Irish Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance: Race, Ethnography, and Transatlantic Literary Culture

Oskar Gordon

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of English Literature, Language, and Linguistics

Newcastle University

November 2023

Abstract

My research examines the significance of ethnography in the writings of Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, and considers the various intersections and influences of these two literary movements across the Atlantic. I consider how these movements responded to an emerging imperative for a new grammar of representation for colonised and marginalised subjects. The centrality of ethnographic discourse to both movements stemmed from their shared interest in race, national identity, and the recovery and reimagining of cultural history, and my research considers these issues in relation to discourses of nationalism, racialisation, and colonialism. These are in turn contextualised by the developing discipline of anthropology as it turned from the 'evolutionist' model associated with James Frazer to the various 'modernist' schools associated primarily with Bronisław Malinowski. I therefore position the similarities between the literary practices of these movements in relation to the ways in which ethnography provided new methods of formal experimentation and a space to revive interest in folklore and dialect, often in opposition to the prevailing corpus of white, colonial ethnographic studies that contributed to narratives of racial essentialism and primitivism. I also demonstrate, however, that this radical employment of ethnographic style and method was frequently mediated by more traditional attitudes to race, nation and empire (as in the case of the influence of Matthew Arnold on W. B. Yeats), and how texts produced from these movements often struggle against the complexities of identity and heritage, exemplified by the famous question of 'what a nation means' in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the recurring imperative in the writing of the Harlem Renaissance to answer, 'What is Africa to me?'

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this research through the Northern Bridge Consortium, and allowing me to spend three months carrying out invaluable work at the Library of Congress as part of the International Placement Scheme. I am grateful to my four supervisors: Stephen Regan and Barry Sheils at Durham, Mark Byers at Newcastle, and above all to Fionnghuala Sweeney for her knowledge, encouragement, and constant support. I would also like to acknowledge the staff at University College London, past and present, who helped shape my interest in modernism, particularly Eric Langley, Julia Jordan, Beci Carver, Scarlett Baron, Matthew Sperling, and Emma Whipday. Above all, thank you to my family for always being there.

Contents

Introduction

In his article 'How Black Sees Green and Red' for the socialist monthly *The Liberator*, the Jamaican poet Claude McKay recalls attending 'a big Sinn Fein demonstration in Trafalgar Square' in the summer of 1920:

> The place was densely packed, the huge crowd spreading out into the Strand and up to the steps of the National Gallery. I was there selling the *Workers' Dreadnought*, Sylvia Pankhurst's pamphlet, *Rebel Ireland*, and Herman Gorter's *Ireland: The Achilles Heel of England*; I sold out completely. All Ireland was there. […] I also wore a green necktie and was greeted from different quarters as 'Black Murphy' or 'Black Irish.'

Caught up in the fervour, McKay admits, 'For that day at least I was filled with the spirit of Irish nationalism—although I am black!' Quickly, however, he dismisses the notion of an uncomplicated relationship of solidarity between himself and the Sinn Féiners, split as they are between 'Sinn Fein Communists', 'regular Sinn Feiners', and 'the Sinn Fein bourgeoisie.' He turns to a consideration of the interplay of class and nationalist struggles problematised by this latter group:

> Members of the bourgeoisie among the Sinn Feiners, like Constance Markievicz and Erskine Childers, always stress the fact that Ireland is the only 'white' nation left under the yoke of foreign imperialism. There are other nations in bondage, but they are not of the breed; they are colored, some are even Negro. It is comforting to think that bourgeois nationalists and patriots of whatever race or nation are all alike in outlook. They chafe under the foreign bit because it prevents them from using to the full their native talent for exploiting their own people. However, a black worker may be sensitive to every injustice felt by a white person. And I, for one, cannot but feel a certain sympathy with these Irish rebels of the bourgeoisie.

McKay expresses his discomfort at this foregrounding of oppressed whiteness, an appeal to race in order to amplify the nationalist cause. The Sinn Féin bourgeoisie, he suggests, like all 'bourgeois nationalists and patriots of whatever race or nation', are often guilty of ignoring the struggles of those who 'are not of the breed'. Writing during the Irish War of Independence, McKay warns against the waning of revolutionary commitment that will materialise during and after the Irish Civil War, in which reformulated political hegemonies will see the Irish bourgeoisie 'using to the full their native talent for exploiting their own people.' Beginning the following paragraph with the claim that 'it is with the proletarian revolutionists of the world that my whole spirit revolts', McKay does not let the 'spirit of Irish nationalism' dilute his critique of the bourgeoisie, but a modicum of sympathy persists because of Ireland's anti-colonial struggle.[1]

The attitude of Max Eastman, editor of *The Liberator*, proved to be a frustrating inversion of Markievicz and Childers in terms of the examination of the intersections of socialism and nationalism that McKay was undertaking in his article. 'I tried to discuss the Irish and Indian questions with you once or twice with a view of getting articles on them for the magazine,' McKay wrote to Eastman from Moscow in 1923, 'but with little sympathy you said that they were national issues. I never once thought you grasped fully the class struggle significance of national and racial problems, and little instances indexed for me your attitude on the race problem.'[2] While the recollection of the Sinn Féin demonstration therefore speaks to the importance of class consciousness in nationalist movements, McKay was equally critical of socialists who ignored or even actively opposed anti-colonial nationalism.[3]

---

[1] Claude McKay, 'How Black Sees Green and Red', in *The Passion of Claude McKay: Selected Poetry and Prose 1912–1948*, ed. by Wayne F. Cooper (New York: Schocken, 1973), pp. 57–62 (pp. 57–8).

[2] McKay, letter to Max Eastman, 3 April 1923, in *Passion,* pp. 82–6 (p. 83). See Lee M. Jenkins, '"Black Murphy": Claude McKay and Ireland', *Irish University Review*, 33 (Autumn–Winter 2003), 279–90 (p. 286).

[3] This frustration is evident in McKay's first article for Sylvia Pankhurst's *Workers' Dreadnought* (31 January 1920): 'Some English Communists have remarked to me that they have no real sympathy for the Irish and Indian movement because it is nationalistic. But, today, the British Empire is the greatest obstacle to International Socialism, and any of its subjugated parts succeeding in breaking away from it would be helping the cause of World Communism.' 'Socialism and the Negro', in *Passion*, pp. 50–54 (p. 54). George Hutchinson has observed, however, that the various letters exchanged between McKay and Eastman in 1923 are only partially representative of McKay's designs for the political content of *The Liberator*. While he may have accused Eastman of fostering at the magazine an 'atmosphere' that 'did not make for serious discussions on any of the real problems of Capitalist society much less the Negro', he also confessed in

Later in the *Liberator* article, McKay articulates a sense that the example of black/Irish solidarity, whether in terms of proletarian revolution or anti-colonial struggle, has a particular resonance for him personally: 'I suffer with the Irish. I think I understand the Irish. My belonging to a subject race entitles me to some understanding of them. And then I was born and reared a peasant; the peasant's passion for the soil possesses me, and it is one of the strongest passions in the Irish revolution.'[4] McKay's connection of the struggle of the colonised with the peasantry and the soil in 'How Black Sees Green and Red' adumbrates several of the concerns and questions of this thesis, two clusters of which I will outline here. Firstly, McKay thinks he understands the Irish in their mutual position as British colonial subjects, but his language gestures towards a hesitation regarding this understanding which itself acts as a parallel to the earlier hesitation towards full political solidarity between the Irish and 'other nations in bondage'. Is McKay's suggestion of understanding one specific to himself as a Jamaican, or could it apply equally in the context of African American/Irish relations, despite the formal absence of the colonial condition for the former? In other words, does McKay 'suffer with the Irish' because he is black, or because he is a subject of empire? Secondly, how does the colonial situation map onto this sudden turn to the peasant and the soil? Is this turn occasioned by a consideration of the effect of colonisation in terms of displacement, land acquisition, and disruption of agrarian life (or indeed, as the title of one McKay's early poems has it, 'Peasants' Ways o' Thinkin' ')? Or is McKay here imagining this connection with the Irish situation not in the negative terms of colonisation, but in the sense of a shared 'passion for the soil' common to those who strive to maintain (or re-establish a connection to) a folk culture?

While the colonial situation separated the experience of British subjects such as Jamaicans and Irish from African Americans, this 'peasant-thinking', and the transnational solidarity that McKay suggests it helped to bolster, marked an important site of contestation for writers of the

---

letters to Langston Hughes 'that he preferred the "Bohemian dilletanti" to the very "political" types at The Liberator.' For Hutchinson, McKay's 'haughty charges' against Eastman were 'colored by […] his enthusiastic reception in Moscow, where, he said, he was feted as a "black ikon in the flesh"', with such a a perception allowing him 'to think of himself as more politically serious than his benighted comrades who were so far from the center of true communist consciousness.' George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 267.

[4] McKay, 'Green and Red', p. 59.

Harlem Renaissance, of which McKay was regarded as a central figure despite not being an African American, and only temporarily making Harlem his home. In its most famous text, the anthology *The New Negro* (1925), editor Alain Locke draws attention to societal and demographic changes among African Americans that involve a shifting away from the peasant modes of life associated both with the 'Old Negro' and life in the South:

> A main change has been, of course, that shifting of the Negro population which has made the Negro problem no longer exclusively or even predominantly Southern. Why should our minds remain sectionalized, when the problem itself no longer is? Then the trend of migration has not only been toward the North and the Central Midwest, but city-ward and to the great centers of industry—the problems of adjustment are new, practical, local and not peculiarly racial.[5]

Locke shares with McKay a concern for the growing black urban proletariat conditioned by the Great Migration and also cautions against a monolithic interpretation of the African American population, mirroring the attention McKay draws to the class hierarchies within Sinn Féin and the Irish nationalist movement: 'with the Negro rapidly in process of class differentiation, if it ever was warrantable to regard and treat the Negro *en masse* it is becoming with every day less possible, more unjust and more ridiculous.'[6] Martha Gruening, in a 1932 retrospective on the Harlem Renaissance that focuses on McKay's novel *Banjo* (1929), notes that McKay's sense of inherent racial qualities in that novel, his dismay at '[e]ducated Negroes ashamed of their race's intuitive love of color', was 'very exasperating for the Negro Intelligentsia':

> Some of them may protest with justice that they are being *themselves* in conforming to the standards of the white civilization in which they live […] that they are not merely Negroes but Americans as well. Every racial minority in America, with the possible exception of

[5] Alain Locke, 'The New Negro', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 3–16 (p. 5).

