You will be amused to note—whereas I am profoundly grateful for—the armor afforded me by your introduction to my book" (qtd. in Goodridge 105). Celeste Goodridge argues that Eliot's introduction defines critics later reactions:

In his introduction to her *Selected Poems*, Eliot effectively deals with Moore's dangerous public. But he is not merely dismissive of a community of bad, unreceptive readers. His brilliant analysis of what Moore is after sets the tone for most of the criticism of Moore which follows in the thirties, forties and fifties. Given Eliot's prominent position in the critical community, no assessments of Moore's poetry could fail to consider and acknowledge, if only implicitly, his reading. (106)

Eliot does, indeed, create a certain kind of reader for Moore's poetry with his introduction: "The gift for detailed observation, for finding the exact words for some experience of the eye is liable to disperse attention of the relaxed reader" (qtd. in Goodridge 106).

¹⁷ We will see this phenomenon in the next chapter that addresses Mina Loy. Female modernist authors seem to create a certain reaction in their audience: people are at once possessive of them and desire their

widespread recognition. This paradox has resulted in specific placement of both Barnes and Loy. It is interesting that many of Loy's critics try to legitimate her by mentioning what Pound has said about her, reenacting the effects of Eliot's introduction to *Nightwood*.

¹⁸ The image of the "laxative" is quite apt. Fletcher appears to be arguing that the novel would help the reader to release their pent up emotions. The coterie group surrounding the novel's publication may have benefited from such a release.

¹⁹ The entire story can be found on pages 314-319 of the Dalkey Archive edition of *Nightwood*

²⁰ See Lynda Curry's "'Tom, Take Mercy': Djuna Barnes' Drafts of *The Antiphon*" in *Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes*.

²¹ For more critical discussion of *The Antiphon* see Meryl Altman's "*The Antiphon*: 'No Audience at All?'" and Louise A. Desalvo's "'To Make Her Mutton at Sixteen': Rape, Incest, and Child Abuse in *The Antiphon*."

CHAPTER IV

“I AM HOMESICK AFTER MINE OWN KIND”: REVISION, DISPLACEMENT
AND THE SEARCH FOR HOME IN THE WORK OF EZRA POUND

Pound is well-known for his outlandish political and economic views, the aid he offered other modernist writers, his support and sometimes creation of several different movements, such as Imagism and Vorticism, and his *Cantos*, the writing of which spanned most of his career. Pound was such an integral part of the modernist community that his place within that community seems assured. From his own writing, the movements he started, and his now famous editorial guidance of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* to the support and advice he gave to other modernists, including H.D., James Joyce, Marianne Moore and Mina Loy, Pound was constantly working to provide a foundation for modernism. But his own negotiation of this community is not as simple as it appears. While Pound was extremely influential in the shaping of modernism, he also created a poetic persona that highlights his status as an exile and an outsider in search for a home. This persona is reflected in his brief flirtations with several different literary, cultural, and political movements, his translations and his poetry as he tries to find a place for himself. Just as Pound eventually had to exile himself from the United States, he also exiled himself from the community he helped to create. This purposeful exile reveals Pound's sense of unease. He never felt fully comfortable being an academic or artistic American author, and he sought out other situations in an attempt to belong. These attempts, however, failed because Pound was constantly finding new

ways to displace and differentiate himself from those around him. This sense of constant displacement shows up everywhere in his poetry; by jumping from movement to movement, focusing so much on the translations of often archaic and generally distant works throughout his career, and using foreign languages and unwieldy imagery repeatedly in his poetry, especially his Cantos, Pound is trying to make his readers feel the displacement his poetic persona creates. Pound frequently revised his own work and also his worldview as he sought comfort for himself; his constant recreation of himself demonstrates his inability to ever feel at home in the modernist community. Pound used translation in some instances and insistent allusion in others to construct a poetic persona as exile from home, as an outsider to the familiar. This persona was part of his effort to defamiliarize the familiar and to make strange the everyday.

Pound's status as a modernist seems something not to be questioned. Ever since Hugh Kenner reestablished Pound's reputation with his extremely influential *The Pound Era*, Pound has been located at the center of modernist thought and criticism. George Bornstein argues that "Pound functioned as a permanent principle of innovation in modernist literature, establishing one interaction, technique, or institution only to hurry on to the next" (23). Although Pound seemed a "permanent principle" the constant turning away from movements reveals Pound's creation of a persona that is less than permanent. Although many critics now assume Pound's central position as a modernist, his position has not always been quite as assured. At the beginning of his career as a "modernist," Pound was thought to be a great friend and supporter of many other modernists: "Pound helped to make modernism by supporting and encouraging other

modernists and by helping to produce, distribute, and institutionalize modernist works” (Bornstein 22). Hemingway once said of Pound, “Pound the major poet devoting, say, one fifth of his time to poetry. . . . with the rest of his time he tries to advance the fortunes, both material and artistic, of his friends . . . he defends them when they are attacked, he gets them out of jail . . . sells their pictures . . . arranges concerts for them . . . writes articles about them . . . introduces them to wealthy women [patrons] . . . gets publishers to take their books” (qtd. in Bornstein 22).¹ Pound directly affected the formation of modernism, and in the earlier parts of his career, his position at the center of modernism appears to be assured; yet, later in his career, the friends that he had once helped so diligently had to come to his aid. This aid came in many forms: from the support given to Pound as he was being tried for treason (Hemingway came up with the idea of the insanity plea) to the awarding of the Bollingen Prize in 1949 (when Eliot was on the committee), from the efforts of many of his literary friends to secure his release from St. Elizabeth’s to the reconstruction of Pound’s literary reputation through the writing of critical works about him, Pound’s friends, including T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ernest Hemingway, William Carlos Williams, and Archibald MacLeish, helped to clean some of the tarnish off of Pound’s reputation. Kenner’s *The Pound Era* provided the final push, cementing a place for Pound in the modernist canon. But this assured place has resulted in a view of Pound that is misleading. I would argue that he never felt at home as a modernist, which is why he constantly revised both himself and his writing style as he created different movements. With his earliest poetry, he looks back to a Victorian style of writing, then he moves on to imagism and vorticism, flirting with both

movements simultaneously. He tries on the styles of other languages, which can be seen in his translation of Chinese poetry for his volume *Cathay*. With his *Cantos*, he creates a plethora of styles as he constantly recreates both himself and his own writing. In his literary essays, Pound constantly reinvents both himself and his friends, altering the works of modernism to his own ends. I will trace these revisions throughout the rest of this chapter.

Pound's Early Poetry: Victorian Constrictions

In *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound famously asserts, “To break the pentameter, that was the first heave” (538). This phrase traces Pound’s own poetic development, since, at the beginning of his career, he was often confined, at least metaphorically, by the very pentameter he was later to break. That is, while he broke with the pentameter in this poem, there is little else about it that is unconventional. In one of his earliest poems, “The Tree,” Pound employs conventional rhythm and rhyme scheme:

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
 Knowing the truth of things unseen before;
 Of Daphne and the laurel bow
 And that god-feasting couple old
 That grew elm-oak amid the wold.
 ‘Twas not until the gods had been
 Kindly entreated, and been brought within
 Unto the hearth of their heart’s home
 That they might do this wonder thing;

Nathless I have been a tree amid the wood

And many a new thing understood

That was rank folly to my head before. (3)

Pound included this poem, written around 1905-1907, in *Hilda's Book*, a collection of poems he wrote for H.D. Both the content and the form of the poem hearken back to an earlier period. Pound, here, is inundated by the influence of an earlier style, and although he often returned to disparate historical forms in his work, in this poem, at least, he seems trapped by the content and style. The mythological imagery and the antique diction limit Pound's ability to express himself. Later, he recognizes his early limitations: "I hadn't in 1910 made a language" (28). That Pound uses a style that is clearly not his own, mimicking earlier writers, demonstrates how, even early in his career, Pound could not find a place of comfort in his works. Indeed, he hadn't yet "made a language" in 1910, but he never does quite find his language, his place.

A slightly later poem, "A Girl," uses the same subject matter, but seems to develop an actively different diction:

The tree has entered my hands,

The sap has ascended my arms,

The tree has grown in my breast—

Downward,

The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,

Moss you are,
 You are violets with wind above them.
 A child—so high—you are,
 And all this is folly to the world. (58-59)

Pound partially throws off the shackles of a Victorian language that were confining his poetry. Here, the girl he describes and speaks to is once again Daphne, the nymph of mythology who is transformed into a tree by her father, the river-god Peneus, in order to escape the pursuit of Apollo. In a short period of time, Pound has transformed his style significantly. The language here is elliptical. Pound's style becomes more typically modernist as it goes through revisions; these two poems illustrate the beginning of Pound's constant revision. Unlike "The Tree" which looks backwards with its conventional style, this poem also looks forward to Pound's involvement with Imagism. As Pound set out to transform a form of poetry he found lacking, he also transformed himself.

Pound and Imagism

In his essay originally entitled "A Few Don'ts" but later retitled "A Retrospect," Pound outlines some of the tenets of Imagism. At the beginning of the essay, Pound sketches a brief definition of Imagism:

1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome. (3)

Pound continues, arguing that Imagism “has since been ‘joined’ or ‘followed’ by numerous people who, whatever their merits, do not show any signs of agreeing with the second specification. Indeed *vers libre* has become as prolix and as verbose as any of the flaccid varieties that preceded it” (3). Pound recognizes here that although Imagism has broken some boundaries, freeing its proponents of the metrical influence of earlier poetry, it has also become rife with adherents who misunderstand Pound’s initial aims. This essay may signal why Pound turned away from Imagism: because he felt it was not accomplishing his goals, but he also felt that this place he had created for himself was somehow tarnished by the presence of lesser poets (e.g., he later called Imagism “Amygism” after Amy Lowell overtook the movement). Nonetheless, many of Pound’s “imagist” poems demonstrate, once again, the constant revision his poetic style underwent as he sought a comfortable, homelike place for himself within the modernist community.

Perhaps one of his most famous poems, “In a Station of the Metro,” illustrates Pound’s assertion that “it is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works” (4). Although Pound later did “produce voluminous works,” indicating again his constant revision of self, “In a Station of the Metro” beautifully performs Pound’s theories about Imagism:

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough. (*P*, 1990, 111)

One of Pound's "don'ts" in his essay is "use no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something" (4). This poem contains no unnecessary words, and the title must become part of the poem for the image to cohere. Simplicity reigns in the poem as the "faces in the crowd" are compared to "petals on a wet, black bough." The image Pound creates here immediately invokes "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (3). The word "apparition" engages the intellect, making the reader wonder at the word's connotation, while the "petals" engage the emotion, associating the people in the metro with nature. Pound embraces the imagist style completely as he briefly finds comfort in the movement.

In this same essay, Pound also recognizes the imprudence of remaining narrow, emphasizing the importance of growth in poetry: "It is a foolish thing for a man to begin his work on a too narrow foundation, it is a disgraceful thing for a man's work not to show steady growth and increasing fineness from first to last" (10). Pound recognizes the importance of changing his style as he grows, but he also asserts that "no man ever writes very much poetry that 'matters'" (10). Pound's discussion of the craft of poetry indicates his uneasiness with his status as a poet, and this insecurity is further revealed by his frequently defensive stance concerning his poetry (e.g., "It has been complained, with some justice, that I dump my note-books on the public," (9) and "Can any one write prose of permanent or durable interest when he is merely saying for one year what nearly every one will say at the end of three or four years? (13)). Pound waivers between overwhelmingly confidence and buried insecurity, which can be seen in another quotation from this essay:

As to Twentieth century poetry, and the poetry which I expect to see written during the next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cock, it will be harder and saner, it will be what Mr Hewlett calls “nearer the bone”. It will be as much like granite as it can be, its force will lie in its truth, its interpretative power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of it. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither. (12)

Pound boldly predicts the future of poetry, but his boldness is undone by his final, revealing comment. He seems to making a claim that all poetry *should* and *will* become “harder and saner,” yet he ends by saying that this style is what he wants for himself.

Pound’s theories about Imagism were influenced by Ernest Fenollosa’s writing on Chinese poetry and its seemingly pictorial aspects. One of his early translations indicates how the style of these poems affected his own style. “Lui Ch’e,” which recalls the death of a woman, demonstrates his adherence to a style in which every single word has import:

“Liu Ch’e”

The rustling of the silk is discontinued,

Dust drifts over the court-yard,

There is no sound of foot-fall, and the leaves

Scurry into heaps and lie still,

And she the rejoicer of the hearts is beneath them:

A wet leaf that clings to the threshold. (110-11.)

Pound's style here is, once again, elliptical; Djuna Barnes's later translation of the poem indicates just how much content Pound left out of the poem in order to create his imagistic style:

To the Dead Favourite of Liu Ch'e
 The sound of rustling silk is stilled,
 With solemn dust the court is filled,
 No footfalls echo on the floor;
 A thousand leaves stop up her door,
 Her little golden drink is spilled.

Her painted fan no more shall rise
 Before her black barbaric eyes—
 The scattered tea goes with the leaves.
 And simply crossed her yellow sleeves;
 And every day a sunset dies.

Her birds no longer coo and call,
 The cherry blossoms fade and fall,
 Nor ever does her shadow stir,

But stares forever back at her,
 And through her runs no sound at all.

And bending low, my falling tears
 Drop fast against her little ears,
 And yet no sound comes back, and I
 Who used to play her tenderly
 Have touched her not a thousand years. (110)

The differences between the two poems are striking, even though the content is almost exactly the same. While Barnes's poem wonderfully evokes a grief-ridden situation, Pound's suggestive diction pulls the reader in, especially his final image: "A wet leaf that clings to the threshold." This image invokes both the reader's intellect and emotion. The reader must interpret the image, becoming an active participant, and the image does not have any one interpretation. The "wet leaf" could be the dead woman, refusing to pass the "threshold" to another world; it could also be Liu Ch'e, refusing to let go of his love. The image also evokes emotion in the reader as the word "cling" indicates desperation. Pound's adherence to his guidelines for Imagism indicates the momentary faith he had in the movement, and the craft with which he constructed these poems is definitely one of the high points of a movement that was to become staid. That Pound did turn away from the movement is indicated in a letter he wrote to Amy Lowell on August 1, 1914, shortly after the publication of *Des Imagistes*:

It is true that I might give my sanction, or whatever one wants to call it, to having you and Richard and “H.D.” bring out an “Imagiste” anthology, provided it were clearly stated at the front of the book that “E.P. etc. dissociated himself, wised success, did not mind use of title so long as it was made clear that he was not responsible for contents or views of contributors.” BUT, on the other hand that would deprive me of my machinery for gathering good stray poems and presenting to the public in more or less permanent form and of discovering new talent . . . The present machinery was largely and wholly my making. I ordered “the public” (i.e. a few hundred people and reviewers) to take note of certain poems. (38)

Pound, finally, did not find a place for himself in Imagism, and he quickly turned away as his interest waned, even as he wanted to maintain control of the “machinery” that he created. He later said of the movement: “I cannot guarantee that my thoughts about it will remain absolutely stationary” (374).

Ezra Pound and Translation

While there have been numerous studies of Pound’s translations, most of them focus solely on pointing out and justifying the flaws in Pound’s translations rather than focusing on why Pound found translation so intriguing and kept coming back to translation as he wrote his ambitious work, *Cantos*.² Much has been made of the lack of accuracy in Pound’s translations, as he often translated instinctually, mimicking the sound and rhythm of the poem rather than the actual content. Pound often translated

languages in which he had no fluency, but he is frequently confusedly accused of having no knowledge of languages that he was actually quite fluent in.³ That Pound was so interested in translating indicates a desire to find an outsider's place in a language that was not his own.

Confusion surrounding Pound and his translations is so common that many of his readers often think he has invented the authors that he translated. Pound has his own theories about translation, and his approach is distinctive.⁴ In his essay, "How to Read," Pound discusses three different kinds of poetry and how they translate:

Melopoeia, wherein the words are charged over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning.