[6] Locke here anticipates the concern voiced in E. Franklin Frazier's 'La Bourgeoisie Noire' about the effect of interracial competition under capitalism: 'The Negro's feeling of superiority to "poor whites' who do not bear in their veins "aristocratic" blood has always created a barrier to any real sympathy between the classes.' As a result, Frazier claims, 'Race consciousness to be sure has constantly effaced class feeling among Negroes.' 'La Bourgeoisie Noire', in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. by David Levering Lewis (New York: Penguin 1994), pp. 173–181 (pp. 174–5).

> the Irish, is divided between those of its members who wish to sink themselves, their blood and their differences in the majority, and the proudly and or defensively race conscious who wish to take their stand on this blood and this difference.[7]

This is therefore the dialectic, 'Negroes but Americans as well', that Locke is grappling with in *The New Negro*. In the last of his four essays in the collection, 'The Negro Spirituals', in which he praises W. E. B Du Bois's 'serious and proper social interpretation' of the spirituals,[8] Locke offers an optimistic appraisal of this dialectic: 'But the very elements which make them uniquely expressive of the Negro make them at the same time deeply representative of the soil that produced them. Thus, as unique spiritual products of American life, they become nationally as well as racially characteristic.'[9] Locke therefore employs what I will describe as a *perpendicular* model for his appraisal of the spirituals' significance, emphasising both their 'horizontal' appeal (their universality), and the 'vertical' or historical conditions (the experiences of both enslaved African American existence and a connection to the soil) that produced them.

Just as Gruening suggested that McKay's enthusiasm for *intuitive* aspects of race in *Banjo* was proving 'exasperating' for the 'Negro Intelligentsia', Paul Gilroy identifies in Locke's desire to harmonise these perpendicular elements an inverted problematic engendered by the attempt to unify what is American with what is 'uniquely expressive of the Negro':

> This doubleness has proved awkward and embarrassing for some commentators since it forces the issues of cultural development, mutation, and change into view […]. This has caused problems, particularly for those thinkers whose strategy for legitimating their own position as critics and artists turns on an image of the authentic folk as custodians of an

[7] Martha Gruening, 'The Negro Renaissance', in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892–1938*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 240–6 (p. 245).

[8] Du Bois had suggested that despite the popularity of the spirituals among both white and black Americans, 'the world listened only half credulously until the Fisk Jubilee Singers sang the slave songs so deeply into the world's heart that it can never wholly forget them again.' Du Bois therefore anticipates Locke's call for a proper ethnographic analysis of African American cultural production. *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. by Brent Hayes Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 168. For a discussion of the Fisk University Singers as an ethnological subject, see Kira Thurman, 'Singing the Civilizing Mission in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms: The Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nineteenth- Century Germany', *Journal of World History*, 27 (September 2016), 443–471.

[9] Locke, 'The Negro Spirituals', in *The New Negro*, pp. 199–210 (p. 199).

> essentially invariant, anti-historical notion of black particularity to which they alone somehow maintain privileged access.[10]

For these 'custodians' (Gilroy suggests Zora Neale Hurston as the primary example), the fact that folk culture, spirituals, the peasantry, and the soil are recurring motifs in *The New Negro* does not negate what they see as the incongruence of Locke's appeals to 'compelling universality' and what Gilroy regards critically as 'anti-historical' racial specificity. As Arnold Rampersad notes in his introduction to *The New Negro*, Locke, who was seen as promoting an 'elitist vision of culture […] in the treatment of music' in the collection, 'shows respect for only these religious songs [the spirituals], which are said to be the "very kernel" of Negro folk music—an identification that was controversial even when he made it.' Locke toys with a critique of recent '"concertized" settings of the spirituals as being too European', but ultimately abandons it: 'we must be careful not to confine this wonderfully potential music to the narrow confines of "simple versions" and musically primitive molds.'[11] As Rampersad concludes, Locke 'thus chose to ignore the lowly blues; in fact, he acted as if that [*sic*] they did not exist.'[12]

This desire to depart from 'musically primitive molds' was not a suggestion for an abandonment of academic study of black artistic, musical, and literary production, but an appeal to consider them in ways that moved beyond or reconsidered this imagined 'primitive' element. When Locke suggests in his final essay in the collection that 'there is little evidence of any direct connection of the American Negro with his ancestral arts', he is not advocating for a historical perspective and an interpretation of the New Negro that is divorced from a consideration of folk culture.[13] Instead, he is calling for a new mode of thought that might offer appropriate analysis and representation. In his opening essay, in positing that '[t]he Negro too, for his part, has idols of the tribe to smash', Locke suggests that the mode of this representation should be the positioning of the African American as an ethnographic subject: 'The intelligent Negro […] must know himself and be known for precisely what he is, and for that reason he welcomes the new scientific rather

[10] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 91.
[11] Locke, 'Spirituals', p. 208.
[12] Arnold Rampersad, 'Introduction', in *The New Negro*, pp. ix–xxiii (pp. xix–xx).
[13] Locke, 'The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts', in *The New Negro*, pp. 254–267 (p. 254).

than the old sentimental interest.' Later he continues: 'the Negro is being carefully studied, not just talked about and discussed. In art and letters, instead of being wholly caricatured, he is being seriously portrayed and painted.'[14]

This thesis considers how this ethnographic doubling, to *know oneself* on the one hand, and to *be known* from without on the other, was an integral, and constantly contested, feature of both Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance. Arguably, the Celtic Revival turned its artistic gaze inwards in order to produce a new kind of literature in English, one that drew on those elements of 'native' Irish culture suppressed over previous centuries and now distilled into folk practices that included storytelling, folklore, music, and a complicated relationship to natural resources, including land. Two of its most famous protagonists, W. B. Yeats and J. M. Synge, complicate the significance of this inward-looking approach by problematising their relationship to the 'native' aesthetic they to set out to discover or invent, and therefore its ideological framing. When Synge writes his account of the Aran Islands in the book of the same name, is he engaging in a form of autoethnography, a commitment to try to 'know himself' better, as Locke encourages the New Negro to do? Or is Synge, an Anglo-Irish, metropolitan 'mainlander', so divorced in terms of life experiences from the islanders he writes about that this notion of autoethnography becomes untenable? And is he therefore instead more closely aligned with the white outsider in Locke's description, a writer characterised primarily by his *interest* in the 'native' subject, whether scientific or sentimental?

Irish literature was as important a point of reference for Locke as it was for McKay, in terms of the production of a politically conscious writing, and, through the example of Synge, a model for conceiving the complex relationship between the writer and the 'folk'. In 'The New Negro' Locke notes that the Irish capital provides a transatlantic equivalent for Harlem as a magnetic centre of artistic vitality: 'Harlem has the same rôle to play for the New Negro as Dublin has had for the New Ireland'.[15] In 'Negro Youth Speaks', the third of Locke's contributions to the anthology, he sympathises with '[t]he elder generation of Negro writers [that] expressed itself in cautious moralism and guarded idealizations' and produced, as a result, a literature of 'Puritanism

[14] Locke, 'The New Negro', p. 9.
[15] Ibid, p. 7.

[…] because the repressions of prejudice were heavy on its heart.' While contextualising this moralising tendency of the elder generation, Locke is critical of their conservative attitude to the younger writers, identifying the Abbey Theatre riots that greeted Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* as a parallel: 'Just as with the Irish Renaissance, there were the riots and controversies over Synge's folk plays and other frank realisms of the younger school, so we are having and will have turbulent discussion and dissatisfaction with the stories, plays and poems of the younger Negro group.' As a representative of the New Negro that the anthology was both attempting to represent and to produce, Locke justifies a departure from the 'guarded idealizations' of their elders by claiming that the younger generation of African American writers 'take their material objectively with detached artistic vision; they have no thought of their racy folk types as typical of anything but themselves or of their being taken or mistaken as racially representative.'[16]

Both the divergence *and* the points of similarity between McKay and Locke in terms of the Irish influence are therefore primarily located in this sense of detachment. Locke asserts in this essay that while writers such as Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston might encode 'racy folk types' in their texts, they are not attempting to have these types function synecdochally for a larger cultural movement or ideology. On the following page, however, he insists that this 'racy' characteristic was crucial to the work of the younger generation: 'And so not merely for modernity of style, but for vital originality of substance, the young Negro writers dig deep into the racy peasant undersoil of the race life.' Locke then quotes Jean Toomer on the impact of folk culture in Georgia on his writing to underline his point: 'There one finds soil, soil in the sense the Russians know it,—the soil every art and literature that is to live must be imbedded in.'[17] What attracts McKay to the Irish model is class struggle, anti-colonialism, and the triadic interplay of the peasantry, the soil, and revolutionary spirit. As I have suggested, Locke is also attuned to these political concerns, if not quite to the degree of McKay, just as he shares with McKay a sense of the importance of the soil and the peasantry. However, in his opening essay Locke foregrounds the need for a 'new scientific' method in order to properly examine and interrogate the distinction between the Old Negro and the New Negro. The *Playboy* riots therefore provide a precursor to this

[16] Locke, 'Negro Youth Speaks', in *The New Negro*, pp. 47–53 (p. 50).
[17] Ibid, p. 51.

combination of acknowledging the role played by 'the racy peasant undersoil' and avoiding a romanticised, 'sentimental' attachment to it: while Synge himself is deeply concerned with the *subject* of the peasantry, by daring to stage the uglier, brutal possibilities of this mode of life, and receiving the indignant reaction that he did, he proved that attachments to idealised visions of this peasantry had too strong a hold over the Celtic Revival.[18]

Locke's distinction between the 'new scientific' and the 'old sentimental' forms of interest in African Americans is taken up in another essay from *The New Negro*, Arthur Schomburg's 'The Negro Digs Up His Past'. Echoing Locke in an endorsement of 'the truly scientific attitude', Schomburg warns that it has been 'plague[d]' by 'the race issue' which has lost sight of objectivity:

> […] history cannot be properly written with either bias or counter-bias. The blatant Caucasian racialist with his theories and assumptions of race superiority and dominance has in turn bred his Ethiopian counterpart—the rash and rabid amateur who has glibly tried to prove half of the world's geniuses to have been Negroes and to trace the pedigree of nineteenth century Americans from the Queen of Sheba.[19]

For both Locke and Schomburg, the 'new scientific' method is a necessary development to dispel both the 'Ethiopian counterpart' and the 'Caucasian racialist' in terms of their idealised, romanticised approach to race and its relation to history. While the details of the 'new scientific' method remain nebulous beyond this general appeal to empiricism, its framing by Locke is explicitly ethnographic, specifically in terms of those emerging discourses of ethnography that made claims about their own authority by way of foregrounding their scientific methodology, and their turning away from the sentimental modes of nineteenth-century ethnographic thought. It is to this turning away, and the complexities that emerge when trying to map academic anthropology in relation to the development of literary modernism, that I will now turn.

---

[18] Sinn Féin leader Arthur Griffith offered a response typical of the moral objections to the play, describing it as 'a vile and inhuman story told in the foulest language we have ever listened to from a public platform.' 'The Abbey Theatre', *Sinn Féin*, 2 February 1907, p. 4. For a discussion of rejections of *Playboy* based on its supposedly apolitical approach, see Gregory Castle, 'Staging Ethnography: John M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* and the Problem of Cultural Translation', *Theatre Journal*, 49 (October 1997), 265–86.
[19] Arthur Schomburg, 'The Negro Digs Up His Past', in *The New Negro*, pp. 231–7 (p. 236).

Modernist Anthropology, Anthropological Modernism

One difficulty in bringing into dialogue modernist literary texts and the anthropology that they drew inspiration from is that the term 'modernism' is radically different in the respective histories of literature and anthropology, largely as a result of a temporal dislocation. The period of literary high modernism, often associated with the year 1922 and the publication of *Ulysses* and *The Waste Land*, intersects not with what is commonly referred to as modernist anthropology, but with the functionalist school of anthropology and the writings of Bronisław Malinowski, whose magnum opus, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, was published in that year.

Malinowskian anthropology drew on and attempted to move beyond prevailing Victorian discourses of the discipline. The evolutionary model of anthropology is associated with the likes of James Frazer, Lewis Henry Morgan, and Edward Burnett Tylor, and can be summarised by a description at the outset of the latter's *Primitive Culture* (1871):

> Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes: while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future.[20]

This notion of uniformity combined with gradation was central to the evolutionist vision. It avoided any sense of cultural alterity in a general sense, instead shifting the concept of alterity to the temporal domain: Tylor ascribed the 'various grades' he observed not to an essential difference that was insurmountable, but instead to the developmental 'lag' he associated with so-called primitive peoples. There was a sense among the evolutionist school not only that '[t]he condition of culture' was an 'apt' subject of study, but that the very mechanics of the 'forward' march of

[20] Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* (1871; repr. London: John Murray, 1903), p. 1.

cultural and societal evolution towards 'civilisation' meant that the disappearance of 'savage culture' was an urgent issue. Cultures perceived as such therefore had to be treated like rare animal species and carefully studied. This is perhaps articulated most clearly by an address of Augustus Pitt Rivers to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1876:

> When once these races are brought into contact with European civilisation their habits change so rapidly that the opportunity is soon lost of observing them in their pristine condition. In Tasmania the aborigines have passed away without our obtaining any satisfactory information about them […]. The English race has done more than any other to destroy all these races and obliterate their culture. As a nation we are bound to keep some scientific record of that which we destroy.[21]

In this advocation of salvage anthropology, Pitt Rivers curiously demonstrates that he is alive to the realities of the degradation and destruction wrought by the British Empire, but simultaneously regards imperialism as its only fitting remedy. Significantly, however, the desire for salvage is cast in terms of the scientific curiosity of the imperialist who can only be satisfied by the reduction of colonised peoples and their cultures to specimens that might be studied ahead of their inevitable 'olibterat[ion]'.

One irony of this insistence on the importance of travel to far-flung corners of empire, and on empire as the primary tool in cultural salvage, is its contrast with the actual production of ethnographic texts in the Victorian period. Travel, exploration, the collection of cultural artefacts, and the engagement with colonised or uncontacted peoples was a crucial first step as Pitt Rivers's lecture demonstrates, but the task of synthesis, commentary, and narrativisation are left to the so-called armchair anthropologists who remain ensconced in imperial centres. While recent studies have pushed back against the usefulness of the term 'armchair anthropology',[22] it is particularly

[21] Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers, 'President's Address' (23 May 1876), in Verney Lovett Cameron, '[On the Anthropology of Africa]', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 (1877), 167–181 (p. 178).

[22] See Efram Sera-Shriar, 'What Is Armchair Anthropology? Observational Practices in 19th-Century British Human Sciences', *History of the Human Sciences*, 27.2 (April 2014), 26–40. Sera-Shriar draws attention to the 'four archetypes' of anthropologists offered by Barbara Tedlock, 'the amateur observer, the armchair anthropologist, the professional ethnographer, and the "gone native" fieldworker', criticising Tedlock for her endorsement of this 'mythologizing depiction of a disjointed discipline' (p. 28). See Barbara

evocative of the Victorian anthropologist most closely associated with literary modernism, James George Frazer.

Frazer's popularity among literary modernists and the reasons for this have been extensively documented,[23] but perhaps the two most significant of these have been praise for Frazer as a producer of texts that successfully hybridise the literary with the anthropological and his ability to transcend 'the pettiness of scientific accuracy in its approximation to the pure truth of myth'.[24] The foremost 'mythic' modernist, T. S. Eliot, famously evokes Frazer in his 1923 review of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. While Eliot's words seem almost more appropriate to his recently published *The Waste Land*, he argued that the novel had demonstrated that '[p]sychology, […] ethnology, and *The Golden Bough*', brought together to compose the 'mythic method' (a replacement for its narrative predecessor), would constitute 'a step toward making the modern world possible for art.'[25] As A. Walton Litz writes, 'Eliot's newly-discovered understanding of Joyce's "classical" method,' participates in a simplistic reduction of the novel, seeing in it 'an easy commerce between past and present, between tradition and the individual talent. Joyce's parallels with the *Odyssey* have "the importance of a scientific discovery" because they enable the artist to express both the pastness of the past and its eternal presentness.'[26] Eliot's interest in 'eternal presentness' speaks to a tension at the heart of Frazer's writings and evolutionist anthropology in

---

Tedlock, 'From Participant Observation to Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 41 (1991), 61–94 (p. 69). Sera-Shriar argues that both Tylor and Frazer 'were highly attuned to the problems associated with using evidence collected by informants and each actively organized and monitored ethnographic exchange networks throughout the empire'. For a discussion of some of these 'networks' see Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 27–50. For examples of Frazer as 'a great encourager of anthropological fieldwork' see George W. Stocking, Jr., 'The Ethnographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski', in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. by Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 70–120 (pp. 79–80).

[23] For the influence of Frazer on Yeats, Eliot, Lawrence, and Joyce, see John B. Vickery, *The Literary Impact of 'The Golden Bough'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). For a general survey of Frazer and literature, see *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination: Essays in Affinity and Influence*, ed. by. Robert Fraser (New York: Macmillan, 1990).

[24] Marc Manganaro, 'Textual Play, Power, and Cultural Critique: An Orientation to Modernist Anthropology', in *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text*, ed. by Manganaro (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 3–47 (p. 22).

[25] T. S. Eliot, '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth', *Dial*, November 1923, pp. 480–3 (p. 483).

[26] A. Walton Litz, 'Pound and Eliot on *Ulysses*: The Critical Tradition', *James Joyce Quarterly,* 10 (Fall 1972), 5–18 (p. 16).

general, between the presentness of the past and simultaneously an elegiac attitude towards it. John B. Vickery, in an essay that marks elegy as central to the connection between Frazer and the modernists, articulates the combination of the mournful attitude of Eliot, Pound, and D. H. Lawrence towards a seemingly lost past, and the hope for rejuvenation *through* a mythologising of this past, something Eliot had suggested *Ulysses* might offer. These 'elegiac' modernists shared

> the conviction—sometimes an assertion, sometimes merely an obliquely voiced hope—that at some point human society existed in a condition of ideal and archetypal simplicity that was essentially primeval as well as paradigmatic. This represents a secularization of the notion of a prelapsarian ideality and the human struggle to regain it.[27]

The consideration of the gap between this mythologised past and the contemporary world necessarily calls for an elegiac mode, a mourning of a perceived falling away from this 'prelapsarian ideality'. Susan Hegeman takes this idea further with regards to Eliot, arguing that his elegiac attitude can be connected more explicitly to the importance of salvage in the field of anthropology: 'in "The Dry Salvages" the islands-salvages are barren fragments of civilization's ruins, the recovered tokens of the moment before "worshippers of the machine" forgot the "strong brown god." As Eliot's famous image of 'fragments shored against my ruin' in *The Waste Land* attests, then, salvage has the potential to unite an elegiac attitude towards a perceived fragmentation with a sense that these fragments might be reterritorialised in useful ways, namely in the production of new cultural objects. Or, as Hegeman writes, drawing on James Clifford's 'On Ethnographic Allegory' (1986), the importance of salvage, which persists across the transition from evolutionary to functionalist anthropology, 'both laments the inevitable loss of the other's "culture," and then reconstructs it as text.[28] In the following section, which considers the significance of primitivism for Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, I will consider how, as with Hegeman's assessment of Eliot, the processes of mourning and elegy associated with the idea of a 'lost' culture were frequently allied to and intertwined with its sanguine double, a sense

[27] John B. Vickery, 'Frazer and the Elegiac: The Modernist Connection', in *Modernist Anthropology*, pp. 51–68 (p. 57).
[28] Susan Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1999), p. 34.

of artistic rejuvenation and escapism offered by attempts to recuperate and reimagine elements of Vickery's 'ideal and archetypal simplicity'.