Phanopoeia, which is a casting of images upon the visual imagination.

Logopoeia, 'the dance of the intellect among words', that is to say, it employs words not only for their direct meaning, but it takes count in a special way of habits of usage, of the context we *expect* to find with the word, its usual concomitants, of its known acceptances, and of ironical play. It holds the aesthetic content which is peculiarly the domain of verbal manifestation, and cannot possibly be contained in plastic or in music. It is the latest come, and perhaps the most tricky and undependable mode. (25)

Pound argues that *Melopoeia* cannot be translated, *Phanopoeia* is the easiest kind of poetry to translate, and *Logopoeia* can only be translated as a sort of paraphrase of the

original. *Melopoeia* cannot be translated because the words, rhythm, and diction are so intertwined that a translation would not do them justice. *Phanopoeia* can be translated because it is so imagistic that the image can translate into another language; Pound believed that all Chinese ideogrammatic poetry was *Phanopoeia*. *Logopoeia* can only be translated as a paraphrase because the original version relies on the idiosyncrasies of its language to create intellectual word games such as puns. Pound believed that much of Sextus Propertius's work was *Logopoeia* and translated it according to that assumption. In addition to categorizing poetry into these three different kinds, Pound also thought that poetry should not be translated for content alone. He is often accused of translating badly or of having numerous "howlers" because he translated based on the rhythm and diction of the original work.⁵ He believed that if a poem were written in iambic pentameter in one language, then it was important to mimic the original rhythm as closely as possible. He wanted readers who could not read a poem in its original to be able to understand what the poet intended:

The poetry of a far-off time or place requires a translation not only of word and of spirit, but of 'accompaniment,' that is, that the modern audience must in some measure be made aware of the mental content of the older audience, and of what these other drew from certain fashions of thought and speech. (Pound, *Translations*, 17)

This translation style often produced weird phrases and strange word choice as Pound would often quite obviously choose a secondary connotation of a word rather than what was primarily meant. The context of a poem usually points to which connotation the

poet means by the word, but Pound often ignored the context. Pound's ideas about translating a text in order to communicate the "mental content" of the original audience for the work changed and evolved as his poetic theories became more intricate, but he constantly returned to the idea of communicating the "fashions of thought and speech" of a far-off time or place.

In an essay about translating Guido Cavalcanti, Pound reveals his peculiar translation practice: "When I 'translated' Guido eighteen years ago I did *not* see Guido at all" (27). The quotation marks Pound places around the word "translation" question whether Pound even believed he was translating. And while he often argued that he wanted to translate texts so they resembled the rhythm and diction of their original language, here he seems to be admitting that he could not follow his own rules of translation. This quotation also reveals Pound's transformation as a translator as he changed his poetic style. He further argues: "My perception was not obfuscated by Guido's Italian, difficult as it was for me to read. I was obfuscated by the Victorian language" (27). It was not the original language, then, that made translation difficult; rather, it was the constriction of Victorian English that caused the problem, which recalls the Vorticist protest against Victorianism. Pound's problem here was that he relied on someone else's translation, and that translation contained all the biases and cultural attitudes of someone working within the confines of Victorian language. Pound believed that the difficulty of translating texts into English ultimately rested on the fact that the language was so mutable:

What obfuscated me was not the Italian but the crust of dead English, the

sediment present in my own available vocabulary—which I, let us hope, got rid of a few years later. You can't go round this sort of thing. It takes six or eight years to get educated in one's art, and another ten to get rid of that education.

Neither can anyone learn English, one can only learn a series of Englishes. Rossetti made his own language. I hadn't in 1910 made a language, I don't mean a language to use, but even a language to think in. It is stupid to overlook the lingual inventions of precurent authors, even when they are fools or flapdoodles or Tennysons. It is sometimes advisable to sort out these languages and inventions, and to know what and why they are. (28)

Pound, then, believed that each translation needed to use a distinctive kind of English—from Anglo-Saxon to Elizabethan to Victorian, he applied different moments in the history of the English language to what he translated. Pound recognizes here that each translation is moderated by the structure and culture of the language it is being translated into, becoming an important precursor to the field of Translation Studies.⁶ Pound ends his discussion of Calvacanti by describing the translator's purpose:

In the long run the translator is in all probability impotent to do *all* of the work for the linguistically lazy reader. He can show where the treasure lies, he can guide the reader in choice of what tongue is to be studied, and he can very materially assist the hurried student who has a smattering of a

language and the energy to read the original text alongside the metrical gloze.

This refers to “interpretive translation”. The “other sort”, I mean in cases where the “translator” is definitely making a new poem, falls simply in the domain of original writing, or if it does not it must be censured according to equal standards, and praised with some sort of just deduction, assessable only in the particular case. (33)

Pound thus argues that by mimicking the rhythm and “feel” of the original, the translator initiates an education into another language and culture rather than presenting the poem as proper to its translated or target language. These two descriptions of the “translator” and the “translator” reveal much about Pound’s own attitude. He suggests that translators should follow the first description, but he often follows both descriptions at the same time as he attempts to remain true to the source as he also reinvents his own distinctive style. Reading one of Pound’s translations is a schizophrenic event, as the reader both feels Pound’s own overwhelming personal style and the foreignness of the source text. Furthermore, Pound’s own attitude about translation changed over time as his own writing style went through several transformations.

***Cathay*: Pound’s Invisible Visible Translation**

Though Pound’s ignorance of languages with which he worked has been overstated, he did sometimes translate with little knowledge of the original. He translated his collection of poems entitled *Cathay* from Chinese long before he even attempted to learn the language, using the notes of Ernest Fenollosa, which were based

on Japanese interpretations of the Chinese. Fenollosa wrote an essay that Pound later extensively edited and published entitled *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*.⁷ In this essay, which was extremely influential to Pound's understanding of Chinese, Fenollosa argues that the pictographic nature of Chinese ideograms create a poetry that is more immediate than that of phonetic languages like English that have abstract words. Much of what Fenollosa argued has been discounted, but the impact on Pound's own poetry and his translations of other poets cannot be denied. His Chinese translations are thus mediated through Fenollosa's understanding. Much later, Pound did translate some of the Confucian odes on his own, but the ideas of Fenollosa were already ingrained in his translation style, and he never fully abandoned the theory.

Pound employed a complex translation strategy that affected his own writing style in his collection of Chinese poetry entitled *Cathay*, trying to translate both the content and the culture of the poem.⁸ Pound translated these poems during World War I, and many have seen this collection as Pound's reaction to the war. His translations from the Chinese were based on Ernest Fenollosa's notes, which were taken while studying the Chinese ideogram in Japan. Fenollosa's notes had numerous poems by the poet Rihaku (the Japanese name given to the Chinese poet Li Po).⁹ The transmission of information, thus, has gone through two different cultures on its way to Pound. Pound translates Li Po's poems through the eyes of both Fenollosa and Fenollosa's Japanese teachers, Mori and Ariga. It is not surprising that Pound's translations contain errors after coming through such a long line of transmission, and it was precisely this displacement from origins (a version of exile from home) that would have attracted

Pound to the project. He was less interested in exact transcription from one language into another than in the idea of the unfamiliar in the poem. Rather than merely translating literally, Pound translates both the rhythm and the content in such a manner as both to attract and to repel his reader. Pound did not include all of the poems from Fenollosa's notes; rather, he chose the ones he thought best communicated the culture of Li Po's China. His choices are intriguing in that most of the poems in some way talk about exile. In total, he translated fifteen poems, including "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter," "Exile's Letter," "Four Poems of Departure," "Song of the Bowmen of Shu," "The River Song," and "The Beautiful Toilet."

"The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter" focuses on the feelings of isolation and nostalgia of a wife left behind. Pound's translation begins with the wife looking back:

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead
 I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.
 You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,
 You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.
 And we went on living in the village of Chokan:
 Two small people, without dislike or suspicion. (192)

Thus, very simply, the speaker is introduced. It is important to note here differences and similarities between the style and diction of this poem as compared to some of Pound's earlier poems. These Chinese poems draw readers in, tricking them with their simplicity into feeling comfortable in the world of the poem. In this first stanza, the wife is very easy to relate to—she is a young girl in love. There is only one hint of the foreign nature

of the poem: the village “Chokan.” As the speaker describes her shyness, she indicates her retiring nature, indicating that she “never looked back.” This statement is intriguing, as the entire poem is about looking back and nostalgia, which reveals Pound’s criticism of and complicity in the nostalgic tendency of the poem. The reader is seduced by the simplicity of the poem’s speaker and diction. It is easy to understand the speaker’s feelings of love and her three-fold desire for “forever.” The reader is confronted with several alienating forces at once. The reader is drawn into the poem, often identifying with the speaker, only to be bombarded with several images of alienation almost simultaneously. The earlier simplicity of the poem, which contains few images, is shattered by the complicated images presented in the later stanzas. From the unfamiliar place-name of “Ku-to-yen” to the baffling image of the monkeys, the poem begins to become confusing and foreign. After all, while monkeys may be a symbol of sorrow in Chinese culture, they represent something entirely different in Western cultures. The reader is thus made to feel a sense of loneliness and alienation at the exact point where the speaker experiences the same feeling. This paradoxically allows the reader both to identify with the speaker and to be alienated from the world of the poem at the same time. In the last stanza, the short, truncated sentences of one line—“They hurt me. I grow older”—contrast with the lengthy, more complex sentence of the next four lines—“If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,/Please let me know beforehand,/And I will come out to meet you/As far as Cho-fu-Sa” (192). The sense of desolation communicated by the two short sentences is emphasized by the speaker’s desperation to see her husband in the last sentence of the poem. Once again the images

alienate the reader; from the moss to the butterflies, Pound makes typically positive or neutral images into representations of loneliness: the moss that has grown in the absence of someone to tend it and the butterflies that yellow with the age of August. The month of “August” suggests a possible pun as it also means someone older in years who is revered for age or wisdom. Pound is indicating here that both the reader and the speaker of the poem have been wizened by the events of the poem. August also suggests an end to summer, indicating the coming of Autumn and Winter, seasons of desolation. And the image of the “paired butterflies” mocks the sense of loss the reader and the speaker feel: the butterflies have partners, but the reader and the speaker end up isolated and alone in the poem (192).

This translation is interesting in that it shows how home changes when someone leaves, and it also demonstrates the revisions the wife has gone through over the years, echoing the process Pound was going through as he moved from style to style, movement to movement. Rather than showing the feelings of the one who departs—the homesickness—this poem demonstrates how the home alters itself so much that when the traveler returns it is not the same. The complex and often resentful thoughts of the speaker of the poem demonstrate just how difficult it is to keep a home the same. Interestingly, the woman speaking in this poem seems to have homesickness also, as she has nostalgia for a simpler time when she did not feel the pain she feels after her husband leaves. Pound’s presentation here, thus, complicates the idea of home, indicating how changed a home will be upon one’s return. Pound demonstrates a distrust for idealized and romantic ideas of home .

Pound's other choices of poems to include in *Cathay* further demonstrate his fixation on homesickness and the difficulty of leaving a home. The very titles of the poems, "Exile's Letter" and "Four Poems of Departure," indicate these feelings. The "Four Poems of Departure" illustrate the feelings of people who are leaving each other. The first poem has no title and is set apart from the rest by smaller type and italics. The second poem echoes "The River Merchant's Wife," communicating the feelings of someone watching their loved one leave. The third poem communicates the twinned emotion of two friends saying goodbye. The final poem in the sequence appears to be advice to someone departing through the mountains. This sequence of poems once again highlights the loneliness and isolation of departure. The images in each of the poems make the reader feel the desolation of the speakers. Throughout *Cathay*, Pound uses foreign place names that distance western readers from the setting of the poetry. Every time a foreign place is mentioned, it emphasizes the reader's feeling of not belonging in the isolated world that the poems describe. The second poem in this sequence uses an image that is repeated throughout *Cathay*: rivers as symbols of departure. In "The River Merchant's Wife," the river becomes a sign for the speaker's lost husband. "Separation on the River Kiang" also uses a river to communicate this emotion. The last two poems of the sequence use mountains as an image of isolation. The diction of these four poems also underlines the solitude of the speakers. Quite often, Pound will use enjambment to break up a sentence so that one part of the sentence is separated from the other. This separated phrase usually is indented and set off from the rest of the text. These lonely phrases also never begin with a capital letter, as all the other lines of the poems do. By

isolating these lines, Pound mimics the feelings of the speakers in the poems. Finally, even though none of the four poems explicitly states that the departure is forever, there is a sense of finality in these poems, as if once a person leaves, he or she can never return.

Revision replaces and often demolishes an earlier version of a poem, destroying the possibility of returning to that earlier style, that earlier self; Pound cannot entirely go back to these earlier styles as he constantly revises his style; any contact with the earlier styles by Pound later in his career will alter them just as a home is altered by the return of a long-absent family member. The images in these poems of exile reflect Pound's own constant exile and revision of his poetic persona.

It is intriguing to look at what Pound did not translate from the Fenollosa notebooks, but determining any uniform practice for why Pound chose poems to include in *Cathay* is difficult. The Fenollosa notebooks contained over one hundred fifty poems, but Pound chose only to include fifteen in his first version and eighteen in a later version of *Cathay*.¹⁰ I would argue that Pound chose poems for two reasons, one of which Anne S. Chapple demonstrates in "Ezra Pound's *Cathay*: Compilation from the Fenollosa Notebooks." Chapple argues that Pound looked for poems that specifically followed his Imagist doctrine and simply represented an image without any extraneous explanation or words. Pound was looking for something in translation that he had already tackled in his own language. He felt that these poems reinforced and supported his concepts about Imagism, so he prized them. I agree that this is most likely one of Pound's criteria for picking poems, but I would also like to argue that, with the possible exception of "The Song of the Bowmen of Shu," Pound chose poems that could communicate an alienated

idea of home. Looking at one of the poems that Pound did not choose to include in *Cathay* will demonstrate this idea further. Pound translated several poems from Fenollosa's notebooks that he never published. He often typed rough sketches of some of the poems, but later rejected them. One of these poems, written by Li Po, presents an intriguing, mostly abstract, idea of home:

“calm night thought”

The moon light is on the floor luminous

I thought it was frost, it was so white

Holding up head I look at mountain moon

that makes me lower head

lowering head think of old home

mountain

looking up I find it to be the moon (qtd. in Chapple 20)

Chapple argues that Pound abandons this poem because it is too abstract and also because “an expression of homesickness of this kind was not the kind of emotion Pound could grasp” (21). I would argue that Pound discarded this poem not because he couldn't grasp the emotion of the poem, but rather because he could grasp it all too well. This poem, quite simply, treats the idea of home romantically as a place to be unthinkingly longed for. Pound wanted to trouble the idea of home because of his complex relationship to the idea. Pound's dislike of the poem's simplicity is indicated by the note and parody that accompany it in the notebook. He calls the poem “gnomic

poetry,” indicating that he thought the poem too aphoristic (qtd. in Chapple 20). The parody further indicates his disdain for the poem’s simple treatment of home:

When the roast smoked in the oven, belching out blackness
 I was bewildered and knew not what to do
 But when I was plunged into the contemplation
 of Li Po’s beautiful verses
 This thought came upon me
 When the roast smokes pour water upon it
 (Blast!) (qtd. in Chapple 21)

Pound’s parody reveals his aim: to translate poems from the Fenollosa Notebooks that present a complex view of home and exile. While he may have eliminated some poems based on their inability to communicate imagistically, I do not believe this poem is one of them. After all, the poem is full of images that represent emotions. Rather, Pound chooses to abandon this poem because of its simple and hopeful idea of home.