The influence of Frazer on Eliot's *The Waste Land* is in this regard particularly fitting, as that touchstone of modernist heteroglossia takes its cues from similar structures of the voice in *The Golden Bough*, but in both texts this heteroglossia essentially obscures what is, beneath the surface, a monologic text. In this way, the Frazerian influence anticipates debates concerning ethnographic authority in the 1980s, some of which are considered below. For example, James Clifford's call for postmodern anthropology to engage in a democratisation of voices through '[a] discursive model of ethnographic practice' that 'brings into prominence the intersubjectivity of all speech'[29] offers an optimistically Bakhtinian model for the discipline, one which P. Steven Sangren takes issue with, arguing that it 'reproduces in forms more opaque and "mystifying" than do many of the older forms it delegitimates the same strivings for hegemony, power, and authority that it attributes to the older forms.'[30]

In his preface to Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Frazer, writing over three decades after the initial publication of *The Golden Bough*, expresses a position that seems to yoke together the language of the specimen typified in the Victorian period by Pitt Rivers and the functionalism inaugurated by Malinowski: 'After all, the human species is part of the animal creation, and as such, like the rest of the animals, it reposes on a material foundation; on which a higher life, intellectual, moral, social, may be built, but without which no such superstructure is possible.'[31] Frazer here demonstrates a position distanced from the stereotype of the armchair anthropologist that characterised his earlier writings. While not conducting fieldwork himself, he endorses Malinowski's project by drawing attention to its apparent rigour and, in quasi-Marxian language, to the notion that cultural superstructures can only be properly understood after a thorough analysis of a society's 'material foundation'. This enthusiasm for the new anthropology's

[29] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 41.
[30] P. Steven Sangren, 'Rhetoric and the Authority of Ethnography: "Postmodernism" and the Social Reproduction of Texts, *Current Anthropology*, 29, 405–35 (p. 407). For an evaluation of critiques of Clifford and 'the textually oriented anthropological theorist', see Manganaro, pp. 32–3.
[31] James George Frazer, 'Preface', in Bronisław Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge, 1922), pp. vii–xiv (p. vii).

scientific and economic focus anticipates Alain Locke's indication three years later for a need to shift from a 'sentimental' to a 'new scientific' interpretation of African Americans and their position in society. However, while Locke's essays (and many others in *The New Negro*) frequently emphasise the importance of the base/superstructure relationship in the American context, the intersection of Frazerian and Malinowskian anthropology maintains a more confident appraisal of the ability to understand, interpret, and narrate its subject of study through what would come to be called anthropological functionalism.

Two descriptions of functionalism that draw attention to its significance will be useful here. The first is from Malinowski himself, who is keen to position himself as its architect:

> Let me confess at once: the magnificent title of the Functional School of Anthropology has been bestowed by myself, in a way on myself, and to a large extent out of my own sense of irresponsibility. The claim that there is, or perhaps that there ought to be, a new school based on a new conception of culture and that this school should be called 'functional', was made first in the article s.v. 'Anthropology' in the 13th edition of The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1926). Among the various tendencies of modern anthropology, I there claimed a special place for 'the Functional Analysis of Culture'.[32]

In considering the place of myth in Malinowski's work, Ivan Strenski offers the following categorisation of the term.

> First, there is generic or 'broad' functionalism. To be this kind of functionalist means little more than to view society as an interdependent organic whole. This generic functionalism calls attention to the ways culture or society coheres, hangs together, works—how it *functions*. Here Malinowski does not differ significantly from Durkheim or even Aristotle.[33]

[32] Malinowski, 'Special Foreword', in *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (London: Routledge, 1929; repr. 1932), pp. xix–xliv (p. xxix).
[33] Ivan Strenski, 'Introduction: Malinowski and Myth', in *Malinowski and the Work of Myth*, ed. by Strenski (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. xi–xxxiii (p. xvii)

Within this context, myth 'functions' as a conveyor of social order and cohesion, 'and even a practical guide to activities with which it is connected.'[34] Its effect at the sociological level, at least in Malinowski's interpretation, therefore mirrors what Eliot wanted myth to achieve within a literary context: 'It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.'[35] Strenski suggests that 'a second, riskier, and more interesting, sense of functionalism can also be found in Malinowski'. Through the functionalist lens, myth functions '*unconsciously* as far as the actors in question are concerned' and it is also *necessary* to the functioning of society, 'so much so that he speaks of the "biological utility" of culturally functioning institutions.'[36] This then raises the issue of the primitivising strain of functionalism, a hangover from the evolutionist school in a modified form. The 'primitive' subject is reduced to what Malinowski describes in an essay on Frazer as 'an eager actor, playing his part for his own benefit'. He is only interested in that which is 'immediately useful', and myth enters into the sociological frame only as a force to provide motivation and order: 'Round these [needs and desires] he develops not only his magic […] but also his myths.'[37] While Strenski points out that Malinowski would depart from this position (he extended the functionalist analysis to both 'primitive' and 'civilised' societies in his later work),[38] Chapter 3 will examine how this reconfigured primitivist strain, which combined a confidence in ethnographic description with a consideration of the role of myth and magic in societal functioning, might be read in relation to the ethnographic imagination of Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Edwin Ardener offers the following diagram to explain the immense influence of Malinowski within the discipline of social anthropology before the advent of structuralism and poststructuralism:

---

[34] Malinowski, 'Myth in Primitive Psychology', in *Work of Myth*, pp. 77–116 (p. 81).
[35] Eliot, '*Ulysses*', p. 483.
[36] Strenski, pp. xvii–xviii.
[37] Malinowski, 'On Sir James Frazer', in *Sex, Culture and Myth* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), pp. 268–282 (p. 272). See Strenski, p. xviii.
[38] Malinowski addresses this turn directly in the context of linguistic analysis: 'I opposed civilized and scientific to primitive speech, and argued as if the theoretical uses of words in modern philosophic and scientific writings were completely detached from their pragmatic sources. This was an error, and a serious one at that.' *Coral Gardens*, 2 vols (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935), II, p. 58. See Strenski, p. xix.

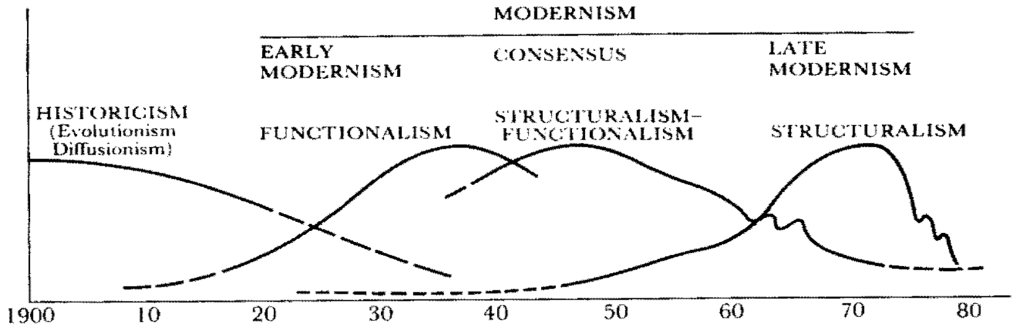

Figure 13.1 Trajectories in British social anthropology

39

Following this model, literary and anthropological modernism would indeed overlap, but the former's 'high' stage only with the latter's early stage, designated by Ardener as 'high-functionalism'. While what Ardener terms this 'out-of-phaseness' seems indisputable, the 'high' prefix is significant to both, as it implies an older genealogy of modernist or proto-modernist influences for both literature and anthropology, with this widening of the respective genealogies therefore allowing for greater interplay and reciprocal influence between the two.

In his introduction to *Modernist Anthropology* (1990), a collection of essays whose 'protagonists' range from Frazer to Hurston and beyond, Marc Manganaro accepts Ardener's chronology but suggests that not all the contributors to the collection would 'adhere to the notion that modernism in anthropology necessarily constitutes the period from 1920 to 1975':

> This lack of consensus reflects current critical musings on the nature of modern periodization, brought to the forefront of theoretical discussions in the compelling debate over the relation of modernism to postmodernism. If we consider Fredric Jameson's enunciation of the issue, modernism must be seen as an overarching cultural phenomenon, not confined to characterizing artistic achievement and indeed very much tied to what Jameson terms 'the classic age of competitive classicism' […]. That means, of course, that anthropological texts first must be seen not as mere influences upon the mighty literary

[39] Edwin Ardener, 'Social anthropology and the decline of modernism', in *Reason and Morality*, ed. by Joanna Overing (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), pp. 47–70 (p. 51).

> canon but as equally legitimate manifestations of culture that are, like literature, integrally tied to the capitalist schema.[40]

Manganaro identifies a fissure in theoretical responses to anthropology that it is worth outlining briefly. On the one hand, Jameson's Marxist interpretation locates the emergence of modernism (and the reasons for its separation from postmodernism) 'within the business society of the gilded age as scandalous and offensive to the middle-class public—ugly, dissonant, bohemian, sexually shocking.'[41] Paul Rabinow, following Jameson, sees in the transition from modernist to postmodernist anthropology a proliferation of 'meta-ethnographic flattening' which 'makes all the world's cultures practitioners of textuality.'[42] On the other hand, Michael Fischer, writing in the same collection to which Rabinow contributed, aligns himself with Jean-Francois Lyotard in drawing attention to 'cycles of modernism that decay and renew',[43] in turn liberating both modernism and postmodernism from 'the strictures of chronological periodization […] and from what he terms the "unsubstantiated negative political evaluations" of Jameson's theory.'[44] Edward Said, writing in response to Fischer and Lyotard in 1989, averred that the latter's notion that 'the great narratives just lost their power' demonstrated a detrimental lack of attention to historical and colonial specificities:

> [Lyotard] *separates* Western postmodernism from the non-European world, and from the consequences of European modernism—and modernization—in the colonized world. In effect then postmodernism, with its aesthetic of quotation, nostalgia, and indifferentiation, stands free of its history, which is to say that the division of intellectual labor, the circumscription of praxis within clear disciplinary boundaries, and the depolitization of knowledge can proceed more or less at will.

---

[40] Manganaro, pp. 6–7.
[41] Frederic Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 111–125 (pp. 123–4).
[42] Paul Rabinow, 'Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Postmodernity in Anthropology,' in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 234–261 (p. 250).
[43] Michael M. J. Fischer, 'Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory', in *Writing Culture*, pp. 194–233 (p. 194).
[44] Manganaro, p. 8.

A parallel therefore emerges between, on the one hand, Said's description of literary modernism as faced with various forms of otherness that 'challenge[d] and resist[ed] settled metropolitan histories, forms, modes of thought' and being only capable of 'responding with the formal irony of a culture unable either to say yes, we should give up control, or no, we shall hold on regardless', and on the other, the state of contemporary anthropology as he saw it, which had 'retreated to the politics of textuality' such that both literary modernism and anthropological postmodernism had fallen, 'as Georg Lukács noted perspicaciously, into paralyzed gestures of aestheticized powerlessness'.[45]

Manganaro then alludes to a lecture by Marilyn Strathern where she identifies what Lyotard had called a 'solace of good forms',[46] thereby associating 'most of modern anthropology as roughly parallel to the modernist faith in form, the major difference being only that the "pure aesthetic form" of modernism, represented in literature by the modernist poem or novel, in anthropology becomes "'society' or 'culture' which the anthropologists simply represented."'[47] The critique of ahistoricity that Said levelled at Lyotard might therefore gesture towards the latter's desire for 'a space beyond representation' or a 'utopian dream of pure present',[48] a postmodern adaptation, perhaps, of Eliot's hope that myth, *through* literature, might offer access to a sense of 'eternal presentness'.