Pound translated “Song of the Bowmen of Shu” twice; once in 1915 for *Cathay* and again in 1954 in *The Classic Anthology as Defined by Confucius*. This poem illustrates the most clearly of all the *Cathay* poems a complex and frequent revision of himself as it reveals differing views about home and homesickness. Most critics have seen Pound’s first translation of this poem as a criticism and judgment of World War I, but anxiety about returning after a long absence seems to be the major theme of this poem. The Bowmen of Shu are not entirely isolated in this poem since they all have each other, but it is clear that they are all lonely:

Here we are, picking the first fern-shoots

And saying: When shall we get back to our country?

Here we are because we have the Ken-nin for our foeman,

We have no comfort because of these Mongols.

We grub the soft fern-shoots,

When anyone says 'Return', the others are full of sorrow.

Sorrowful minds, sorrow is strong, we are hungry and thirsty.

Our defence is not yet made sure, no one can let his friend return.

We grub the old fern-stalks.

We say: will we be let to go back in October?

There is no ease in royal affairs, we have no comfort.

Our sorrow is bitter, but we would not return to our country.

What flower has come into blossom?

Whose chariot? The General's.

Horses, his horse even, are tired. They were strong.

We have no rest, three battles a month.

By heaven, his horses are tired.

The generals are on them, the soldiers are by them.

The horses are well trained, the generals have ivory arrows and

quivers ornamented with fish-skin.

The enemy is swift, we must be careful.

When we set out, the willows were drooping with spring,

We come back in the snow,
 We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,
 Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief? (189)

The impossibility of both literal and figurative return is the subject of this poem. The warriors in the poem are homesick, but they know some of them will never return. Also, they know that when they return home it will not be the same. Another repeated idea in this poem is the idea of having no comfort. Far from home, they cannot feel comfortable in their own skin. They feel displaced because they are missing the familiarity of their lives—the comfort of familiar faces—while they can also feel themselves changing, revising, as a result of their experiences. The warriors, however, do have each other and the knowledge that each of their friends is experiencing the same feeling of homesickness, but no one can return.

In 1954, Pound translated this poem again, producing a significantly different poem in terms of both content and style. I present the two translations here, matching up the lines as closely as possible¹¹:

1954 Version:

Pick a fern, pick a fern, ferns are high,

“Home,” I’ll say: home, the year’s gone by,

1915 Version:

Here we are, picking the first fern-
 shoots

And saying: When shall we get back
 to our country?

no house, no roof, these huns on the hoof.	Here we are because we have the Ken-nin for our foeman,
Work, work, work, that's how it runs,	We have no comfort because of these Mongols.
We are here because of these huns. (86)	(189)

The first stanza of the 1954 version demonstrates how much Pound's attitude has changed. The use of the word "home" twice emphasizes the soldiers' isolation and hopelessness. The earlier version seems to contain a slight hope of getting home as the speaker asks the question: "When shall we get back to our country?" The 1915 version also purposefully demonstrates the foreignness of the poem with its style through the use of the word "Ken-nin" and the diction and rhythm of the poem. Pound domesticates the style of the later version as he uses rhyme and a familiar almost sing-songy rhythm. Pound uses the word "huns" twice in the later version. In World War I and to a lesser extent in World War II, the word was used as a slang reference to German soldiers. By using this slang in his later poem, Pound uses a word that is both familiar and not familiar at the same time, domesticating the poem even as he displaces the reader. The second version is also much more personal seeming than the first version as the reader can connect with the domesticated version of the poem because the first version displaces the reader, making him or her feel uncomfortable.

The next stanza of the 1954 version repeats the desperation for home:

1954 version:

Pick a fern, pick a fern, soft as they come,
I'll say "Home."

Hungry all of us, thirsty here,

no home news for nearly a year. (86)

1915 version:

We grub the soft fern-shoots,
When anyone says 'Return', the
others are full of sorrow.

Sorrowful minds, sorrow is strong,
we are hungry and thirsty.

Our defence is not yet made sure, no
one can let his friend return. (189)

Here, we begin to see Pound's method of repeating the same phrase: "I'll say 'Home'".

In the 1915 translation, Pound translates the word "home" as "return," indicating the desire to go back to a simpler time. The change to the word "home" and its enormous presence in the second translation indicates a more concrete desire: a desire for a place to belong, for an actual place to return to. The earlier use of "return" assumes that there is something to return to, whereas the later use of "home" indicates Pound's overwhelming sense of loneliness and his sense of never having found a home. Pound is paradoxically yearning for something (i.e., he is homesick) and searching for a home he cannot find. Additionally, the earlier version of this poem depersonalizes the speaker—"anyone says 'Return' rather than the speaker saying "Home."

The poem continues:

1954 version:

1915 version:

Pick a fern, pick a fern, if they scratch,	We grub the old fern-stalks.
I'll say "Home," what's the catch?	
I'll say "Go home," now October's come.	We say: will we be let to go back in October?
King wants us to give it all,	There is no ease in royal affairs, we have no comfort.
no rest, spring, summer, winter fall,	
Sorrow to us, sorrow to you.	Our sorrow is bitter, but we would not return to our country. (189)
We won't get out of here till we're through. (86)	

Once again, the earlier translation betrays a simplicity, a youthful naiveté, about the idea of home. In the earlier version, the speakers look to home as the solution to all their troubles; that is, when they go home, they will be happy, welcomed, and comforted. In the second version, the lone speaker demonstrates a suspicion about the comforts of home, saying "I'll say 'Home', what's the catch?" The speaker wonders what he would have to sacrifice as a result of going home. This line indicates Pound's distrustfulness about home, and this is especially revealing given that he translated the later version while he was in St. Elizabeth's after his time at Pisa. Pound was, literally, home again in the United States, but he was repatriated, forced home and imprisoned. The idea of home for Pound shatters after his unique experience at Pisa and his subsequent stay at St. Elizabeth's, and these two translations reveal his inability to trust home again. The Pisa

experience has revised Pound in such a way that he has no place. He has been pulled out Italy, the closest thing he ever found to a comfortable place, and forced back to the United States. Certainly, living in a cage altered his ideas about comfort. The 1954 version's use of "Go home" also indicates Pound's apparent separation from others: he seems to be telling everyone else to go home as he recognizes his own inability to go home. The final line of 1954 version further indicates Pound's changing attitude: "We won't get out of here till we're through." Rather than voicing a desire for home, this line complicates the idea of home. Pound, here, could be referring to St. Elizabeth's when he talks about getting out.

The next two stanzas are different, but the differences are slight, and aside from Pound's informal tone in the later translation, the meaning is basically the same:

1954 version:

When it's cherry-time with you,
we'll see the captain's car go thru,
four big horses to pull that load.

That's what comes along our road,
What do you call three fights a month,
and won 'em all?

1915 version:

What flower has come into
blossom?
Whose chariot? The General'
Horses, his horse even, are tired.
They were strong.

We have no rest, three battles a
month.
By heaven, his horses are tired.

Four car-horses strong and tall

The generals are on them, the
soldiers are by them.

and the boss who can drive ‘em all

The horses are well trained, the
generals have ivory arrows and
quivers ornamented with fish-skin.

as we slog along beside his car,

ivory bow-tips and shagreen case

to say nothing of what we face

The enemy is swift, we must be
careful. (189)

sloggin’ along in the Hien-yün war. (86)

It is interesting to note here Pound’s only use of a foreign place name: “Hien-yün,” which comes in a line where he also uses a domesticating informal slang: “sloggin.”

This juxtaposition of foreign and domestic reveals Pound’s ambivalence about the comfort of home. He does make his later version more accessible to Western readers, but at the same time, he will still not let them feel quite at home.

As the poem ends, the youthfulness of the first version becomes increasingly clear when compared to the mature bitterness and suspicion of the later version:

1954 version:

Willows were green when we set out,

it’s blowin’ an’ snowin’ as we go

1915 version:

When we set out, the willows were
drooping with spring,

We come back in the snow,

<p>down this road, muddy and slow,</p> <p>hungry and thirsty and blue as doubt</p> <p>(no one feels half of what we know). (87)</p>	<p>We go slowly, we are hungry and thirsty,</p> <p>Our mind is full of sorrow, who will know of our grief? (189)</p>
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The 1915 version seems almost romantic as the speaker desires that others know of the soldiers' grief, even though the speaker questions if anyone ever will. The 1954 version, however, contains no such desire; rather, the speaker separates himself from others, saying: "no one feels half of what we know." This sentiment indicates the speaker's belief in the inability of people to understand someone else's plight. The speaker in the second poem is, thus, alone, without a home and without the ability to connect. Even though the word "we" is used here, I get a sense that Pound does not feel part of a group, and if anything is using the royal "we." This inability to connect occurs constantly in his career as he moves from style to style and movement to movement; his constant revision is a search for a point of connection—a point he never seems to find. Pound turned to translation much as he turned to Imagism and Vorticism in order to find a comfortable place, a home for himself, but he later realized the futility of this search, which led to his purposeful displacement of the reader in his *Cantos*.

The *Cantos*: Pound's Displacement of the Reader

Pound questions ideas of home and comfort throughout his career as a poet and critic as he constantly revises himself in order to find a comfortable place as a modernist.

His *Cantos* perform his discomfort; he uses language to displace his readers, taking away their comfort. Since he can never feel at home himself, he debunks the ideal of home in his work: for Pound, home is extremely fragmented. Pound's increasing alienation over the years indicates a poetic persona that is alienated from home, which is the version of himself he wants to communicate to his readers. To create this persona, he included more and more techniques in his own poetry that were designed to make the reader feel uncomfortable. This inclusion immediately makes the reader feel as if he or she does not belong. Mimicking the effect of his translations, Pound's later poetry makes the reader constantly ill at ease, and thus, not at home in Pound's poetry. His readers feel the effect of Pound's constant revision and his search for a comfortable place. Pound's *Cantos* offer the best example of how his poetry works on the reader.

In *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound's sense of displacement is at its most potent.

Written while he was imprisoned in Pisa after World War II, *The Pisan Cantos* communicate his despair at being ripped out of the tentative home he had created for himself. The opening lines of "Canto 74" illustrate Pound's despair:

The enormous tragedy of the dream in the peasant's bent
 Shoulders
 Manes! Manes was tanned and stuffed,
 Thus Ben and la Clara *a Milano*
 That maggots shd/ eat the dead bullock
 DIGONOS, Δίγονος, but the twice crucified
 where in history will you find it?

yet say this to the Possum: a bang, not a whimper,
 with a bang not a whimper,
 To build a city of Dioce whose terraces are the colour of stars.
 The suave eyes, quiet, not scornful,
 rain also is of the process.
 What you depart from is not the way
 and olive tree blown white in the wind
 washed in the Kiang and Han
 what whiteness will you add to this whiteness,
 what candor?
 “the great periplum brings in the stars to our shore.”
 You who have passed the pillars and outward from Herakles
 when Lucifer fell in N. Carolina.
 if the suave air gibe way to scirocco
 OY TIS, OY TIS? Odysseus
 the name of my family. (3)

Repetitions of his translations abound in this passage. Five of the lines—“What you depart from is not the way/and olive tree blown white in the wind/washed in the Kiang and Han/what whiteness will you add to this whiteness/what candor?”—are almost direct translation from Chinese, taken from the work of Confucius. The reader familiar with Pound’s work will recognize the river Kiang from his poem in *Cathay*, but the foreign place names in the passage, once again, demonstrate Pound’s efforts to make the reader

feel as if he or she does not belong. The mention of North Carolina provides American readers with something familiar, but Pound immediately makes North Carolina strange by referring to an obscure occurrence in North Carolina. The passage is referring to a meteor shower that took place near Gibraltar, North Carolina in 1944. Pound blends the geographical locations of Gibraltar, North Carolina, and the strait of Gibraltar with its cliffs known as the Pillars of Hercules. North Carolina becomes as foreign as the river Kiang as Pound fragments it into confusion. Furthermore, Pound's allusive technique—the constant quotations from other sources—are a poetic means of displacing language, of exiling phrases from their homes in one poem into a foreign place in another poem. He uses this technique by alluding to Eliot's "The Hollow Men." Pound alters the famous ending of Eliot's poem, switching the order. In Pound's revision the world ends with a "bang" instead of a "whimper," reversing Eliot's claim.

The most obvious use of displacement in this passage comes from the use of Greek. Pound argued that readers should skip around his *Cantos* just reading what caught their eyes. This skip and skim method makes it so that the text affects each reader differently. Pound also said that any foreign languages were almost always translated and repeated in English. However, when a reader does not know Greek, which has a very distinctive alphabet, or Chinese, which uses ideograms rather than letters, or even Latin, where word order functions differently than it does in English, the assault of foreign languages in the *Cantos* is off-putting. The plethora of languages makes readers feel insecure, distancing them from the text and making them foreign to the text. In the above passage, Pound uses a couple of different Greek passages. He

uses perhaps one of the most famous Greek passages when he quotes from *The Odyssey*. ΟΥ ΤΙΣ means “no man” or “nobody,” and Odysseus tricks Polyphemus into believing this is his name in order to escape. This phrase recurs throughout *The Pisan Cantos*. When readers encounter this phrase and discern the meaning, they could have various reactions. The idea of being no one once again brings up the idea of being a stranger in a strange land. The idea of not belonging and being in exile are echoed in Pound’s repetitions of the phrase: ΟΥ ΤΙΣ, ΟΥ ΤΙΣ, making the reader feel desperation at being unable to belong in the world created by Pound’s poetry. Later in *The Pisan Cantos*, Pound repeats the phrase once again but associates it with a Chinese ideogram that means “not or no.” Pound interprets this ideogram as literally meaning “a man on whom the sun has gone down” (8) because the ideogram has the symbol for the sun above the symbol for a man. The idea of the sun going down isolates the “no man” from the Greek even more. Not only is the man unnamed, the man also has no chances left of achieving a life of belonging. Throughout Pound’s *Cantos* he repeatedly uses the strategy employed in “Canto 74” to displace the reader.

Pound’s constant revision of himself indicates his inability to find a place for himself in the community of modernism. Pound’s flirtation with movements, translation and his frequent changing of style, reflect his displacement in a world that he is assumed to be central to. Pound created a poetic persona that made him appear to be never at home with himself or in modernism, so he underwent revision as did his work. Pound does have homesickness, but he finally realizes the futility of searching for a home. In the end his desire for return, his longing for home, has no object; he has no place, and

there is no center of modernism. He realizes that he wants something impossible, so he, in what I see as a very ethical move as a critic, translator and poet, makes visible the difficulties of home and revision as he makes the reader feel his displacement. And yet, there is one aspect of himself he never revises—his support of his friends. In an obituary written for Eliot in 1966, Pound continues his support:

His was the true Dantescan voice—not honoured enough, and deserving more than I ever gave him.

I had hope to see him in Venice this year for the Dante commemoration at the Giorgio Cini Foundation—instead: Westminster Abbey. But, later, on his own hearth, a flame tended, a presence felt.

Recollections? let some thesis writer have the satisfaction of “discovering” whether it was in 1920 or ’21 that I went from Excideuil to meet a rucksacked Eliot. Days of walking—conversation? literary? *le papier Fayard* was then the burning topic. Who is there now for me to share a joke with?

Am I to write “about” the poet Thomas Stearns Eliot? or my friend ‘the Possum’? Let him rest in peace. I can only repeat, but with the urgency of 50 years ago: READ HIM. (464)

Pound could see in others what he could never see in himself. He was able to make a place for others while he could never make a place for himself. This is reflected in his final fragment, written the same year as the obituary for Eliot:

Fragment (1966)

That her acts
 Olga's acts of beauty
 be remembered

Her name was Courage
 & is written Olga

These lines are for the
 ultimate CANTO

whatever I may write
 in the interim. (824)

NOTES

¹ Many other authors of the period noted Pound's generosity, including H.D. who said, "The strange thing is that Ezra was so inexpressibly kind to anyone who he felt had the faintest spark of submerged talent, Alfred Kreymborg who exclaimed, "In a world where most people slavishly coddled their own egos, here was a fellow with a heart and intelligence at the service of other contemporaries" and Wyndham Lewis who remarked, "He does not in the least mind being in service to somebody" (qtd. in Bornstein 23).