As Manganaro recognises, Strathern's characterisation of Lyotard's position evokes an earlier writer who embodies 'a more complex and perhaps compelling application of the faith in form', while also straddling the structuralist/poststructuralist divide: Claude Lévi-Strauss. What connects this modernist, 'faith in form' aspect of Lévi-Straussian anthropology with his literary antecedents is the fact that he is an inheritor of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic structuralism. The 'interdisciplinary lag' identified by Ardener is thus particularly noticeable in the writings of Lévi-Strauss whose 'structural methods put faith in the form of language itself', and even while

[45] Edward Said, 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors', *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (Winter 1989), 205–25 (pp. 222, 209, 223).
[46] Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 81.
[47] Manganaro, p. 10.
[48] Marilyn Strathern, 'Partial Connections', Distinguished Lecture, 1988 Meeting of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania. Quoted in Manganaro, p. 10.

he is too self-aware to 'assum[e] a simple one-to-one correspondence of signifying word to signified cultural object,' his language 'does function ultimately to explain, interpret, or translate the cultural Other.' Ardener's use of 'structuralism-functionalism'[49] for the 'consensus' phase of modernist anthropology, typified by Lévi-Strauss, is therefore particularly apt, as it hints at the possibility that the structuralist revolution was in fact to some extent a continuation of Malinowskian functionalism, with the latter's essential belief in the coherence and unity of the 'integral system of culture', and the anthropologist's ability to represent it.[50]

Chapters 1 and 2 therefore engage with the relationship between the writer and the question of whether they can or should represent the Other in the context of the ethnographic writings of Synge and Yeats. Both writers participate in the difficult task of portraying the Irish peasantry as a subject that is sufficiently *different* to warrant ethnographic interest, but not so different that it cannot be represented as part of a functional whole, following Malinowski, or analysed as part of a structure, following Lévi-Strauss. Added to this complexity is the question of their own distance from the subject at hand, where they situate themselves on the spectrum dividing full autoethnography and, say, Malinowski among the Trobriand people of Papua New Guinea. The ways in which both Yeats and Synge negotiate this is further problematised by the fact that they do not align with Lévi-Strauss's own critique of 'bad' anthropology.

'I hate travelling and explorers. Yet here I am proposing to tell the story of my expeditions. […] [In] this kind of narrative […] the desire to impress is so dominant as to make it impossible for the reader to assess the value of the evidence put before him.'[51] By opening his 1955 work *Tristes Tropiques* with this paradoxical pronouncement, Lévi-Strauss initiates what Eugenio Donato has described as his 'attack against travellers who cross half of the world to have the pleasure of writing the history of their journeys or to present in front of a blasé public colorful slides of an unreal and far distant nature', while at the same time admitting the compulsion he feels

[49] George Stocking discusses the transition from the 'initial reassertion of the ethnological tradition by Rivers, followed first by the "pure" functionalism of Malinowski, and then by the "hyphenated" structural-functionalist of Radcliffe-Brown.' Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987), p. 320.
[50] Malinowski, 'Foreword', p. xxix.
[51] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Atheneum, 1975), p. 17.

to participate, albeit in a modified form, in this same endeavour. Donato then poses, and excellently answers, the following question:

> But why are these endeavours doomed to failure? The fact is that these travellers are not interested in coming to the discovery of the genuine Otherness of the savage. Nor is the public that reads them or that goes to hear them led by a genuine desire of living an anthropological experience which would permit them to identify themselves with the Amazonian or African native. […] The traveller does not travel to discover; the traveller travels to be seen; and the journey is only an obstacle. […] As for his spectators, they are as mystified as he is, since what they ask of the performer is not to introduce them to the genuine alterity of the far and distant savage; *for to recognize the alterity of the Other would also be to recognize him as identical with themselves.* (Emphasis added).[52]

The first, simpler reason that this seems a critique ill-suited to Synge's ethnography of Aran and Yeats's collection of folklore is the gap between these rural Irish subjects and the 'far and distant savage' that both Lévi-Strauss and Donato have in mind. The form of escapism identified in the spectators is similarly inaccurate, as the cultural and geographical gap between Europe and the Amazon, for example, makes the ethnographic narrative appear almost fictive in its very disparity (and therefore less deserving of critical consideration), unlike the relative proximity of metropolitan Irish readers to Aran islanders, and their partially overlapping history of colonisation. Even in this more classical form of ethnography-as-escapism, however, another paradox emerges in terms of what the audience 'back home' wants the far-flung ethnographic subject to *provide*: a sense of alterity sufficiently credible to entertain, but not such that it might force a recognition of the Other as 'identical with themselves.' This therefore raises the second, more significant aspect of awkwardness in terms of applying Lévi-Strauss's critique to the autoethnographic Irish situation. Denato's Other/self equation might still apply to Synge and Yeats but it generates a different outcome. In the traditional spectatorial moment, Denato argues, 'one's being becomes inextricably bound to that Other which we would like to see ourselves as different from', whereas Synge and Yeats are engaged (or at least try to engage) in a more complex relationship with that

[52] Eugenio Donato, '*Tristes Tropiques*: The Endless Journey', *Modern Language Notes*, 81 (May 1966), 270–287 (p. 271).

Other: the collapse in difference between self and Other emerges not through a forced reckoning with some sort of humanist universality, but rather with a gauging of how different this Other really is.

I have drawn attention to the debate in the 1980s concerning the politics of (post)modernism because aside from outlining important attempts to demarcate the boundaries of anthropological modernism (and thereby its relation to literary modernism), the Jameson-Rabinow-Said and Fischer-Lyotard divide is relevant to my discussion of the specificities of Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, in terms of the ways in which these movements were influenced by ethnographic thought, either by their incorporation of ethnographic discourse into fictional and poetic texts, or in the production of their own ethnographic texts which participate in various forms of generic hybridity. I will therefore briefly consider two points of connection that emerge specifically from the contested theoretical territory outlined by Manganaro.

While Jameson's conception of the defining 'scandalous' quality of modernism might seem to gesture most obviously to the sexual explicitness of parts of Joyce's *Ulysses* or the shocking and comical juxtapositions of Dadaism, the notion that modernism is a defiantly anti-middle-class project also speaks to the works of Yeats, particularly given that Jameson was formulating his definition in terms of '[t]he older or classical modernism [that] was an oppositional art'.[53] Some of the specificities of Yeats's aversion to what he regarded as middle-class philistinism will be considered in Chapter 1, but it is perhaps best exemplified (and complicated) by the poem 'Adam's Curse' from *In the Seven Woods* (1903):

> I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;
> Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
> Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
> Better go down upon your marrow-bones
> And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
> Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
> For to articulate sweet sounds together
> Is to work harder than all these, and yet

[53] Jameson, p. 123.

> Be thought an idler by the noisy set
> Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
> The martyrs call the world.'[54]

Yeats's complaint, directed towards the 'noisy set' who are irreverent, he believes, to those who, like himself, 'articulate sweet sounds', seems adjacent to the recurring idea in his poetry and essays of an essential (but ill-defined) alignment between the Irish peasantry and the poet, against the growing new-money class who remain ignorant of the modes of life of both peasant and poet. What Yeats ends up 'articulating', however, is not a form of cross-class solidarity or even well-intentioned *noblesse oblige*, but instead a petty point of comparison ('harder than all these') with domestic labourers whose forms of work Yeats cannot romanticise as he would those of the peasant. Yeats therefore anticipates in this poem the suspicion directed towards the bourgeoisie in Claude McKay's 'How Black Sees Green and Red', but fails to recognise, as McKay does, the penetration of bourgeoise factions into the Irish nationalist movement, while also closing himself off from the broader form of class solidarity that McKay insists on by limiting his interests to the rural proletariat.

In his examination of Jameson's central theses and attempts to distinguish modernism from the postmodernism, Rabinow argues that the avant-garde literary modernists 'began with the conceit of an interiorized and distinctive subjectivity that both drew from and stood at a distance from normal speech and identity. There was "a linguistic norm in contrast to which the styles of the great modernists" could be attacked or praised, but in either case gauged.' Exploring the implications of this, Rabinow asks an important question that speaks to the specific complexities of the relationship between literary modernism at large and the writings of the Harlem Renaissance, particularly those of Zora Neale Hurston:

> But what if this tension between bourgeois normality and the modernists' stylistic limit testing cracked, yielding to a social reality in which we had nothing but 'stylistic diversity and heterogeneity' without the assumption (however contestable) of relatively stable

[54] Yeats, 'Adam's Curse', in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. I: The Poems*, ed. by Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 1997), pp. 78–9 (p. 78).

> identity or linguistic norms? Under such conditions, the contestatory stance of the modernists would lose its force […][55]

The transition from modernism to postmodernism, for Jameson and Rabinow, is therefore that moment at which 'the contestatory stance', the transvaluation of aesthetic and moral norms, has become stale, leaving room only for Said's 'paralysed gestures' of postmodern pastiche. Within the discourse of African American modernism, however, these stable identities and linguistic norms were only part of the literary heritage to which its practitioners were choosing to respond. While all modernists were to some extent writing in response to social and cultural upheavals, this sense of a stylistic revolt against 'bourgeois normality' seems far more relevant to the poetry of Pound and Eliot, and indeed Yeats's anti-bourgeois posturing, than it does to Harlem Renaissance writings. Racially specific conditions, whether in the negative forms of segregation and racism or in the optimistic strivings of the Great Migration and the belief in an emergent New Negro, coupled with a rediscovery and reimagination of folk culture and dialect literature, suggest that the revolt against norms that Rabinow identifies was a categorically different task for the Renaissance than for the canonical high modernists. Not only was the sense of a bourgeois normality less concretised than it was for Pound and Eliot, the notion of 'a linguistic norm' with and against which the modernist text might play did not map straightforwardly onto the African American context. In explaining his famous term 'deformation of mastery',[56] Houston Baker notes that '[t]he deformative sounds of Afro-America[,] […] the group phonics and common language of the masses […] are traditionally labelled "sub-standard," "nonsensical," or "unlearned" by white speakers.' As with the protean state of the black bourgeoisie, the notion of a revolt against a norm is completely reconfigured if that norm is itself regarded as abnormal by the majority population. 'It is impossible to sustain a master, standard, or absolute position', Baker therefore suggests, 'in the face of the radically demonstrated provisionality of one's position.'[57] By enacting deformation, then, as 'the putative bondsperson's assured song of his or her own exalted, expressive status in

[55] Rabinow, p. 249.
[56] Houston A. Baker, Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. xiv.
[57] Baker, 'Modernity and the Harlem Renaissance', *American Quarterly*, 39 (Spring 1987), 84–97 (p. 93).

an always coequal world of sounds and soundings', the writers of the Harlem Renaissance were able to maintain the 'contestatory stance' that Rabinow associates with earlier European modernism while also resisting the imposition of the linguistic norms of white America.