² See, for example, Helen M. Dennis' "The Translation Strategies of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ezra Pound and Paul Blackburn" and Roxana Preda's "The Broken Pieces of the Vessel: Pound and Calvacanti" both in *Ezra Pound and Poetic Influence*.

³ In his essay "Pound as Translator" Ming Xie catalogues Pound's language fluency: "From 1901 to 1907 at the University of Pennsylvania and Hamilton College, Pound studied, among other subjects, English, Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Provençal, Anglo-Saxon, and Greek. He specialized in Romance languages and received in 1906 a Master of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania. Pound's command of the Romance languages was secure and solid, although even in this area his scholarship has sometimes been impugned" (204-205).

⁴ For more discussion of Pound's translation theories see John W. Maerhofer, Jr.'s "Towards an Esthetic of Translation: An Examination of Ezra Pound's Translation Theory" and Ronnie Apter's *Digging for the Treasure: Translation After Pound*.

⁵ Walter Benjamin's argument about translation supports Pound's view: Benjamin argues that translations always echo the original. See Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator."

⁶ Translation Studies has become an increasingly important field. Lawrence Venuti, one of the major Translation Studies' critics makes much the same argument as Pound about the transmission of culture. Venuti argues that it is more ethical to translate visibly; that is, translators must make visible the transmission a text must go through in order to be translated.

⁷ Interestingly, Pound edited out a lot of Fenollosa's commentary about the United States of America, once again exiling himself from his home. This editing indicates Pound's inability to interact with the U.S. in his work and in his life. See Pound and Fenollosa's papers at the Beinicke Library.

⁸ For more specific discussion of Pound's translations and their accuracy see Eric Hayot's "Critical Dreams: Orientalism, Modernism, and the Meaning of Pound's China," Anna Xiao Dong Sun's "The Man That is Waiting: Remarks on Li Po's 'Chokan Shin' and Pound's 'The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter'" and Zhaoming Quian's "Translation or Invention: Three *Cathay* Poems Reconsidered" Christine Froula's "The Beauties of Mistranslation: On Pound's English after *Cathay*," Barry Ahearn's "*Cathay*: What Sort of Translation?" and Ming Xie's *Ezra Pound and the Appropriation of Chinese Poetry: Cathay, Translation, and Imagism*.

⁹ In her article, "Ezra Pound's *Cathay*: Compilation from the Fenollosa Notebooks," Anne S. Chapple specifically discusses Fenollosa's notebooks and Pound's treatment of them. She argues that Pound's selection strategy was based on his Imagist theories. While this argument is convincing, I believe that there are other factors guiding Pound's choices.

¹⁰ See Ann S. Chapple's "Ezra Pound's *Cathay*: Compilation from the Fenollosa Notebooks" for more specific information. .

¹¹ It should be noted that the version from *Cathay* does not have stanzas like the version from 1954. Please refer to the earlier transcription in this chapter of the 1915 version to see its structure more clearly.

CHAPTER V

“THE PERPETUAL SURGING OF INVENTION”: MINA LOY AND THE DISGUISE
OF PUBLICATION

“I assure you I am indeed a live being. But it is necessary to stay very unknown . . . To maintain my incognito that hazard I chose was—poet” (Conover, *Lost* xvii-xviii).¹ This was Mina Loy’s notorious response to the prevalent rumor that she was not an actual person but rather a literary hoax. Loy’s response is typical of her public persona in that while claiming she is no hoax, she at the same time reinforces the elusive persona that gave rise to the hoax rumor in the first place by using one of her favorite words—incognito.² Her incognito allows Loy to use the magician’s technique of misdirection to draw attention to the poetic persona she had created by manipulating what it meant to be a female author within a modernist aesthetic. This misdirection has resulted in a particular kind of attention perpetually being given to Loy until at present, she has almost, once again, become a kind of hoax perpetuated by her critics. Loy courted attention and obscurity at the same time, placing herself in the position of being repeatedly rediscovered by her readers, who often attempt to place her at the center of the modernist canon with authors like Pound and Eliot. But I would argue that Loy does not belong in this center of high modernism, not because her work doesn’t deserve recognition, but because the removal of Loy from the margins removes also her particular ability to speak to the outsider. Rediscovering Loy is a path fraught with difficulty and illusions, and much like a magician’s act, the magic is gone once we know

how the magician does the trick. Loy and her poetry resist institutional recognition and court perpetual rediscovery because her persona must remain decentered to function properly.

The way in which Loy's works were published created a disguise that she did nothing to shed. This disguise resulted from Loy's eccentric and shocking poetic style and, as Roger Conover argues, causes readers to have a vehement reaction to her.

One generally takes Loy—or does not—as one takes a vow. She tends to be accepted or avoided. No one considers her “decent.” She is contrary, she is antimetric, and certainly she is *indecent*. Her first readers found her so, and most contemporary readers still do. You become either a sworn believer or a fast enemy. (xix)

Being such an extremist, Loy created a unique place for herself that is almost impossible for her to escape. Because readers are supposed either to love her or to hate her, there is little place for proper analysis of her work. From the poems published in the little magazines of the early twentieth century to the collections of poems and a novel published posthumously, Loy's work has always been presented to the reading public as outlandish and shocking. Her poem, “Parturition,” for example, is representative of the scandalous nature of her work: “And the foam on the stretched muscles of a mouth/Is no part of myself/There is a climax in sensibility/When pain surpassing itself/Becomes Exotic” (Loy 5). By equating the pain of childbirth with the pleasure of a sexual climax, Loy creates a dissonance that affects the reader strongly. The language and style of this poem perplex readers, creating distance between readers and the poem. This

dissonance has produced the limiting responses to Loy's work. Throughout her career as a poet, Loy constructed a persona that anticipated her later critical reception, placing herself in the paradoxical position of remaining perpetually outside of the modernist canon no matter how many times she is rediscovered.

Modernist Authorship: Negotiating Femininity

At the time Mina Loy was writing, the idea of what it meant to be an author, and more specifically a woman author, was becoming increasingly complicated.³ In her essay "Anon," Virginia Woolf betrays some of the attitudes and preoccupations about the place of the author in modernism. Woolf argues that the history of English literature went through a major shift as it became increasingly important who authored a work. She creates a persona she names "Anon" or "anonymous" who is free from the shackles of authorship. Woolf associates "Anon" with a time before books were printed, a time anchored in orality, arguing that because of this orality, "Anon" is able to revel in the creation of his or her work without worrying about authorial influence or a cultural tradition. When words began being connected with specific authors, she argues that there was a significant change in what an author was: "He is aware of his art as Chaucer was not, nor Langland, nor Malory. His is no longer a wandering voice, but the voice of a man practicing an art, asking for recognition, and bitterly conscious of his relation [to] the world, of the world's scorn" (391). Woolf's thoughts about authorship and anonymity reflect Loy's own concerns about what it meant to be an author, although Woolf and Loy have differing reactions to the problem. While Woolf reacts to the difficulty of being a female author in the modernist era and all it entailed by creating a

nostalgic character like “Anon,” Loy turns herself into an “Anon” of sorts by purposefully hiding in plain sight. Loy’s self-fulfilling incognito status and her alleged “pseudomania” reveal how Loy courted obscurity by playing with anonymity (Conover, “Last” xviii).

Other modernist women authors encountered difficulty occupying the role of author. Such authors as Marianne Moore, Gertrude Stein, and H.D. created personas for themselves so they could occupy the role of author within the modernist framework. Sandra M. Gilbert argues that Marianne Moore had to create a persona of spinster or old maid author in order to become the kind of “anti-poetess” that modernist male authors would embrace. Gilbert compares attitudes towards Marianne Moore and Edna St. Vincent Millay and discusses how the two “poetesses” manipulate and subvert their positions by creating personas that allowed them to work within the conventions and structures of poetry and modernism. Millay, Gilbert argues, adopted a significantly different persona than Moore—that of the “‘poetess’ as dramatic *improvisatrice*” (29), but they both used dress to create specific masks for themselves. Celeste Goodridge also discusses the mask Moore created in order to participate in the difficult world of modernism. Goodridge examines Moore’s “role as a poet-critic,” demonstrating the way Moore manipulated her own writing and the writing of others to create a kind of mask for herself: “Her temperament and her belief that art grows out of an economy of disclosure and concealment required that she value the unseen, the impenetrable, the inaccessible, the playful appearance of a sleight of hand, the mask or disguise, and the part, or partial view, over the whole” (14). Like many female modernist authors, Moore

had to create space for herself. She chose to occupy a place of exaggerated femininity using the same technique of misdirection that Loy does, but Loy creates a much more ambivalent space for herself, which may have resulted in Moore's canonical status and Loy's marginal one.

Other women authors of the time also created masks such as these in order to function in a modernist context. Bob Perelman argues that Gertrude Stein created a genius persona that she often presented publicly in lectures.⁴ Stein, additionally, tried to present a masculine persona to the public, dressing herself in such a way that she looked like a man; whereas H.D., much like Moore, occupied a fraught feminine persona that she created through her dress and poetry. Loy's persona reflects many of the same anxieties about being a female modernist poet, but the persona she creates falls somewhere between the hyper-masculine persona of Stein and the hyper-feminine one of Moore. Loy also costumed herself so she could better occupy the specific role she had fashioned for herself, and various photographs of her indicate this costuming.

Photographs as Disguise: Loy's Manipulation of Her Audience

Loy consciously manipulated how her audience viewed her in both her poetry and in how she presented herself to the world. Her complicated persona is reflected in many of the photographs she had posed for throughout her life. These photographs, which are not candid but clearly staged, almost seem to be publicity photographs that function perversely to shroud Loy in mystery. The publicity photograph often creates a particular perspective. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss the manipulation of

publicity photographs in their response to Frank Lentricchia's attack on their *Madwoman in the Attic*:

On the one hand, though he's no doubt a highly paid professor at a prestigious private institution, Lentricchia has presented himself—in the infamous photograph on the back of *Criticism and Social Change*—as a kind of street-wise tough, what Maureen Corrigan in the *Village Voice Literary Supplement* called 'the Dirty Harry of contemporary critical theory.' Posed against a wall streaked with graffiti instead of the usual blackboard or bookcase, wearing a striped T-shirt instead of a tweed jacket, Lentricchia seems to want to convince readers that he's no ivory tower egghead but one of the boys. (404)

Gilbert and Gubar further argue that this photograph is part of a tradition of publicity photographs, citing such examples as Walt Whitman's famous visage from the frontispiece of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass* and Annie Leibowitz's photograph of John Irving in a wrestling costume. Gilbert and Gubar claim that "American men of letters, socially constructed to feel they must be 'masculine,' have sought to certify their manhood in a culture where they feel their potency to be imperiled" (405). Like Lentricchia and Whitman, Loy made conscious gendered decisions about how her image would be presented to the public. Loy creates an aura of feminine mystery that mimics and reverses the exaggeration of masculinity in male author photos. With her parody of femininity, Loy once again is hiding in plain sight, revealing herself visually while she is

perpetuating a mask as persona. The first two photographs I will discuss were taken in 1909 by Stephen Haweis, Loy's first husband:



Figure 11: Mina Loy in 1909, Photo by Stephen Haweis⁵



Figure 12: Mina Loy in 1905, Photo by Stephen Haweis



Figure 13: Mina Loy in 1907, Photo by Stephen Haweis



Figure 14: Mina Loy in 1909 (II), Photo by Stephen Haweis

The blurring of Figures 11, 12, 13, and 14, taken by Haweis for public display, creates an aura of mystery around Loy that immediately makes her appear intriguing. The nude picture provides the most stunning example. The audience of the photograph does not see Loy's face, and her only ornament is a shawl that covers nothing. This photograph shows Loy in all her nakedness as her poems purport to do. However, as in her poems, the nudity in the photo is not clearly revealing. Since we do not see her face, we do not know what her reaction or involvement is in the picture, which creates a distance between Loy and the audience of the photograph. None of the other three pictures reveals much about Loy either: her expressions are unfocused, she is always completely composed, and she never looks at the camera directly.

The first photograph (Figure 11) is an unfocused image of Loy in profile with a cigarette poised on the edge of her mouth. She is not smoking the cigarette; rather, she holds it as slightly eroticized prop. The same can be said of Figure 13, in which she holds a sculpture by Rodin. The sculpture, much like the cigarette, is a prop that Loy uses to emphasize her artistry and her highly eroticized femininity. Figure 14 does not have any props, but the style of the photograph is similar. The viewer does not see her eyes, and she is, once again, out of focus. The props in these photographs use the misdirection technique I discussed earlier—the cigarette, the Rodin sculpture and even Loy's naked body distract the viewer from really looking at Loy by attracting the gaze to her constructed mask.

Later photos of Loy followed much the same trend. In 1920, Man Ray took a photo of Loy that now appears on the dust jacket of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*. This

picture shows the quintessential modern woman all the way down to her earring made of a thermometer:



Figure 15: Mina Loy in 1920, Photo by Man Ray

That Conover chose Figure 15 for the cover of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* is telling (he did not, after all, choose a picture of Loy with her children). Once again, the photograph is extremely contrived: the gaze is averted, the chin tilted to suggest artistic arrogance, and the avant-garde earrings effect the usual misdirection of the viewer's gaze. Loy has once again hidden herself in plain sight. When potential readers pick up *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, they are immediately confronted by this picture. In other words, this picture is the first impression readers will have of who Loy is. The persona created by this

picture is one of cool intellect—it seems as if Loy is indifferent to what her audience feels about her.

The final photograph that helped to create Loy's persona was taken in 1957. Unlike the other photographs, Loy gazes directly though with hooded eyes at the camera as if she has nothing to hide.



Figure 16: Mina Loy in 1957, Photo by Jonathan Williams



Figure 17: Loy's Eyes Cropped for the Cover of *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*

In 1958, Loy cropped Figure 16 to focus on her eyes and used Figure 17 for the cover of her new collection, *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*. It is interesting that in most posed photos Loy averts her gaze from the camera, and in this photo, she not only looks directly at the camera, she focuses all of the attention on her eyes. Her eyes are hooded in the picture, creating the effect of both looking and hiding. In spite of the direct gaze, the cropping reinforces that persona by emphasizing, once again, the distance between viewer and subject. By just showing her eyes, Loy creates the same kind of mystery that occurs when viewing her other photographs. Her eyes become much like the cigarette, the sculpture and the earring of the earlier photographs—props to distract the viewer and to evoke a voyeuristic impulse to see more. Loy’s professionally posed photographs create a distinct persona that is reinforced by her publishers and biographers. No one, after all, chooses to put a spontaneous photograph of Loy on the cover of his or her book. Both Roger Conover and Carolyn Burke choose a photograph that has Loy looking away from the camera and shrouded in artistic mystery.⁶ This choice indicates their desire to buttress Loy’s existing persona rather than questioning the myths that have defined her as an author.

Later in her career, Loy may have realized the perspective that these photographs created. In a letter written to Jonathan Williams, the publisher of *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*, in June of 1959, Loy responds to the lack of positive reviews of her work and Williams’s apparent disappointment:

I was given some devastating remarks from the *New York Times*—but about my pictures only, I think. . . . How carefully you have counted the

reasons for disliking a poet. My advice to you, dear friend—the best way to conquer is to wear as helmet: *a smile*. You *do* let yourself look too severe—I don't agree that there is no winning in this country. Change from *Persona Non Grata* to PERSONA GOOD GRINNER—now don't hate me!!! I hope you will visit here again *soon*. And we can discuss the right design for your face-armor. Now don't let this seem merely an encouragement to relax—it is entirely for friendliness between poetry and the world. (xiv)

Loy, then, explicitly admits the efficacy of “face-armor,” and, with the help of props and this armor, she successfully created a strong persona to reinforce her incognito. She manipulated the power of the publicity photograph to her own aesthetic ends, presenting herself as inaccessible and even marginal and beginning the cycle of perpetual rediscovery.