Roots, Primitives, and Primitivism

In discussions of primitivism as it relates to literature in the early twentieth century, and particularly in relation to Irish and African American literature, a tendency is discernible that looks to position particular texts on a spectrum designed to differentiate and delineate the complexity of primitivism itself. It will be useful to examine some of these examples as a form of groundwork to establish why primitivism, or at least discourses engaging with it, emerge so prominently in these movements.

In his analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of the 1984 *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, Hal Foster draws attention to how the curator, William Rubin, formulated his own categorisations of the primitive as a context in which to present this work:

> Rubin distinguished primitive style from archaic […] *diacritically* in relation to the West. The primitive is said to pertain to a 'tribal' socius with communal forms and the archaic to a 'court' civilization with static, hieratic, monumental art. This definition, which excludes as much as it includes, seems to specify the primitive/tribal but in fact suspends it.'[58]

We can see how both of these definitions relate to the modernist interest in primitivism, and the corresponding set of anxieties surrounding 'threats' to Western society, 'by loss, by lack, by others.' The perceived communalist nature of this 'tribal' primitive is presented as a panacea for a corresponding fragmentation of Western social forms (the family, nation, religion, etc). Paradoxically, however, the 'archaic' that Rubin alludes to can be viewed as similarly antidotal.

[58] Hal Foster, 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art', *October*, 34 (Autumn 1985), 45–70 (p. 52).

The static and hieratic aspects of this 'court' socius could be read (and indeed this seems to be the belief of Yeats and Eliot) as equally effective bulwarks against fragmentation.

C. K. Stead has drawn attention to two apparently contradictory claims in Yeats's introduction to Ezra Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916):

> I love all the arts that can still remind me of their origins among the common people.
>
> Realism is created for the common people and was always their particular delight, and it is the delight today of all whose minds, educated alone by schoolmasters and newspapers, are without the memory of beauty and emotional subtlety.[59]

As Stead points out, '[t]he contradiction results from carelessness rather than from any fundamental confusion of thought, and it disappears when we see that the "common people" of the first sentence belong to Yeats's agrarian, feudal, folk ideal; while those of the second sentence are products of an urban, industrial society.'[60] This 'carelessness', this unintentional doubling of what exactly 'common people' signifies, is what in 'Adam's Curse' evokes the possibility of class solidarity and Yeats's belief in a genuine equivalence between the Irish working class and the poet-aristocrat, which is then undermined by his exclusion of those who 'scrub a kitchen pavement'. It is also, however, indicative of how that which Yeats sought in an (imagined) primitive draws from both the tribal and the archaic, in the distinction suggested by Rubin. The yearning for a 'folk ideal', which is always as much an act of imaginative creation as it is a real desire to return to (or reintroduce) elements of historical culture, requires for Yeats a conception of this former, communal, almost simplistic, tribal. A horizontal relationship is therefore proposed between the contemporary artist and this community. The significance of the 'archaic', however, emerges more forcefully in Yeats's writing, and as this passage concerning Japanese theatre demonstrates, he is just as comfortable relocating the 'common people' from this horizontal relationship to a hierarchical one in which those who are possessed of 'the memory of beauty and emotional

[59] Yeats, 'Introduction', in *Certain Noble Plays of Japan: From the Manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa*, ed. by Ezra Pound (Dundrum: Cuala Press, 1916), pp. i–xix (pp. iii, viii).
[60] C. K. Stead, *The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot* (London: Hutchinson, 1964), pp. 16–17.

subtlety' are to look down on what Yeats sees as the middlebrow interest in 'realism'. Stead is right in arguing that this carelessness results from a more urban orientation of 'common people' in the second instance, but this only serves to reinforce the problem of Yeats's position: the common people of Yeats's own present *are*, increasingly, urban industrial workers and not the folk ideal which, if it existed at all, is confined to Ireland's past.

To return to Foster's essay, Rubin's attempt to articulate the varieties of primitivism in the MoMA exhibition through the tribal/archaic binary fails to provide any useful meaning to the term which, as the quotation marks in the title imply, had by the 1980s become a difficult and contested term:

> Neither 'dead' like the archaic nor 'historical,' the primitive is cast into a nebulous past and/or into an idealist realm of 'primitive' essences. […] In this way the primitive/tribal is set adrift from specific referents and coordinates — which thus allows it to be defined in wholly Western terms.

This detachment from coordinates is crucial, and serves as the overarching argument of Foster's essay: as an ill-defined signifier, 'primitivism' itself marks a disavowal of responsibility. By drawing attention to the tribal/archaic distinction Rubin does not need to define primitivism itself, or what it means in the context of the exhibition, and the resulting evacuation of context leads to what Foster terms 'the mummification of the tribal and the museumification of its objects'.[61]

Two forms of nebulousness are apparent here: both in the term 'primitivism' itself and the difficulty of (or reluctance to) define it, and the 'setting adrift' of objects, artworks, and myths from their historical coordinates. The vagueness surrounding the provenance of those primitive objects that inspired modernist art, such as Pablo Picasso's masks, is set in contrast to the specificity of the modern artwork they helped to produce. This, combined with the sense of affinity between the primitive and the modern, as in Yeats's horizontal organisation, obscures the voice of the culture in which these objects originated. By 'absorbing the primitive' the focus shifts towards the modernist art object itself, with a corresponding reduction of the 'original' to a secondary position, a mere source of influence. Therefore, while Foster has offered an excellent analysis of

[61] Foster, p. 52.

the problems arising from the complexity and slipperiness of the term 'primitivism' itself, and the attempt by Rubin to avoid addressing this signifier directly, the curator's subdivision is still relevant to both the difficulty that the term offers, and a corresponding ambiguity among modernist artists and writers, Yeats foremost among them, concerning the *utility* of the primitive. Foster's critique should not, however, be taken as a suggestion that any attempt to map out the varieties of primitivism is futile or part of a technique of avoidance. I will therefore turn to two such attempts at mapping primitivism that relate to writers under consideration in this thesis.

In the introduction to *Primitivism, Science, and the Irish Revival* (2004), Sinéad Garrigan Mattar writes that her book will trace the 'commitment to a "revival" of the primitive' common to Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Synge who 'arrived at three distinct versions of primitivism, all of which had one foot in the nineteenth century and one in the twentieth century.' Despite the points of departure between the writers that Garrigan Mattar examines, she argues that all three had 'squared their instinctively romantic primitivism with the findings of comparative science and so recorded in their work a fundamental shift in the nature of literary primitivism itself.'[62] We therefore have two binary conceptions relevant to Yeats's work: the division of the primitive itself along Rubin's tribal/archaic axis, and the division of primitivism (as a discourse) between romantic and scientific in Garrigan Mattar's distinction. Crucially, in relation to both axes, Yeats's writing seems to enact a collapse, an attempt to square the various poles without gravitating wholly to one side or the other.

Garrigan Mattar in turn maps her own binary onto the distinction drawn in George Boas and Arthur Lovejoy's *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (1935) between chronological and cultural primitivism. Boas and Lovejoy employ an elaborate method of categorising the former, with multiple subsets related to undulation, ascent, decline, and circularity. Cultural primitivism, on the other hand, is then summarised far more succinctly, as 'the discontent of the civilized with civilization.' They are keen to stress that the two are not mutually exclusive, with the latter involving only a general sense that a simpler past resulted in 'a more desirable life', while the former attempts a more rigorous definition of the topography of this 'goodness' across human

[62] Sinéad Garrigan Mattar, *Primitivism, Science, and the Irish Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 19.

history or 'the distribution of value in time'.[63] Despite these possible hybrids, for Boas and Lovejoy what ultimately distinguishes the two is cultural primitivism's *presentism*: 'above all the cultural primitivist's model of human excellence and happiness is sought in the present, in the mode of life of existing primitive, or so-called "savage" peoples'.[64] Here, then, is yet another dichotomous articulation of primitivism which is highly relevant to Yeats's writing while doing little to help define it. Yeats's conflicting uses of 'common people' examined above, one generalised, idealised, and historic, the other definite and contemporary, gestures towards the prioritisation of a chronological mindset: the common people of today, the 'noisy set' of 'Adam's Curse', lack what the common people of some unspecified past possessed, namely the commitment to the production of an art that emerges naturally from the folk.

Yeats's discussion of this peasant art will be discussed in Chapter 1, but I have drawn attention to it here because it speaks to the concern that seems to most closely tie together the writers in this study: the question of the relationship between the production of the modernist text and cultural history, and whether that history will function as a nightmare, as Stephen Dedalus famously claims in *Ulysses*, or as a source of legitimate influence that helps embed the writer in a chain of literary and cultural heritage.[65] Yeats, while struggling with this issue perhaps more than any other, is also the most programmatic, using the vast, esoteric schemas of *A Vision* (1925) to contextualise what he sees as the relationship between his own writing and an Irish folk tradition. The Harlem Renaissance poets Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Helene Johnson, examined in Chapter 5, similarly grapple with these Yeatsian anxieties of influence but in ways which shift the dynamics of the issue from folk culture to a consideration of the relationship between Africa and African Americans and the question of what influence the continent, in its various forms, should and could have for the contemporary writer. What differentiates their engagement with heritage politics from Yeats's is not only a concern with the geographical displacement of their ancestors from Africa but also the way in which this displacement intersects with time, trauma,

---

[63] George Boas and Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935), p. 7.
[64] Boas and Lovejoy, p. 8.
[65] James Joyce, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler with Wolfhard Steppe and Claus Melchior (New York: Random House, 1986). Further references are cited parenthetically in the text as '*U*', followed by episode and line numbers.

and memory. The instinct towards engaging in a form of salvage ethnography that informs Yeats's interest in collecting and preserving Irish folklore sees its parallel in the efforts of Hurston to do similar work in the American South, but Hughes and Cullen explore how this same desire cannot easily translate across the Atlantic into an African context.