“The Effectual Marriage”: Loy's Poetic Invention

Loy's constructed persona is further reflected in her poetry. In the poem “The Effectual Marriage, or, The Insipid Marriage of Gina and Miovanni,” written in 1915, Loy does little to disguise *who* the poem is about, but does a lot to mask *what* the poem is about. The poem is ostensibly about Loy's love affair with Giovanni Papini. Hiding herself and her lover in plain view, she merely switches the letters of their first names. At the beginning of the poem, Loy describes Gina and Miovanni:

Gina and Miovanni who they were God knows
 They knew it was important to them

This being of who they were

They were themselves

Corporeally transcendently consecutively
 conjunctively and they were quite complete. (Loy 36)

This description makes it seem as if both characters are happy and whole; that is, both Gina and Miovanni are living their lives to its fullest and being who they are in every way. The title indicates, however, that the tone of this passage is ironic. From the beginning, readers must question the characterizations of Gina and Miovanni. Loy goes on to describe Gina more specifically: “Gina was a woman/Who wanted everything/To be everything in woman/Everything everyway at once/ Diurnally variegated” (Loy 38). Here Loy is ostensibly writing about herself—she wants to be everything, which can account for her varied interests. More specifically, she wants “to be everything in woman” which is a bit more perplexing. This phrase could mean that Gina wants to encompass everything that is expected of her as a woman.

Giovanni Papini was a futurist, and, like most futurists, had a narrowly misogynist view of the role of women. Loy limits what she can be by confining it to just everything a woman can be. Loy further describes Gina, and Gina’s writing: “When she was lazy/She wrote a poem on the milk bill/The first strophe Good morning/The second Good Night/Something not too difficult to/Learn by heart” (Loy 39). The poem Gina creates here is doggerel. Gina must find a way to write, and when she writes it cannot be too difficult lest she offend the sensibilities of Miovanni. These lines comment on Loy’s reception as a poet. She realizes the reaction people have to the difficulty of her poems,

understanding that they wish she would use a much simpler form and more acceptable content than the form and content she commonly uses in her poetry. In this passage she parodies herself by writing the simplest poem possible: “Good Morning, Good Night.” Loy goes on further to question the complicated images in her poetry, cataloguing the ordinary things in Gina’s world:

The scrubbed smell of the white-wood table
 Greasy cleanliness of the chopper board
 The coloured vegetables
 Intuited quality of flour
 Crickly sparks of straw-fanned charcoal
 Ranged themselves among her audacious happinesses
 Pet simplicities of her Universe
 Where circles were only round
 Having no vices. (39)

All of the items described above are supposed to be just what they appear to be—ordinary objects. Loy points out the simplicities of Gina’s life and the absence of depth in all the objects in her house. There is no symbolism in the circle for Gina; rather, it is “only round.” This passage betrays nostalgia for simplicity—the simplicity of housework, the simplicity of a circle, and the simplicity of a life without symbols. Immediately after this very revealing passage, however, Loy discounts everything she has claimed in the poem: “This narrative halted when I learned that the house which inspired it was the home of a mad woman” (39). By claiming that Gina is a mad

woman, Loy makes it clear that nothing said of Gina in the poem can be taken at face value. This final line directs the readers' attention away from any revealing moments the poem might expose by questioning the validity of Gina's approach.

Ezra Pound valued this poem as one of Loy's best. He published parts of it in two different anthologies, but retitled it "Ineffectual Marriage."⁷ By taking away the original title, Pound changes the meaning of the poem significantly. Loy's title of "The Effectual Marriage" functions both literally and ironically. She means the title literally in that the situation she describes in the poem *does* make an "Effectual Marriage"—Gina does everything Miovanni wants her to do and appears to be happy. The opposite can also be said of the title—Loy is using the title to indicate how ineffectual the marriage is. When Pound changed the title, he removed the nuance along with this masking effect. Pound also changed the poem significantly by excerpting it when he anthologized it. The excerpt that he published is extremely truncated—25 lines are retained from the original 122 lines. He removes the subtitle and much of Loy's critique of marriage:

So here we might dispense with her
 Gina being a female
 But she was more than that
 Being an incipience a correlative
 An instigation to the reaction of man
 From the palpable to the transcendent
 Mollescent irritant of his fantasy

Gina had her use Being useful
 Contentedly conscious
 She flowered in Empyrean
 From which no well-mated woman ever returns

 Sundays a warm light in the parlor
 From the gritty road on the white wall
 anybody could see it
 Shimmered a composite effigy
 Madonna crinolined a man
 hidden beneath her hoop.

What had Miovanni made of his ego
 In his library
 What had Gina wondered among the pots and pans
 One never asked the other. (qtd. in Scott 248)

Pound chose to pare down Loy's poem in much the same way he cut down *The Waste Land*, creating a new poem in the process. Pound's version of the poem was later published in *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, an anthology that highlights the gender issues of modernism. It is interesting that Carolyn Burke, the editor of the Loy section, chose a poem that is so clearly altered by Pound. In her introduction, Burke argues that we need to rediscover Loy and that the selections in the

anthology provide a starting point for new readers. But it is possible that her introduction is to a poem that is more Pound's than Loy's and that excises the gendered meditation on marriage.

One of the most significant deletions in Pound's anthologized version of the poem is the removal of the final line questioning Gina's sanity. Pound also excerpts a section of the poem that barely focuses on Miovanni and treats Gina very abstractly. Few of the intriguing and interesting images remain, such as Gina writing doggerel or Miovanni absurdly responding "Pooh" in response to Gina's calling him to supper. Pound also has changed the stanzas and excerpted only parts of stanzas, often leaving off the last line or two. Pound, thus, has produced his own Loy persona, less complex and more straightforward than Loy's poetic "face armour."

"Once Upon a Time": Loy's Ambivalent *Love Songs to Joannes*

What could be considered Loy's most famous persona surfaces in the Loy's most widely recognized series of poems, *Love Songs to Joannes*. An article on Loy would just not be an article on Loy without quoting the opening poem of the series:

Spawn of Fantasies

Silting the appraisable

Pig Cupid his rosy snout

Rooting erotic garbage

"Once upon a time"

Pulls a weed white star-topped

Among wild oats sown in mucous-membrane (53)

So much attention is given to the shocking diction of Loy's opening gambit and to carefully chosen shocking lines from later in the poem, such as "the skin-sack/In which a wanton duality/Packed," that much of the poetry is cast aside and ignored (53). Loy's persona here, the shocking new modern woman poet, has definitely done its job. This is not to say that nothing significant has been said about the opening or about the *Love Songs* in general, but focusing on these few lines definitely skews perspectives of the poems.⁸ The general consensus about these lines is that Loy is smashing conventions of love poetry by juxtaposing conventional love imagery with what can only be called dirty or grimy imagery. "Pig Cupid's" "rosy snout," for example, sullies the image of the rose that is so prevalent in love poetry. Thus, Loy creates her persona here through the use of juxtaposition, colliding oppositional images to destroy conventions.

But less immediately outrageous passages in the poetry belie the prevalent interpretation of the poems. Song VI, for example, does not shock or question love conventions in the way much of Loy's colliding images do:

I know the Wire-Puller intimately
 And if it were not for the people
 On whom you keep one eye
 You could look straight at me
 And Time would be set back (55)

These lines betray a certain nostalgia for the love conventions that Loy has smashed; there is a sense of the possibility of connection here between the speaker and her lover that does not surface in the more shocking passages. Loy distracts us with the

juxtaposed collisions of imagery from seeing her complicity in the traditions of love poetry. That she does desire connection is evident in this passage, but it also clear that she realizes that this kind of connection becomes impossible in that it is both constructed by convention and shattered by her own critique of that convention. Loy, then, is much more ambivalent about the conventions she is questioning in the *Love Songs*, but her persona courts shock and encourages her readers to focus only on the destruction of conventions and not on the hidden hope for connection.

Loy's *Love Songs* also betray a fear of that connection. Most critics read Loy's poetry ironically;⁹ I would like to argue that this is exactly Loy's intention (or at least the intention indicated by her persona), and I would like to suggest that it may be profitable to also read Loy's poetry against the grain and without irony. Later in the *Love Songs*, Loy suggests some strategies for keeping a boundary between two lovers:

Let us be very jealous

Very suspicious

Very conservative

Very cruel

Or we might make an end of the jostling of aspirations

Disorb inviolate egos (58)

Here it appears Loy is espousing protecting the self from being lost in someone else, echoing her authorial persona, but the next lines contradict her argument:

Where two or three are welded together

They shall become god

 Oh that's right
 Keep away from me Please give me a push
 Don't let me understand you Don't realize me
 Or we might tumble together
 Depersonalized
 Identical
 Into the terrific Nirvana
 Me you—you—me (58)

This passage contradicts itself as it both orders the reader to create distance between him or herself and the speaker and it demonstrates a yearning for the “terrific Nirvana.” This poem has been thought to demonstrate the inability to have a self in the modern world, but I would argue that the poem is actually much more ambivalent about the loss of the self.¹⁰ There seems to be a desire both to keep the self by denying someone else and to lose the self in a lover. This ambivalence is especially reflected in the partially chiasmic last phrase of this passage: “Me you—you—me” which almost suggests the conflation of reader and speaker into one. The absence of a dash between the first two words suggests the inability to connect—the inability to approach a relationship from common ground.¹¹ Near the end of the *Love Songs*, Loy produces the perfect description of what she is doing both in her poetry and with her persona: “Let them clash together/From their incognitoes/In seismic orgasm” (66). In these poems, Loy’s words “clash together” to create her “incognito” status, disguising some nostalgia and yearning

that is revealed when we look beyond the “clash” of words and the “seismic orgasm” caused by the juxtaposition of disparate images.

An Apology: Loy as Genius

Loy creates a different kind of persona for herself in one of her most well-known poems, “Apology of Genius.” This poem creates a dichotomy between the genius and the ordinary, aligning her poetic persona with the geniuses. Loy also addresses the ordinary in the poem, pointing out how one can never understand what it means to be genius:

Our wills are formed
by curious disciplines
beyond your laws

You may give birth to us
or marry us
the chances of your flesh
are not our destiny— (77)

Loy once again creates a distance between herself and her reader by creating an inaccessible persona. She makes the reader feel as if there is no possibility of being a genius. In addition to ostracizing the reader by making him or her feel ordinary, Loy also excludes the reader with her complex diction in this poem. It takes about three readings even to begin to make sense of this poem. After a short time with her poetry most readers will begin to see the need for a dictionary to understand much of her poetry, and

this poem requires not only a dictionary but also a playful sense of definition. In this poem, Loy creates a dichotomy between herself and her reader by speaking directly to the reader as “you,” making the reader feel as if he or she is not part of her privileged club. This dichotomy gives the reader a reason to turn away from what Loy is saying in the poem. One instant reaction could be to think Loy is insulting her reader, and if the reader feels insulted, he or she may stop reading altogether or read through an antagonistic lens. Creating an antagonist of her reader is an unusual move for a poet but one carefully designed to perpetuate her incognita, her privacy.

Loy and Aging: The Fear of Losing the Mask

In the poem, “An Aged Woman,” Loy creates yet another persona for her reader; however, in this poem, written late in her life, she seems to shed the multiple masks she created earlier in her career. She looks back to the past, forward to the future, and even looks at the present and finds nothing for herself:

The past has come apart
 events are vagueing
 the future is inexplotable

 the present pain.

Not even pain has that precision
 with which it struck in youth-time

More like moth
eroding internal organs
hanging or falling down
in a spoiled closet

Does your mirror Bedevil you
or is it the impossible
possible to senility
enabling the erstwhile agile
narrow silhouette of self
to hold in huge reserve
this excessive incognito
of a Bulbous stranger
only to be exorcised by death

Dilation has entirely eliminated
your long reality.

Mina Loy

July 12th

1984 (145)

This poem is ostensibly about the feelings of a woman grown old who does not recognize herself in the mirror. Loy appears to be finally shedding the masks she had worn for so long. She recognizes the effect the long years have had on her ability to hide herself. That the word “incognito” appears in the poem demonstrates Loy’s thoughts about maintaining her personas. But Loy has, once again, created a new persona for herself even while she is questioning her old personas. She has created the persona of the old woman, who is a bit senile and even predicts her own death (she was off by about 20 years).¹² This poem, more than any of the other poems I have discussed, highlights the tension Loy felt between her public and private selves. She betrays a certain exhaustion with keeping up appearances, but then creates another persona immediately to disguise this exhaustion.

The use of the word “dilation” also reveals Loy’s feelings about her long career as an incognito poet. “Dilation” recalls both her famous “Parturition” and also the birthing and maintenance of her persona which like physical labor, induced pain and exhaustion. The word also means to have expanded attention or to be discussed at length; Loy was quite conscious of how critics were treating her and how she was received by the reading public itself. This dilation of attention and interpretation has affected Loy so much that later in her life she is still feeling the effects. That she says that “dilation” has ended her “reality” is also telling in that so much attention was paid to her persona that she feels as if her own reality was never even in question. The word “dilation” can also be related to photography, the source of one of Loy’s favorite metaphors. When a picture is taken, the shutter of the camera momentarily dilates;

Loy's poems are like the shutter on a camera, momentarily letting in light in order to reveal small aspects of her persona. Thus, her poems are like snapshots of the persona she created.

Manifestos: Loy's Outlandish Prose

In addition to writing poetry, Loy also wrote quite a few essays, especially in the earlier periods of her writing. One of her most famous pieces, "Aphorisms on Futurism," creates yet another persona for Loy's readers to explore. The title itself connects Loy to a movement that many critics still associate with her.¹³ The persona created by Loy in "Aphorisms" shocks the reader with bravado and intense imagery:

TO your blushing we shout the obscenities, we scream the blasphemies,
that you,

being weak, whisper alone in the dark.

THEY are empty except of your shame.

AND so these sounds shall dissolve back to their innate senselessness.

THUS shall evolve the language of the Future.

THROUGH derision of Humanity as it appears—

TO arrive at respect for man as he shall be—

ACCEPT the tremendous truth of Futurism

Leaving all those

--Knick-knacks.-- (152)

The superior tone of this essay is quite different from the tone of much of Loy's poetry. The confidence these aphorisms exude belies the persona that is revealed in her papers.

It is almost as if Loy is reacting to her own insecurities (i.e., “being weak” and “blushing”) by talking so loud that her readers won’t notice her.

Loy’s “Feminist Manifesto” uses many of the same techniques as “Aphorisms on Futurism;” once again, she tries to shock and outrage her readers with outlandish prose. Loy also uses bold typography and varies the size of her font, which, while a signature effect of Futurist writing would also seem to be an attempt to draw readers’ attention, but it actually creates another disguise because readers will focus more on the unusual typography than on her content:

Leave off looking to men to find out what you are **not**—seek

within yourselves to find out what you **are**

As conditions are at present constituted—you have the choice

between **Parasitism, & Prostitution**

--or Negation. (154)

Here, Loy makes the assertion that as long as women rely too heavily on men, they only have three choices: wife, whore, or nothing. It is interesting that she complicates the binary of wife vs. whore by adding “negation.” While the assertion Loy makes here has now become almost commonplace, for her to write it in the earlier part of the twentieth century places her in the vanguard. In her “Feminist Manifesto,” she provides solutions for many of the most well-known feminist issues; however, her solutions are a bit more radical than usual:

the first self-enforced law for the female sex, as a protection against the man made bogey of virtue—which is the principal instrument of her subjection, would be the unconditional surgical destruction of virginity through-out the female population at puberty-- (154-55)

This solution recalls Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"; once a reader encounters this satiric suggestion, everything else Loy writes is pushed to the background, creating another guise for Loy to hide behind.