Robert A. Coles and Diane Isaacs characterise Renaissance attitudes to primitivism in exactly these antidotal terms. The lecture they presented at the 1985 'Heritage: A Reappraisal of the Harlem Renaissance' conference opens with an unequivocally laudatory assessment of its functioning:

> During the Harlem Renaissance one of the dominant cultural forces was the cult of primitivism, a therapeutic alternative to the insidious disease of Western culture, which was suffering from an overabundance of 'civilization.' In human terms, this disease was especially acute among alienated individuals who, after witnessing the First World War, were made abruptly aware of the self-destructive capacity of machinery and weaponry. Thus these individuals reflected their alienation by cultivating primitivism as a spiritual and cultural alternative to modern technological society and worked the cult into artistic themes, images, and symbols.[66]

This assessment leaves little room for nuance. The notion of primitivism as 'therapeutic' centres the concerns of the modernist writer while reducing those peoples or cultures associated with the primitive to the role of this therapeutic agent. The connection Coles and Isaacs draw between the Harlem Renaissance investment in primitivism and the alienation and fragmentation signified by the First World War is not an inaccurate one, but in this regard it is not specific to African American literary production in the interwar period.

The suggestion that within the domain of the Harlem Renaissance the political implications of primitivist discourse were somehow nullified by the marginal position occupied by its constituent writers is misleading. Tracy McCabe has argued that both approaches such as that of Coles and Isaacs concerning the revolutionary potential of primitivism, and opposing views such

[66] Robert A. Coles and Dianne Isaacs, 'Primitivism as a Therapeutic Pursuit: Notes Toward a Reassessment of Harlem Renaissance Literature', in *The Harlem Renaissance: Revaluations*, ed. by Amritjit Singh, William S. Shiver, and Stan Brodwin (New York: Garland, 1989), 3–12 (p. 3).

as those of Bruce Kellner that interpret it solely as stemming from the edicts of white patronage,[67] fail to consider that within the context of the Renaissance primitivism is not 'a monolithic discourse that can be simply labeled as either subversive or supportive of dominant ideology. It should be read as a local practice or event that takes on diverse and often contradictory meanings in its various social, historical, and literary contexts.'[68] Chapter 5 therefore inherits the reading of primitivism typified by Kellner that views it through the lens of white patronage, considering how the demands for primitivist tropes by these patrons were often tied to financial compensation and how the specific manifestations of primitivism sought out by these patrons invoked exoticised images of Africa and Africans that were not grounded in historical or cultural specificity, and were erroneously equated with contemporary African American culture. However, heeding the suggestion by McCabe that a monolithic conception of Renaissance primitivism is counterproductive, this chapter will also examine how writers such as Cullen and Hughes addressed the complexities of the discourse in opposition to the dictates of their patrons, while never being able to rid themselves entirely of its persistent spectral presence, closely imbricated as it was with that larger and more famous question, 'What is Africa to me?'

Implicit in this question, and in the issue of how primitivism might function as a grammar for Harlem Renaissance writing, is a discussion of 'roots' and rootedness. Julio Finn offers a critical perspective which is indicative of how this issue has been oversimplified in light of the positions taken up by, and debates staged between, writers such as Hughes and Cullen: 'The poets of the Harlem Renaissance sought to present black life to black people, but to do that they had first to rid themselves of white cultural values and to re-tap their roots in Africa.'[69] Chapter 5 will consider more closely how this question of ridding oneself of 'white cultural values' became a bitter area of contestation (Hughes even wrote that Cullen 'would like to be white'[70]), but it is worth briefly considering the relationship between roots and primitivism in order to address Finn's claims. The problematics of the word 'root' itself are more evident in its French counterpart,

[67] Bruce Kellner, '"Refined Racism": White Patronage in the Harlem Renaissance', in *The Harlem Renaissance Re-Examined*, ed. by Victor A. Kramer (New York: AMS Press, 1987), pp. 93–106.
[68] Tracy McCabe, 'The Multifaceted Politics of Primitivism in Harlem Renaissance Writing', *Soundings* 80 (Winter 1997), 475–497 (p. 476).
[69] Julio Finn, *Voices of Négritude* (London: Quartet, 1988), p. 100.
[70] Hughes, 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain', in *Harlem Renaissance Reader*, pp. 91–5 (p. 91).

racine, whose similarity to 'race' might explain the Francophone origins of the root/rhizome dichotomy expounded most famously by Deleuze and Guattari, but also by Martinican writer Édouard Glissant. In their uncharacteristically direct claim that '[t]he rhizome is an antigenealogy' in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari offer a conceptual structure, defined in opposition to the root, that is useful for an analysis of the politics of cultural heritage in the Harlem Renaissance, and one which underlines the limits of the kind of absolute realignment with genealogy that Finn suggests took place.[71]

Glissant speaks approvingly of the Deleuzo-Guattarian shift to rhizomatic thinking in his 1987 lecture 'L'errance, l'exil', arguing that the concept 'maintains […] the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root'. The hesitations of Glissant's lecture, which veer from an approval of the rhizome as relevant to his 'Poetics of Relation' to a doubtful glance at the 'nomadic' implications of the concept ('is nomadism not a form of obedience to contingencies that are restrictive?'), speak to the anxiety concerning rootedness in those Harlem Renaissance writings that draw their complexity from unresolved meditations on these concepts.[72] Neither Finn's call for a resurgent cultural taproot, nor the purely Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizome can therefore function as sufficient models for the transatlantic 'poetics of relation' that concern poets such as Hughes and Cullen.

While I have pointed to the oversimplifications nested in Finn's claims of the need for Harlem Renaissance writers 'to re-tap their roots in Africa', the examples he draws upon fittingly unite the poetry of Hughes with Claude McKay and Léopold Senghor. He quotes the latter's essay 'La Poésie Négro-Americain': 'This cultural movement, like all others of its kind, began by searching for its roots […] With Cullen[,] Hughes […] *La mystique africaine,* preached by Marcus Garvey, *a porté ses fruits*. […] When one discovers his Négritude, when one cultivates and exalts it, then one dreams of Africa as of a rich *heritage*.'[73] Senghor, along with co-pioneers of Négritude Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas, had met with the likes of Hughes and McKay in a Parisian salon

[71] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 21.
[72] Édouard Glissant, 'Errantry, Exile', in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 11–22 (p. 11).
[73] Quoted in Finn, p. 99.

hosted by Jane and Paulette Nardal, and in their writings 'they found an expression of black pride, a consciousness of a culture, an affirmation of a distinct identity that was in sharp contrast to French assimilationism.'[74] Senghor, largely basing his assessment on only a small snapshot of the literary output of the two men, could be forgiven for a reading of their work that evades the complexities regarding the significance of the 'rich *heritage*' he admired. However, his explicit association between the Renaissance and the search for roots sets him against the rhizomatic thinking of Glissant. Indeed, this tension serves as a microcosm of the major disagreements within, and critical stances against, the philosophy of Négritude itself. In 'The French Language in the Face of Creolization' Glissant established the dichotomy of 'atavistic cultures' and 'composite cultures […] born from history'.[75] Aligning himself with the latter, Glissant views his own 'genesis' as occurring in 'the belly of the slave ship', a hybrid space that Souleymane Bachir Diagne describes as '[n]ot Africa, then, where the ship was coming from with its hideous freight, but the journey itself, the unpredictable becoming of the voyage to new shores, to new continuously proliferating, rhizomatic identities.'[76] I suggest that while the exploration of this kind of rooted identity exists and cannot be ignored in the work of both Hughes and McKay, the interrelation of their own biographical narratives and the poetic and fictional texts they produced transcend, not Négritude itself, but the potential shortcomings of the philosophy that Glissant's assessment brings into focus.

At the same time, it is important to consider that thinkers on both sides of the Négritude/Créolité debate were wary of 'rootless' narratives of identity.[77] While Glissant seems to speak favourably of the rhizome in his 1987 lecture, he had in fact addressed the concept in its Deleuzo-Guattarian formulation directly a decade earlier in *Le Discours antillais* where, as Neal A. Allar notes, he critiques 'the rhizome for its "abstracting" quality that "largely ignores *other*

[74] Souleymane Bachir Diagne, 'Négritude', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2023) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/negritude/> [Accessed 3 March 2023].
[75] Glissant, 'The French Language in the Face of Creolization', in *French Civilization and its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, ed. by Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele (New York: Lexington Books: 2003), pp. 105–113 (p. 111).
[76] Diagne, 'Négritude'.
[77] For a discussion of this debate and the convergence of the two movements, see Mickaella L. Perina, 'Beyond Négritude and Créolité: The Ongoing Creolization of Identities', *CLR James Journal*, 15 (Spring 2009), 67–91.

situations": "There is [in this concept] an abstracting *a priori* of which I am wary."' Specifically, the question Glissant would later raise concerning 'nomadism' as 'a form of obedience to contingencies' is adumbrated in this earlier text: 'The rhizome is not nomadic, it is rooted, even in the air […]; but not being a *stem* predisposes it to "accept" the inconceivability of the other.'[78] By directly contradicting Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome as *not* rooted Glissant is able to maintain his appreciation of the kind of thinking the concept encourages, while suggesting that its abstract quality might not cohere with a postcolonial discourse in which *some* form of roots ('traces of roots, wounded roots, and roots of uncertain origin') cannot be done away with.

Finn offers McKay's 1922 poem 'Outcast' as a primary example of the rooted aesthetic that he regards as central to the Renaissance, and this poem offers in microcosm both an illustration of the root/rhizome dichotomy and the anxiety concerning the 'question' of Africa that is the focus of Chapter 5. An initial reading of the opening lines makes it evident why this is the McKay poem that Finn has chosen to support his interpretation of rootedness:

> For the dim regions whence my fathers came
> My spirit, bondaged by the body, longs.
> Words felt, but never heard, my lips would frame;
> My soul would sing forgotten jungle songs.
> I would go back to darkness and to peace,
> But the great western world holds me in fee,
> And I may never hope for full release
> While to its alien gods I bend my knee.[79]

The immediate image of a yearning for an ancestral African home is mediated by the choice of 'dim': the yearning itself does not fully know its object, obscured as it is by time, geography, and cultural and linguistic differences. The suggestion that this obscuration might be insurmountable is then emphasised by the awkward syntax of the opening sentence which verbally distances the 'dim regions' from the speaker's body. The object of desire itself slips from the geographical to

[78] Neal A. Allar, 'Rhizomatic Influence: The Antigenealogy of Glissant and Deleuze', *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 6 (January 2019), 1–13 (p. 10). The translations of Glissant are by Allar.
[79] McKay, *Complete Poems*, ed. William J. Maxwell, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 173–4. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.

the literary or vocal in the third line, and these '[w]ords felt, but never heard' anticipate the mournful absence of 'memories alive | Save those that history books create' in Hughes's 'Afro-American Fragment' (1930).[80] The longing of the speaker is not overcome or dismissed, but its persistence is matched by the unrelenting language of barriers in the poem ('dim', 'never heard', 'forgotten', 'darkness'), and the wistful conditionals ('My soul would', 'I would'). To borrow from Freud's opposition between mourning (which can achieve some form of resolution through psychological 'work') and melancholia (which involves a mere circling of the lost object of desire), McKay's speaker is positioned as being plagued with the latter, resulting in a timeless, spectral existence: 'And I must walk the way of life a ghost', 'Under the white man's menace, out of time.' This melancholic longing for 'roots' that cannot even be clearly envisaged is therefore cut across by a more forceful perpendicular attitude of rhizomatic becoming in which, as Deleuze and Guattari write, '[t]ransversal communications between different lines scramble the genealogical trees.'[81] In Chapter 8 I will examine how McKay engages with these and similar moments of dislocation and hybridisation through the combination of traditional verse forms with patois in his early poetry.