Twitchell-Waas demonstrates how Loy participated in mask-making almost constantly, arguing that her "Feminist Manifesto" demands that women maintain their masks in order to gain more control:

We might recall Loy's remark in the "Feminist Manifesto" that "woman must retain her fragility of appearance" (271), presumably as a mask behind which her strengths can operate all the more effectively. In this sense, a number of the *Love Songs* are such masks, seeming to pose as expressions of the woman's sense of pain and betrayal, yet on closer inspection dissolving into a play of ironies which mock the sentimental trappings of romantic love. (Twitchell-Waas 120)

Thus, Twitchell-Waas argues that Loy was presenting a certain face to the world in order to hide her true strengths; however, Loy's attempts and success in making and maintaining her multiple personas were much more complicated.

In another essay, entitled "Auto-Facial-Reconstruction," Loy betrays her conflicted feelings about the face she presents to the world. This essay discusses how

the youthful face represents someone's true personality. Loy argues, iconoclastically, that growing old should not be done gracefully; rather, people should do everything they can to maintain their youth:

The face is our most potent symbol of personality.

The adolescent has facial contours in harmony with the conditions of his soul. Day by day the new interests and activities of modern life are prolonging the youth of our souls, and day by day, we are becoming more aware of the necessity for our faces to express that youthfulness, for the sake of psychic logic. Different systems of beauty culture have compromised with our inherent right, not only to "be ourselves" but to "look like ourselves", by producing a facial contour in middle age, which does duty as a "well preserved appearance." This preservation of partially distorted muscles, is, at best, merely a pleasing parody of youth. That subtle element of the ludicrous inherent in facial transformation by time, is the signpost of discouragement pointing along the path of the evolution of personality. For to what end is our experience of life, if deprived of a fitting aesthetic revelation in our faces? (165)

Loy argues that without physical and youthful beauty, there is really no point in living. She recognizes that the face people present to the world is almost always immediately associated with the personality. She philosophizes about what it means to "be ourselves" and "look like ourselves" when we start aging. The idea of "look[ing] like ourselves" is intriguing. People do not always know what they look like. In fact, people

go about their day being looked at by other people more often than they look at themselves. What we imagine as ourselves could be quite different from what other people see in us. A person could have quite a few facial expressions that he or she does not realize he or she makes. While Loy argues that in order to “be ourselves” we must “look like ourselves,” it is impossible to know what face we actually do present to the world. Loy struggled with this problem throughout her life and tried to fix it by presenting as many faces to the world as she could.

Loy’s Papers and Privacy

Throughout Mina Loy’s unpublished works, there is a preoccupation with privacy. Several times in her notes and drafts, Loy writes some variation of the phrase: “Truth remains the one unrevealable scandal” (Loy Papers). At another point in her papers, on the draft of one of her novels, Loy is once again focused on what remains “unrevealable”: “a roll of negative film—already printed but unrevealable until it has found a camera to project it—and a surface to throw it upon” (Loy Papers Note Box 1, Folder 10). This fixation with something that cannot be seen indicates her own feelings about her private self and what she wants to reveal to the reading public. She realizes that it is impossible to reveal the truth about herself because “truth” is an impossible standard. By interrogating the idea of truth, Loy indicates her willingness to adopt different masks in order to play with the idea of authenticity.¹⁴ Her comments about film also highlight her feelings about the series of personas she presented to the world. She knows that she is already “printed” upon by the impressions her life has created, but she needs a camera (her poetry) and a surface (the reading public). That her persona is

filtered through both her poetry and readers' reactions to her poetry creates additional veils to protect her private self.

There is also a preoccupation in Loy's unpublished papers with writing prose that is not reflected in what she published in her lifetime. In the draft for "Ladies in the Aviary," one of Loy's attempted novels, she describes the process of writing the book: "These chapters come in as attempts of a woman constantly interrupted to begin a book she is too shy to write" (Loy Papers, Ladies in an Aviary pg. 1). It would probably be a big surprise to most of Loy's readers that she was shy about writing anything given the subject matter of her poetry. Loy's own words and inaction when it came to publishing any of her novels belie the audacious personas she created with the complicity of her critics.

Loy's papers also reveal her desire to write a longer prose work. In the "Ethics and Hygiene of Nightmare," a chapter from a longer work, Loy made a note that "to make 800 pages book would be about 131/2 times as long as part this far" (Loy Papers "Ethics and Hygiene of Nightmare" 59). Her goal was obviously to write a book on the scale of a novel like *Ulysses*. She never did entirely complete the book, but it is intriguing that someone who has become known almost solely for her poetry aspired to be a novelist.

In his introduction to the novel, *Insel*, Roger Conover argues that Loy did not want to be labeled a "novelist":

Mina Loy would be the last to call herself a novelist, or to answer, for that matter, to any of the names which refer to producers of the things she

made—plays, poems, hats, manifestos, paintings, collages, essays, sculptures, inventions, crafts, fashions, lampshades, drapes, designs, dresses. She did so with a self-possessed certainty, oblivious to the notion of audience and unconcerned about what impact these activities might have on the building of a reputation, or a career: “I leave that to my post-mortem examination.” (9-10)

He argues, then, that Loy wrote her numerous unpublished novels and participated in other creative activities not for the sake of her reputation, but for the sake of her own edification. The notes written on her papers, however, belie this characterization of Loy as someone who did not care how people saw her. She wanted to write novels of a specific length indicating a specific aesthetic ambition for scale. In writing her novels, she was creating yet another persona to present to the reading public, but, unlike her other personas, this mask was a bit thinner.

Insel: Loy’s Prose Persona

Insel, released after her death, is Loy’s only published novel. The novel tells the story of the artist, Insel, and his friendship with the narrator, who closely resembles Loy. The narrator starts out wanting to write a biography of Insel, but this desire dwindles as the book progresses. Insel, based on the lesser known painter of Loy’s acquaintance, Richard Oelze, radiates an intriguing—yet slightly disgusting—quality. The narrator is fascinated by Insel’s aura, becoming obsessed with him and his abject lifestyle. Throughout the novel, the narrator waivers between disgust and love for Insel. Loy plays with the difference between the personas people present to the world and their self-

image in the novel. Quite often, she is suggesting that there may be nothing beneath the face that a person presents to the world. At one point, the narrator is discussing Insel's hideous appearance; Insel tells her that he looks horrible naked, and her reply is: "Your face is naked and you walk about with it" (*Insel* 53). As was the case in "Auto-Facial-Reconstruction," Loy implies that a person's face can betray or mask personality. The narrator remarks:

I've never really seen you. You always give me the impression that you are *not there*. Sometimes you have no inside; sometimes no outside, and never enough of anything to entirely materialize. Like a quicksand, when one looks at you whatever one gets a glimpse of you immediately rush up from your own depths to snatch. Your way of being alive is a sequence of disappearances. You're so afraid of actuality. (*Insel* 54)

Here, Loy provides her readers with a clue to decipher her intricate web of personas; however, this clue is a bit misleading since Loy never provided an actual path to her "true" self, since she believed that there was no such thing.

Rediscovery and Its Aims: Some Questions

Loy's manipulation of her persona has created a critical aura around her that puts her in the position of being constantly rediscovered.¹⁵ Sometimes, there is a reason why an author has stayed on the margins so long, and by placing him or her at the center of text, critics remove a crucial aspect of the author's persona. Perhaps some authors create a public persona that is intended to marginalize rather than center his or her work. By ignoring the author's attempts to marginalize him or herself, critics paradoxically

undermine the writer's authority. The act of rediscovery or liberation from the margins takes away the very reason that the author had for using a new, unusual style or shocking content. Remove Loy from the margins, and we alter the purpose of her work.¹⁶

Why do we need to rediscover the author? Foucault argues that without the "author function," we do not know how to read a text or where to place a text in our organizational understanding of the world (118). The impulse to rediscover an author is based on this need to make sense of and categorize the world. When a critic is embroiled in a rediscovery effort, he or she becomes very invested in the rediscovered author's life. A certain expectation ensues, and the critic can be disappointed if the author does not live up to his or her expectations. Rediscovery, then, is almost always both personal and political.

Like the words written in the margin of a book, marginal authors occupy a special, ephemeral place that can affect interpretations of their work. Marginalia is fleeting because it only occupies one copy of a book, making it personal and difficult to uncover. Marginal authors occupy a similar position--a position that they may or may not have chosen--in which they are only discoverable in certain situations and are constantly changing so that the critic finds him or her difficult to pin down. This ephemeral nature makes it easy for the author to disappear, while it also makes the author's persona malleable. When an author creates a persona that is not meant to last, the process of rediscovery becomes all the more complicated. It is unclear if it is even possible to rediscover an author without affecting his or her persona. Additionally, by being ephemeral, marginal authors are more subject to manipulation by outside forces

than canonical authors, such as critics. Much like the idea in anthropology where the observed is always affected by the observer and vice versa, the act of rediscovering automatically creates a distinctly different persona than existed before. Throughout the years since Loy began publishing, she has often been subject to these critical impulses, which have affected Loy's reception as a poet and as an author.

What the Critics Said: Presentations of Loy

In his introduction to his first collection of Loy's work, *The Last Lunar Baedeker*, Roger Conover recognizes Loy's difficult status even as he is seduced into reinforcing it. He begins his introduction with a dedication to Loy that demonstrates a tension between his desire to define her and his knowledge of her dislike of definition:

This book is for Mina Loy. Deprecatory of romantic gestures and steeled against salutes, she didn't wait for it. She was against the validation of art by the veneration of books. When she wrote something, it was as much to mark silence as to fill the page. This book is not a challenge to her final speechlessness, but an ear to it. (xv)

Conover here recognizes the complexity of Loy's self-presentation, but he consciously romanticizes it at the same time. He, like many of Loy's critics, believes he can be the one to listen to her. Conover further recognizes Loy's wish to remain invisible and hidden, quoting her thoughts on her critical reception "But, why do you waste your time on these thoughts of mine? I was never a poet" (xv), yet he tries to create a space for Loy within the modernist canon. Conover is also unable to recognize any equivocating in Loy. I would suggest that by making comments such as the one quoted above, it is

clear that Loy is courting her status as unknown at the same time that she is betraying a desire for interest. In the introduction, he also creates a certain image of Loy: the uneducated, daring, and shocking poet that he is to reinforce in his later collection of her poetry, *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*.

Loy has gone through numerous phases of rediscovery, going in and out of fashion every decade or so. The back of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* lists reactions and comments from people like William Carlos Williams, Louis Zukofsky, and Hugh Kenner to Loy's writing from its inception to the present time. These comments are chosen to demonstrate Loy's difficulty in becoming recognized as a poet throughout her career and after her death. Almost all of the comments query the idea of her being unknown, but each of the comments are from different years, suggesting that Loy was never really lost as a poet. The back cover begins with a comment by Yvor Winters from 1926,¹⁷ and ends with a comment by Barbara Guest written in 1996. The comment from Winters's review, written while Loy was still well-known and still writing indicated Winters's ambivalence about Loy's poetry:

She attacked the dirty commonplace with the doggedness of a weight-lifter . . . Using an unexciting method, and writing of the drabest of material, she has written seven or eight of the most brilliant and unshakably solid satirical poems of our time, and at least two non-satirical pieces that possess for me a beauty that is unspeakably moving and profound (*LLB* back cover)

This blurb actually misrepresents what Winters said in his review, which was quite negative. To contextual this quotation, it is necessary to look at more of Winters's commentary:

If she has not actually conquered the clumsiness which one can scarcely help feeling in her writings, she has, from time to time, overcome it; and these occasional advantages have resulted in momentous poems. Or perhaps it is not clumsiness, but the inherently unyielding quality of her material that causes this embarrassment. She moved like one walking through granite instead of air, and when she achieves a moment of beauty it strikes one cold. (496)

Winters seems to have been possessed by the spirit of T. S. Eliot here, making backhanded compliments much as Eliot did with Djuna Barnes' work. That Conover carefully chose what to include from Winters's review indicates how he fashioned his own Loy persona in the way he presented her work to the world.

To return to the back cover of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*: in 1944, Kenneth Rexroth was already noting Loy's disappearance from the poetry world:

At one time it was common to couple the names of Mina Loy and Marianne Moore. Pound treated them as equals . . . But [Loy's] material is self-evidently more important than [Moore's] . . . It is hard to say why she has been ignored. Perhaps it is due to her extreme exceptionalism. Mr Laughlin, the "Five Young Poets" are still Eliot, Stevens, Williams, Moore, Loy—get busy. (back cover)

This quotation, which is taken from introductory material of the earlier publication *Lunar Baedeker and Time Tables*, is also significant for what has been left out. I quote part of the passage below:

At one time it was common to couple the names of Mina Loy and Marianne Moore. Pound treated them as equals, said they both wrote something called logopoeia. Today only one visible ground of this equation remains. They are moderately difficult for the careless reader. Mina Loy is inferior in technical mastery. Some turns of phrase can be accounted for only as lapses in skill. Her obscurity is often willful and skittish. Miss Moore's is due to involuted sensibility. Sometimes Mina Loy is obscure because direct statement would be unprintable, or unmailable. Metrically it is sometimes difficult to discover what effects she was seeking, if any. But her material is self evidently more important than Miss Moore's, and treated with great earnestness, never with Miss Moore's dehydrated levity. (iv)

Once again, Conover has left out some of the more critical lines of the review. He picks and chooses, eliminating numerous lines. He culls the review to find the positive statements and includes those in the blurb. Conover may, of course, have been concerned with space in this instance; there was, after all, only a limited amount of space available on the back cover for the blurbs, but he so severely cuts up this passage that it is clear that he is creating a specific argument for Loy's rediscovery and privileging praise of her, necessarily skewing what these critics said.

The next two blurbs on the back cover of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* come from 1957. Louis Zukofsky comments on Loy as a poet from the 1920s: “Miss Loy heard of last in the 1920s remains a poet more than thirty years later—which is the test of a poet” (back cover). In the same year, Henry Miller recognizes her ability to get beyond the surface in her poetry: “an interplanetary voice whose subtle vibrations only faintly pierce our smug-laden atmosphere” (back cover). Both of these quotations are taken from the back cover of the earlier text *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*. Conover thus repeats blurbs here in order to shore up Loy’s reputation. The back of this book includes three blurbs that Conover chose not to include but that also create a certain perspective of Loy as a poet. Unlike the blurbs on the back of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker*, these blurbs seem to have been solicited specifically for inclusion in *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*. Edward Dahlberg praises her: “In a day when rubbish is being canonized it is an immense delight to hear that Mina Loy’s Poems are to find the sanctuary at last in a book. H.D., Mina Loy, Mary Butts, Marsden Hartley, Emanuel Carnevali, and F.S. Flint were my tutelary Muses and woodland Seers” (back cover, *LB & TT*). Walter Lowenfels applauds her: “She broke the sound barrier with words long before the Dog Star did, and still gives that feeling of panic that hits you when a poem arrives” (back cover *LB & TT*). Alfred Kreymborg remembers her with kindness and nostalgia:

I am glad to learn that you are publishing a book of poems by Mina Loy. This is news of the utmost importance. I still consider her one of our best poets and one of the most original. And had the honor of introducing poems of hers in the first number of my magazine, “OTHERS” back in

1915. The four numbers were simply entitled “LOVE POEMS,” and made a deep impression for their bold images, forthright character and, in the worst sense, their shocking impact on people with sensitive or sentimental nerves. Those days are by no means over with me. They come alive again and again against a background beneath the foreground of the Imagist period. And so I wish the beautiful Mina the place she deserves via her new Volume. (back cover *LB & TT*)

Again, Conover probably left these out because of space concerns, but it is interesting to look at what he chose to include on the back cover of his later collection. He includes Miller and Zukofsky, yet does not include Dahlberg, Lowenfels, or Kreymborg. Perhaps he chose the more well-known of authors for his blurbs, or perhaps he didn't like what was said in the blurb. It is also interesting to note that the earlier collection follows the same pattern as the later, collecting blurbs that seek to create a definite persona for Loy—that of the rediscovered modernist woman author. Loy may have had some involvement in the creation of this persona as she was still alive at the time this collection was published. She chose the picture of her cropped eyes that appears on the back cover, so she certainly had some involvement in her presentation here.

Another of the blurbs for the back of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* was taken from *Lunar Baedeker and Time-Tables*, but this time it was taken from William Carlos Williams's introduction to the earlier work rather than from the back of the book:

Mina Loy was endowed from birth with a first-rate intelligence and a

sensibility which has plagued her all her life facing a shoddy world. When she has put a word down on paper it is clean; that forces her fellows to shy away from it because they are not clean and will be contaminated by her cleanliness. Therefore she has not been a successful writer and couldn't care less. But it has hurt her chances of being known . . . (back cover)

Williams's entire introduction repeats the glowing admiration of this excerpt, but, once again, it is interesting to notice what Conover includes. The phrase, "it has hurt her chances of being known" makes it clear that Loy has faded into obscurity. The rest of the introduction does not refer to her status as unknown; rather, it addresses her poetry. That Conover did not include a blurb that discussed her poetry indicates his desire to place Loy in a particular context, making an argument with his blurbs that Loy should be rediscovered rather than using blurbs to compliment her poetry.

The final two blurbs on the back cover of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* repeat this impulse. In 1982, Kenner argues that "her utter absence from all canonical lists is one of modern literary history's most perplexing data" (back cover). Finally, in 1996, Guest once again calls for Loy's resurrection: "Today we should welcome and raise Loy from neglect . . . Her poems, neglected by poets even of her own era, are a rare declaration of the visible seen from within an original spirit" (back cover). This timeline of reactions creates a puzzling contradiction: with the exception of Winters, who was writing during Loy's most prolific publication period, all of these blurbs call for a rediscovery of Loy's work. As early as 1944, when she was still writing, critics were claiming that she had

disappeared. It seems as if Loy published and immediately became the kind of writer that critics defend and place in a specific position—the unknown author with the wonderful talent that has been cruelly neglected. However, the fact that all of these authors were writing about her belies this notion. The choice of blurbs for the back cover of the book creates an image of Loy as an author unappreciated since the beginning of her career. The back cover could almost be entitled: “In Defense of Loy.” Thus, she has become an interesting paradox: a known unknown writer. If she loses her unknown nature, she loses some of her inscrutability, which would cause her to become less intriguing as a writer. This paradoxical nature has kept her stuck in a stage where most critics only want to rediscover and defend her work rather than interpret her poetry—a stage Loy purposely set out to occupy. Loy realized that her persona would be most protected if she was outside the center. Critics would not be quite as interested in who she was if she did not call attention to herself by trying to occupy the center that high modernist authors, such as Eliot and Pound, occupied.

The jacket copy of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* also creates a skewed view of Loy. As it quotes a oft-repeated Ezra Pound comment, the jacket copy contributes to the back cover’s “Defense of Loy,” placing Loy in a marginal position at the same time it seeks to centralize her:

In 1921 Ezra Pound wrote to Marianne Moore: “Also, entre nooz, is there anyone

in America except you, Bill [William Carlos Williams] and Mina who

can write anything of interest in verse?” There was a time when it was

common to couple Mina Loy's name with that of W.C. Williams or Marianne Moore: her advanced contemporaries considered her a literary and artistic genius—a descendant of Sappho by way of Emily Dickinson. But the public was scandalized by her work, and some critics openly scorned it. (jacket copy)

By connecting Loy with Moore and Williams, the jacket copy seeks to legitimize Loy. The jacket copy also participates in the same kind of skewing of perspective as the back cover. By saying it was her “advanced contemporaries” who recognized Loy's genius, the jacket copy can avoid discussing all the critics who found nothing to praise in Loy's work. The jacket copy's argument for recognizing Loy continues:

Mina Loy vanished from the literary scene just as dramatically as she arrived on it, and for most of the century her bold experiments have remained a well-kept secret. But in recent years Loy's work has been discovered by a new generation of poets and critics, and has begun to surface in revisionist anthologies. (jacket copy)

The reader, thus, is joining a club as he or she becomes privy to the “well-kept secret” of Loy's poetry. The jacket copy further argues that Conover has “rescued” Loy's poems from obscurity, while the back cover seems to belie this argument. Was Mina Loy ever obscure according to the way this text was presented? Instead of making an argument that Loy was obscure, the various ways the text presents itself indicates that Loy is only for a special audience—the people who understand her work, like her “advanced

contemporaries.” The jacket copy and back cover and even the introduction of *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* seek to make the reader who picks up the book feel as if he or she is part of a special group. I pick up the book, and I am urged to think that I must be like Williams, Moore, or Pound because I alone can appreciate Loy’s work. The very change in names from *The Last Lunar Baedeker* to *The Lost Lunar Baedeker* indicates the desire of Loy’s editor to place her in a certain position. By calling Loy’s work “lost,” Conover creates a situation in which every time someone picks up the book, Loy is rediscovered again. All of the textual apparatuses contribute to creating a kind of coterie reading group for Loy, and this is often reflected in articles about Loy.¹⁸ This exclusive grouping has contributed to her constant and perpetual status as a rediscovered author.

Carolyn Burke, who has written an excellent biography of Loy, has even been seduced by the persona Loy created. On her website, www.carolynburke.com, which is dedicated to discussion of the biography, Burke frames Loy in such a way that her persona is emphasized. When a reader encounters the website, he or she is immediately confronted with Loy’s mystery: “Quiz Time! Mina Loy is: a. The president of Bulgari in New York, b. The late poet who’s all the rage now in smart literary circles, c. Myrna Loy’s twin sister” (www.carolynburke.com). All three answers contribute to Loy’s mysterious persona, indicating she is a fashionista, an actress’s relative, or a cutting-edge poet. The “smart literary circles” is especially intriguing as this places Loy’s readers in a special group. The fact that Burke even has this quiz on her website indicates Loy’s persona is still working. While she has become increasingly more well-known, critics still take a defensive stance where she is concerned. This stance is further indicated by

the quotation that comes next on the website: “Mina Loy is one of those names a lot of people recognize without knowing exactly who she was. When she appears on lists of famous presences, it adds cachet, and we nod our heads knowingly; but most of us are hard pressed to say why” (Weber qtd. in www.carolynburke.com). Once again, Burke emphasizes Loy’s unknown status and the “cachet” Loy’s presence adds. Without being unknown, Loy would not have this “cachet.”

Even in articles or commentaries that claim Mina Loy no longer needs to be discovered, there is often an underlying anxiety about Loy’s legitimacy. It is not rare to find most articles opening with a comment or story about how the author had discovered Loy. One of my favorite openings, which has appeared in a few different places, is to discuss how people often confuse Mina Loy with Myrna Loy.¹⁹ Many articles often quote Pound on Loy, emphasizing Loy’s legitimacy in the 1910s and 1920s.²⁰ In doing so, the critic demonstrates his or her anxiety about Loy’s acceptance. Even Marisa Januzzi’s extensive and impressive bibliography of Loy betrays some feelings of anxiety about her status. She has tried to include every reference ever made to Loy in any work in order to build up a sizeable bibliography.²¹ Her opening gambit about the bibliography demonstrates her desire to give Loy legitimate, centered status:

If anyone tries to tell you that Mina Loy is obscure, you just point out the lit side of the moon here. Though reports of her remoteness have been (and continue to be) greatly exaggerated, the aesthetic, historical, and scholarly traces of her transit are everywhere aglow. Within northern and western limits, she circulated in almost every important literary milieu

and Anglophone avant-garde magazine of her day, and her work continues to surface in the most congenial of contexts. She is about as obscure as the electrical pulses emanating from your local library. (507)

Januzzi uses language here that elevates Loy's loss to the status of a rock star by repeating the familiar expression "reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated" with only a slight difference. Here, too, she talks about Loy's lack of obscurity in the most obscure ways, arguing that Loy is as "obscure as the electrical pulses emanating from your local library." By using something undetectable to demonstrate Loy's lack of obscurity, Januzzi performs the problem that Loy's tricky persona creates. After all, Januzzi could have used a much more concrete example, such as "Loy is about as obscure as Stephen King." Januzzi further demonstrates her anxiety about Loy's status as she recounts how some critics in the past "encountered academic objections to their subject, and some even sacrificed their careers in disgust" (507). Januzzi goes on to discuss the need for more criticism and delving into Loy's work, suggesting that much of the work has been introductory in nature, but she fails to recognize that the introductory work repeats itself as Loy perpetually is rediscovered. Januzzi's introduction itself repeats the work of introduction because the anxiety of Loy's status is never far from the minds of the critics.

Besides reflecting anxieties about Loy's status, many reviews and articles manipulate Mina Loy's personas to their own end. Often what we see in these reviews and articles is the author's own biases and influences represented in how they interpret Loy. Perhaps the most shocking of all the reviews that does this is Rob Sheffield's

“Mina Loy in Too Much Too Soon: Poetry/Celebrity/Sexuality/Modernity.” Calling Loy a “starfucker” and comparing her to the punk rock group the New York Dolls, Sheffield argues that Loy’s fame as a poet came before her actual poetry (630). He argues that Loy created personas that she presented to the world, but he gets so caught up in these personas that he becomes, for lack of a better word, “starfucked;” that is, just starstruck to the extreme:

Nobody seems to agree on who Mina Loy really is: a poet? A real poet? A great poet? A character? A feminist icon? A well-connected dilettante? A fashion plate? A nice little role model? A boho scare artist? A mad, bad, and dangerous-to know psycho drama-vampire lampshade pimp? But that’s a good thing, too. Mina Loy is enjoying such a vibrant afterlife because she’s all these things. The more light shines on her, the more there is to see. (630)

Thus, while Sheffield recognizes Loy’s manipulation of personas, he turns these personas towards his own ends, adding another persona to the list by making Loy into a punk rocker.

Other responses have been less outrageous, but just as damaging to Loy. From Louis Untermeyer’s description of Loy’s poetry as “nephritic” in 1919 to Yvor Winters’ comment in 1967 that “at least she knew when to stop,” she has been subjected to a belittling of her poetry that those who try to rediscover her often ignore (Untermeyer 311, Winters 320). Positive responses have done as much to create confusion as the negative responses. Marianne Moore described her poetry as “a sliced and cylindrical, complicated yet simple use of word” (121), using paradox and contradiction to describe

how Loy wrote. In 1971, Kenneth Rexroth argued that “Hundreds of people in little magazines and in the underground press who have never heard of her, and never will, write like her, but not nearly so well” (71). Loy has thus become a contradiction: a poet who knew when to stop who keeps getting rediscovered, an influence on people who will never hear of her, and a purveyor of “pure” pornography. Her poetry, like her persona, is complicated in its very simplicity, and it has worked.

Throughout her career as a poet, inventor, novelist, artist, etc., Loy created and destroyed numerous personas in order to hide behind. These personas, however, offered her more than a refuge: they created a way for her to present herself to the world so that she would always stay on the margins. In his introduction to *Insel*, Roger Conover argues that, since her rediscovery, Loy was often the subject of labeling attempts:

Today, partly because of the cult of reverse-chic which has attached itself to Jargon publications, and partly because of the desire on the part of certain critical establishments to “claim” her, it has become fashionable to introduce newcomers to her work with a justifying recommendation—Neglected Woman Poet—as if lack of awareness on the part of a wider public compliments the perspicacity of the discoverer, the one who is being invited, as if by password, to come inside. The tendency to legendize, rather than legitimize, Mina Loy’s career is understandable, given certain proclivities of her own. But it also puts the work at risk of being marginalized again. (12)

Much of what Conover says here is true; Loy has been the victim of critics who want to place her in a certain category. I would argue, however, that Loy needs to remain in the margins in order for her work to maintain its status as subversive. Furthermore, the desire to legitimize Loy's work will do her a disservice, since she consciously and carefully created personas that questioned the very notion of legitimacy. Loy did not court legitimacy in the way Barnes did and looking to make her work more centered and accepted will damage understanding of her work. Loy's status as marginal is productive and helps her work to occupy a position from which it can subvert ideas of modernist authorship. Keeping Loy's work on the margins, however, does create a difficult conundrum that accounts for her constant rediscovery. If we allow Loy her marginal space, we also create a coterie readership—an exclusive Loy club—that may exclude the very outsiders she was trying to speak to. This paradox raises the question of whether it is even possible for a marginal author to be inclusive; that is, does a marginal author who remains marginal only speak to an exclusive group or can he or she speak from the margins to others on the margins? Loy's complex creation of herself creates this paradox, and I would argue that it results in a questioning of both the center and the margins that is valuable.

One of Loy's later poems outlines her complicated relationship with her work and with her critics:

Leave me
 my final illiteracy
 of memory's languor

my preference
 to drift in lenient coma
 an older Ophelia
 on Lethe. (*Last*, xv)

She asks here to be forgotten at the same time she indicates a desire to be heard. The mere act of writing the poem indicates Loy's desire for an audience, yet she maintains her persona to the end, slipping into the margins by misdirecting the reader's gaze.

NOTES

¹ It is interesting that Loy does not use the feminine form of the word "incognita." As someone so well-versed in language, she definitely would have known the correct form. By using the word "incognito," Loy recognized the specifically gendered nature of authorship; she realizes she must take on a certain persona in order to succeed.

² In their introduction to *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet*, Maeera Shreiber and Keith Tuma discuss Loy's attraction to the word "incognito": "Incognito is one of Loy's words, or it's as much hers as any word can be a poet's own, and like other readers we have the sense that it is a word that meant very much to her" (11).

³ The concept of "authorship" has had an extensive history, going back all the way to Plato. Ever since Roland Barthes declared that the author was dead, the concept has gone through many permutations. Michel Foucault's famous question from his essay "What is an Author?": "What difference does it make who is speaking?" (Foucault 120) addresses the "Death of the Author". Foucault argues that this is the question we will eventually come to ask as the "author function" becomes increasingly less important. He claims that if we get beyond the "author function" we will see that "the author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (Foucault 118). Take away the author, and interpretation becomes relatively unbounded. Barthes complicates this notion of the author by examining the author's relationship to the text. The "text" provides a way of displacing the author and his or her ownership of the work in question, creating what Barthes' calls a "paper author". The strong presence of the author as "The Author" does not exist in the "text"; rather, the author merely exists as a character or persona in the text. Derrida, too, has made important claims about the status of the author. For Derrida, the text is the most important aspect of a work, and he argues that the author is part of this text: "*There is nothing outside of the text*" (118). Quite often, readers have mistakenly believed that Derrida's bold assertion that "there is nothing outside of the text" meant he had done away with the author. This is not the case; rather, Derrida is arguing that the author is within the text. All that the reader knows of the author is mediated by a text or texts. Thus, the author is textual rather than physical. Foucault, Barthes and Derrida's ideas of the author leave out one important characteristic in their theory of the author. None of them discuss the traditional, conventional author in regards to gender; Barthes only uses the masculine pronoun when he discusses the author in general, excluding women authors entirely. In her book *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing*, Nancy K. Miller argues that women authors are not subject to the same kind of criticism that critics like

Foucault and Barthes level at authors in general. She claims that since one of the primary objectives of feminism has been to rediscover women authors, it is not appropriate to erase these authors immediately after they have been rediscovered. Miller, then, addresses what position an author has who has from the beginning been decentered from his or her role as an author. She calls for wider definitions of the author, complicating the ideas Foucault, Barthes, and Derrida have put forward. She raises a significant question: how is an author who is already marginalized affected by the de-centering that Foucault and Barthes place on the author? That is, if an author never had conventional authority, is he or she even affected by the subversion of said authority?

⁴ See his *The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce Stein and Zukofsky*.

⁵ All photographs of Loy are taken from www.cwru.edu/artsci/engl/VSALM/mod/wolkowski/main.html.

⁶ The one possible exception to this is the photography Maeera Shreiber and Keith Tuma choose for the cover of the collection of articles on Loy: *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet*. In this photograph, Loy looks directly at the camera, yet half of her face and one of her eyes is in shadow, creating the same sense of mystery, even though she is not looking away from the camera.

⁷ See Pound's collections *Instigations* and *Profile: An Anthology Collected in MCMXXXI*. The two anthologies have slightly different versions of the poem.

⁸ See, for example, Eric Murphy Selinger's "Love in the Time of Melancholia," Rachel Blau DuPlessis' "Seismic Orgasm': Sexual Intercourse and Narrative Meaning in Mina Loy," Peter Quartermain's "The Tattle of Tongueplay": Mina Loy's *Love Songs*, Maeera Shreiber's "Love Is a Lyric/of Bodies': The Negative Aesthetics of Mina Loy's *Love Songs to Joannes*, and Jeffrey Twitchell-Waas' "Little Lusts and Lucidities': Reading Mina Loy's *Love Songs*" which are all in *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet*.

⁹ See, for example, Selinger, "Love in the Time of Melancholia," DuPlessis, "Seismic Orgasm': Sexual Intercourse and Narrative Meaning in Mina Loy," Quartermain, "The Tattle of Tongueplay': Mina Loy's *Love Songs*, and Twitchell-Waas, "Little Lusts and Lucidities': Reading Mina Loy's *Love Songs*." All of these critics argue for an ironic reading of the *Love Songs* in some way.

¹⁰ See Selinger, "Love in the Time of Melancholia."

¹¹ Selinger also recognizes this failed attempt at chiasmus, but his reading differs significantly from mine: "Instead of something 'new' the speaker musters up longings she herself cannot believe, and her final gesture of union, the chiasmic 'Me you—you—me' disperses even as it is written, its chiasmus undone by the dash." (36). To some extent, Selinger is seduced by Loy's trickery here as he fails to recognize the nostalgia indicates by Loy's partial chiasmus.

¹² She wrote the poem before she had gotten old; she was imagining what it would be like to age, and this is the persona she felt she would present to the world at that age. She actually died much earlier than the date this poem gives.

¹³ When Loy originally wrote these aphorisms, the title was "Aphorisms on Modernism." Copies of early drafts in her papers are identical to the published version except for the title. It is almost as if Loy found Futurism and Modernism to be interchangeable.

¹⁴ For more discussion of authenticity and inauthenticity see Vincent Cheng's *Inauthentic: The Anxiety Over Culture and Identity*. In the book, Cheng "explores the ways and patterns by which we construct 'authenticities' to replace these seemingly vacated identities" (3).

¹⁵ Articles that focus on Loy and rediscovery abound and keep appearing. See, for example, Samuel French Morse's "The Rediscovery of Mina Loy and the Avant Garde," Joshua Weiner's "Rediscovering Mina Loy," Virginia Koudis's "Rediscovering our Sources: The Poetry of Mina Loy" and *Mina Loy: American Modernist Poet*, Carolyn Burke's *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy*. The final two sources have become central to Loy interpretation. Both offer intriguing readings of Loy; yet, they both romanticize her rediscovery.

¹⁶ Removing an author from the margins can also create legends and rumors about that author that eventually become accepted facts. The case of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper" demonstrates this phenomenon. In her introduction to *The Yellow Wall-paper and the History of Its Publication and Reception*, Julie Bates Dock catalogs and discounts the numerous rumors that surround the publication and reception history of Gilman's most well-known story. Dock discusses how many

feminist critics have become invested in the idea that “The Yellow Wall-paper” was, from its inception, marginalized and how Gilman had difficulty even publishing the story. This is not the case, Dock asserts, as Gilman easily found a publisher and the story itself has been widely published since 1892. Dock further asserts that many of the legends about the story, such as the legend that Weir Mitchell changed his famous “rest cure” after reading the story, are false and sometimes merely rumors spread by Gilman’s own writing. The way these rumors and legends have become fact indicates the dangers of investing too much in rediscovery. Sometimes the rediscovery effort becomes so important and privileged that the actual history of a text and its author gets ignored.

¹⁷ The back cover actually has a mistake, as it lists this quote as being from 1921, but it is actually from a 1926 review that Winters wrote for *The Dial*.

¹⁸ Keith Tuma and Maera Shreiber discuss how reading Loy and carrying around her book is like belonging to an exclusive, special club in their introduction to *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet*.

¹⁹ According to Carolyn Burke, Myrna Loy got her name from Mina Loy. Joshua Weiner opens his article “Rediscovering Mina Loy” with the allusion. Ellen Keck Stauder also mentions the mistaken identity in her review article “On Mina Loy.” Rob Sheffield bemoans the confusion in his review: “Mina Loy in Too Much Too Soon: Poetry/Celebrity/Sexuality/Modernity.

²⁰ In his review of “Others” in the *Little Review*, which was later reprinted as “Marianne Moore and Mina Loy”, Pound argues that “Without any pretenses and without clamours about nationality, these girls have written a distinctly national product, they have written something which would not have come out of any other country, and (while I have before now seen a great deal of rubbish by both of them) they are, as selected by Mr. Kreymborg, interesting and readable” (425). When critics quote Pound, they usually just quote the praise rather than the parenthetical reference to their work as rubbish. See, for example, Marjorie Perloff’s “English as a ‘Second’ Language” “Mina Loy’s Anglo-Mongrels and The Rose,” Elisabeth A. Frost’s “Mina Loy’s ‘Mongrel’ Poetics,” Roger L. Conover’s “(Re)Introducing Mina Loy,” Susan Gilmore’s “Imna, Ova, Mongrel, Spy: Anagram and Imposture in the Work of Mina Loy,” and Anita Helle’s “Playing with Elegy: Mina Loy’s Poetry of Mourning.” While some of these articles approach Pound’s words more skeptically, they all in some way rely on Pound to assuage their anxiety about Loy’s position as an author.

²¹ She had included so much, in fact, that the series editor of *Mina Loy: Woman and Poet* had to cut a lot of the references. See her “A Bibliography of Books by and about Mina Loy.”

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

There would indeed be no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of a forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression. Above all, and this is the most serious, beyond or within this simple limit called finiteness or finitude, there is no archive fever without the threat of this death drive, this aggression and destruction drive. This threat is in-finite, it sweeps away the logic of finitude and the simple factual limits, the transcendental aesthetics, one might say, the spatio-temporal conditions of conservation. Let us rather say that it abuses them. Such an abuse opens the ethico-political dimension of the problem. There is not one archive fever, one limit or one suffering of memory among others: enlisting the in-finite, archive fever verges on radical evil.

--Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*

the continually more and less intermisunderstanding minds of the anticollaborators, the as time went on as it will variously inflected, differently pronounced, otherwise spelled, changeably meaning vocable scriptsigns

--James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

This dissertation has demonstrated the difficulty of working in the modernist archive from a poststructuralist perspective. More than that, it questions assumptions made by and about three often conflicting disciplines: textual criticism, poststructuralism, and modernism. A collision can often be a violent, life-changing event, but in all the recognition paid to the damage a collision causes, the subtle, yet sometimes more potentially dangerous, changes are less perceptible than the more obvious changes. In this dissertation, I have attempted to make these subtle, yet significant, changes visible. From Joyce's intriguing title change of an occasional poem to Loy's conscious, yet buried, manipulation of her readers, these four modernist authors

make difficult, complex textual choices that have ethical, social and political implications. As readers and interpreters of both their final texts and their manuscripts, we should be conscious of what effect our own contact with the texts will have. This dissertation, finally, can lead to two different beneficial paths: an underlying questioning of the awe with which the archive and manuscript are treated, and the development of a new way of looking at the community modernism fostered. The answers are not simple or obvious, often courting ambivalence more than clarity.

Examining Archives: Some Ethical Considerations

Examining the manuscripts of any author is a difficult endeavor, fraught with seductive traps. Archival work, for the most part, lives an unexamined life. The romanticism with which people approach the archive is almost never questioned. Think, for example, of two recent popular movie treatments of archival material. The movie *Possession*, which is based on A.S. Byatt's novel of the same name, creates a love story around the archive. The two main characters uncover the love of two authors by looking at their archives. One of the main characters even steals some archival material, keeping his discovery a secret from the other researchers. The more recent movie, *National Treasure*, also deals with stealing archival material, but, in this movie, the stakes are a bit higher. The main character, Benjamin Franklin Gates, steals the "Declaration of Independence" to protect it from greedy treasure-hunters. The "Declaration" holds the secret code to a treasure map that is only revealed with lemon juice and heat. The movie unfolds as the puzzle is solved, presenting the archival as a mystery that must be solved. Throughout the movie, the "Declaration" is treated with reverence, although the

filmmakers become increasingly sloppy in letting the characters handle the document without gloves and roll and unroll it continually. This movie demonstrates a fear of archival theft. The document upon which the United States is founded cannot and should not, the movie argues, be damaged. But what would happen if the “Declaration of Independence” were destroyed? Would the laws of the United States change? Most likely not. I found myself sitting in the movie with conflicted feelings about that document. On the one hand, as someone who understands the importance of historical and literary archives, I was in pain whenever the document was mishandled. On the other hand, I had an overwhelming desire for them to just destroy the damn document already. What would it matter if the document were gone—the words would still exist. The problems in the movie could have been quite easily solved, after all, if they had just burned the manuscript. I, quite simply, became annoyed by the complete and unquestioned reverence with which the characters treated the document. The best way to protect a secret, after all, is not to archive it, but to destroy it.

Secrets and archives go hand in hand. As both these movies demonstrate, part of the attraction of the archive is the discovery of its secrets—to be part of a privileged few who know something others don’t know and then to be able to tell others the secret, knowing all along that you were the one who discovered it. I, too, have participated in this seductive archival game; it is difficult not to. When I discovered “Molly Bloomagain” in a serendipitous moment, I experienced a rush of joy and a desire to claim the discovery as my own. This desire should be questioned. Rather than blindly working with manuscript material, memorizing the notebook numbers of the *James*

Joyce Archive, for instance, in an attempt to show how well one knows that material, critics should approach these materials ethically, with the conscious knowledge of their “archive fever.” This sickness is somewhat unavoidable—it is the nature of working in the archive (probably why we sometimes have to wear gloves: to protect ourselves, not the documents). I have attempted an ethical approach in this dissertation by colliding the archive with the suspicion provided by poststructuralism and by situating the archival material within the author’s own fraught status. I have, I hope, not placed my claiming flag in the archival material that I have uncovered; rather, I have encouraged an interaction with these texts—not a simple uncovering of secrets, a complex socializing with the texts that places them in their own contexts and uses them to trouble assumptions. There is no antidote for “archive fever”—the archive is too seductive—but it can be inoculated against by understanding the responsibility to the text and other readers and troubling the overarching romanticism and possessiveness of archival work. “Archive fever” is a chronic condition, but a condition that one can live with.

Modernist Solitude vs. Modernist Sociability: An Unwieldy Opposition

Eliot was a solitary author who created his difficult complex works alone as he brooded on the state of the world. Eliot collaborated with Pound for his most famous work, *The Waste Land*, and Pound lifted the poem out of Eliot’s plethora of notes. These two contradictory ideas of Eliot’s relation to his work demonstrate the uncomfortable and unwieldy, but often unnoticed, opposition that has sprung up in modernist criticism. There is an underlying tension between these two schools of thought that has formed the background for this dissertation. This tension has resulted in

what I believe is an unfair accusation of modernism—that it is elitist. Modernist authors are either elitist because they worked alone, creating works for themselves that no one else could understand, or because they worked together, creating an exclusive group that outsiders could not penetrate. Both of these arguments give modernists the same isolated status. Thus, arguments about modernist sociability can be just as limiting as arguments about modernist solitude.¹ Is this opposition really an opposition, or is modernist sociability a way of claiming a fresh view of modernism that is actually just repeating older views? That is, are the two sides really that different? Creating this dichotomy between the two ways of seeing modernist authorship is just too simple; authors were neither entirely social or solitary but flirted with both as they navigated the difficult modernist world. Sometimes they had to maintain their solitude to protect themselves from that world, and sometimes they had to work in that world in order to gain recognition or to help reinvigorate their work.

One of the most important outcomes of my dissertation is to argue for a social understanding of modernist authorship, but with a twist. Yes, these authors did collaborate and affect each others' works. Yes, these authors did work alone up in their rooms, writing in solitude. However, both of these seemingly distinct views of authorship are fraught with difficulty. Working in solitude, these authors often communicated their sense of isolation and exile from the world. They all felt that they did not belong, and they all have complex reactions to this feeling that is reflected in their work. Joyce, for example, constantly focuses on the plight of the outsider, trying to give him or her a place to feel comfortable, arguing in what I see as a complex ethical

move that outsiders should not belong, but neither should they be excluded.² Joyce negotiates the social world even as he claims that isolation is a necessary evil in order to develop an ethical, more inclusive understanding of interaction. Barnes, too, reacts to the feeling of being isolated, but in a significantly different way; she seeks a place for her texts to belong by becoming social even as she resents this involvement and collaboration, and she prizes the outsider in her work, emphasizing his or her isolation even while she argues for his or her acceptance. Pound, who was quite generous and helpful, often helping other modernists get their works published and supporting or finding support for some of them financially when they hit hard times, also has a complex ambivalence about his solitude and the social world of modernism. He seeks to be inclusive by translating other languages, bringing other worlds into his world, but at the same time he makes his readers feel uncomfortable and isolated by displacing them from his work. Loy recognizes the difficulty of participating in a social world so fraught with difficulty and thus creates a social persona that shields her even as it isolates her. None of these authors fall simply on either side of the opposition as they situate themselves within the modernist world at the same time that they isolate themselves. Neither side of the opposition is a place to inhabit simply; rather, these authors moved back and forth between the two, occupying both at the same time.

“A way a lone a last a long the”

I will end with the beginning. I began this dissertation by outlining its etymology, and I will end by looking at the etymology of its outcomes. One of the overwhelming attitudes that has surfaced in this dissertation is ambivalence. All of these

authors formed an ambivalent relationship with their work and the social world they sometimes inhabited with joy, sometimes with resentment, and sometimes, quite simply, with indifference. The word “ambivalent” echoes my earlier focus on the word “together” and the trio of words that define this dissertation: “collision,” “collusion,” and “collaboration.” Etymologically, the word means “to be both with vigor.” The word communicates the feeling of having strong opposing feelings, such as love and hate, or the feeling of being torn between two options. Having these feelings “together” creates confusion. Ambivalence is not a pleasant feeling—it is frustrating and difficult to shake. This dissertation demonstrates the positive and negative effects of ambivalence. Feeling unsure, these authors created characters and wrote in such a way that they invited their readers into their worlds even as they make the reader feel uncertain also. Ambivalence is the more creative choice, fostering uncertainty and space to play. By negotiating the complex social world and troubling the idea of solitude even as they often embraced their own isolation, these authors encourage their readers to become active and socially involved with their texts. Rather than sitting back as passive readers, modernist audiences must become part of the social world that these authors found so difficult. The resulting feeling in readers is usually uncertainty and doubt, which can lead to strong reactions such as accusation of modernist elitism or a creation of modernist idols. I assert that neither of these reactions is productive; rather, readers should react to the ambivalence these authors created with more ambivalence. That is, it is potentially damaging to react to uncertainty by creating certainty. Ambivalence, in this instance, is the more ethical and difficult choice—a choice that is hard to sustain.

NOTES

¹ This is not to say that all arguments about modernism and sociability argue this, but who, after all, did these authors socialize with if not each other.

² See Marian Eide's *Ethical Joyce* for more specific discussion of Joyce and ethics.

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