McKay's fiction is similarly engaged in the process of firstly offering up, and then problematising, the importance that Finn attributes to rootedness in the Harlem Renaissance context. This will be considered more closely in Chapter 9, but one example involves the author surrogate Ray in *Banjo* (1929). McKay writes that '[t]he Africans gave him [Ray] a positive feeling of wholesome contact with racial roots', even as this feeling emerges out of a moment of *dis*-communication, with Ray basking in the incomprehensible speech of 'the Senegalese and other West African tribes'.[82] Perhaps then the possibilities of rootedness can only be felt through a direct contact with Africa in the present, a position that accords with Hughes's initial impression of the continent during a visit to Senegal in 1923: 'Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book'.[83] We might read this geographical nomadism or 'errance' undertaken

[80] Hughes, 'Afro-American Fragment', *Crisis*, July 1930, p. 235.
[81] Deleuze and Guattari, p. 11
[82] McKay, *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* (New York: Harper, 1929), p. 320. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.
[83] Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940; repr. London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 325.

by McKay and Hughes as one which paradoxically led them to a sense of anti-nomadic rootedness through their direct contact with Africa and its peoples. A tension therefore emerges between those African Americans like Hughes who have seen and felt '[t]he real thing' and those who have not, a disparity that Brent Hayes Edwards identifies in relation to McKay's Ray: 'Not surprisingly, he feels no such confidence about African-derived populations in the Americas, "who, long-deracinated, were still rootless among phantoms and pale shadows and enfeebled by self-effacement before condescending patronage, social negativism, and miscegenation".'[84]

For McKay, the novel form is therefore used to stage debates about the production of literature, as it relates to both the concept of rootedness and the discourse of primitivism, through the filter of his alter-ego Ray. As I will argue in Chapter 9, by employing a melting pot of diverse characters in and around the docks of Marseille in *Banjo*, McKay is able to provide a similarly diverse set of interpretations on questions of racial identity (something that will be reiterated in terms of political factionalism in the novel *Amiable with Big Teeth*, the subject of Chapter 10). In doing so McKay absolves himself of the need to commit to the kind of declaratory positions that Yeats takes up in both his prose and verse, and that critics such as Julio Finn have offered in terms of the way in which ideas such as rootedness are imagined by Harlem Renaissance writers. In Chapter XVI of *Banjo*, a debate between Ray and a student from Martinique addresses the relationship between primitivism and race specifically:

> 'It's the common people, you know, who furnish the bone and sinew and salt of any race or nation. In the modern race of life we're merely beginners. If this renaissance we're talking about is going to be more than a sporadic and scabby thing, we'll have to get down to our racial roots to create it.'
>
> 'I believe in a racial renaissance,' said the student, 'but not in going back to savagery.'
>
> 'Getting down to our native roots and building up from our own people,' said Ray, 'is not savagery. It is culture.'
>
> 'I can't see that,' said the student.
>
> 'You are like many Negro intellectuals who are bellyaching about race,' said Ray. 'What's wrong with you-all is your education. You get a white man's education and learn to despise your own people. You read biased history of the whites conquering the colored

[84] Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 222.

> and primitive peoples, and it thrills you just as it does a white boy belonging to a great white nation.'
>
> (pp. 200–201)

Ray rightly points to the possibility of a racial renaissance, a '[g]etting down to our native roots', that does not resort to savagery as the Martinican student suggests. One of the tensions that emerges here however, and that I will return to in greater detail in Chapter 9, relates to the complexities of McKay's attitudes to primitivism, located as they are in the wide gap established in this sensible distinction between culture and savagery. This is perhaps best expressed in Ray's assertion of an inherent affinity between black people and the playful, heady energy of New York City at the close of *Banjo*'s prequel, *Home to Harlem* (1928), when McKay's protagonist is contemplating leaving the city to work on a freighter:

> He was a reservoir of that intense emotional energy so peculiar to his race. Life touched him emotionally in a thousand vivid ways. Maybe his own being was something of a touchstone of the general emotions of his race. […] It was the simple, lovely touch of life that charmed and stirred him most. . . . The warm, rich-brown face of a Harlem girl seeking romance . . . a late wet night on Lenox Avenue […]. That was the key to himself and to his race. That strange, child-like capacity for wistfulness-and-laughter. . . .[85]

Ray relates this intense sensibility to black musical production, and in turn contextualises it in terms of white resentment: 'No wonder they hated them, when out of their melancholy environment the blacks could create mad, contagious music and high laughter. . . .' (p. 267). McKay touches here upon the optimistic fervour of the Harlem Renaissance generally, and specifically the figure of the New Negro, looking forward to *Banjo* where Ray's sense of his race being 'mere beginners' is not regarded bleakly, but instead as something to be strengthened by a recourse to 'racial roots'. In the following paragraph in *Harlem*, McKay encapsulates Ray's conflicted attitude to what he sees as the 'wistfulness-and-laughter' encoding the black experience in New York:

[85] McKay, *Home to Harlem* (New York: Harper, 1928; repr. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), pp. 265–6. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.

> Going away from Harlem. . . . Harlem! How terribly Ray could hate it sometimes. Its brutality, gang rowdyism, promiscuous thickness. Its hot desires. But, oh, the rich blood-red color of it! The warm accent of its composite voice, the fruitiness of its laughter, the trailing rhythm of its 'blues' and the improvised surprises of its jazz. He had known happiness, too, in Harlem, joy that glowed gloriously upon him like the high-noon sunlight of his tropic island home.

Ray's volatile relationship to the blood-red nature of the city forms part of a larger collection of musings on the merits of civilisation. Ben Etherington suggests that in *Banjo* Ray 'distinguishes degenerate from healthy forms of primitive immediacy and ensures that the latter is not interpreted as the rebelliousness of class *ressentiment*.' We might then identify a parallel between this act of distinguishing and Ray's distancing of himself from what he terms 'these black boys' at the close of the novel:

> From these black boys he could learn how to live—how to exist as a black boy in a white world and rid his conscience of the used-up hussy of white morality. He could not scrap his intellectual life and be entirely like them. He did not want or feel any urge to 'go back' that way. Tolstoy, his great master, had turned his back on the intellect as guide to find himself in Ivan Durak. Ray wanted to hold on to his intellectual acquirements without losing his instinctive gifts.
>
> (p. 322–3)

The possibility of genuine communal solidarity is undermined not only by Ray's sense of difference through superiority, but more significantly in terms of this thesis, through the notion that these black boys are for Ray a means to an end, a model of carefree simplicity that allows him to escape, temporarily, 'being paralyzed by his double consciousness'.[86] The dichotomy that McKay establishes, through Ray, is a continuation of Ray's attitude to the co-protagonist of *Harlem*, Jake Brown: 'Life burned in Ray perhaps more intensely than in Jake. Ray felt more and his range was wider and he could not be satisfied with the easy, simple things that sufficed for Jake' (p. 265). In expressing the difficulties Ray experiences attempting to maintain

[86] Ben Etherington, *Literary Primitivism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 155.

simultaneously 'his intellectual acquirements' and 'his instinctive gifts', McKay risks resorting to a reduction of other characters in the novel to foils who allow Ray to preserve this self-image. Ray's distinction of 'degenerate from healthy forms of primitive immediacy' is therefore one that positions a primitive simplicity and contentedness (Jake; the boys in Marseille) against his own exoticised primitivism, the fantasy world imagined in *Harlem* of 'gleaming-skinned black boys bearing goblets of wine and obedient eunuchs waiting in the offing' (p. 158) in which Ray is the only participant.

As Chapter 2 will explore, the Aran Islands provided a similar touchstone of seeming 'primitive' simplicity for metropolitan British and Irish writers to travel to as a form of escapism, precisely because they represented an *imagined* other that might serve as an antidote to urban life and technological development (or for more reactionary writers, the perceived degeneracy of Western modernity). Terry Eagleton has noted how this process, which Synge engaged with but also challenged in his writings on Aran, was also essential to the project of Irish nationalism, and that it frequently betrayed the very 'imagined' nature of the community that Irish writers and politicians sought a return to by drawing attention to the tension between their interests and those of the Irish people themselves: 'A traditional culture which is now being increasingly abandoned by the people themselves, under the influence of metropolitan manners, is reinvented by an urban intelligentsia for its own political ends.'[87] While not specifically political, this often deliberate blindness to the burgeoning of 'metropolitan manners' manifests itself most notably in Synge's enduring fascination with tramps and tramping. In his travel essay 'The Vagrants of Wicklow' he employs the primitivist characterisation of the tramp as one who is capable of a greater intensity of emotion, but simultaneously the inability to mask it:

> It need hardly be said that in all tramp life plaintive and tragic elements are common, even on the surface. Some are peculiar to Wicklow. In these hills the summer passes in a few weeks from a late spring, full of odour and colour, to an autumn that is premature and filled with the desolate splendour of decay; and it often happens that, in moments when one is

[87] Terry Eagleton, 'The Archaic Avant-Garde', in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 273–319 (p. 286).

> most aware of this ceaseless fading of beauty, some incident of tramp life gives a local human intensity to the shadow of one's own mood.[88]

This surfacing of the 'plaintive and tragic' elements in tramp life allows Synge to conceive of these people almost as actors staging emotions (in the tradition of a Noh play) for the benefit of the metropolitan outsider such that, as David H. Greene put it bluntly in 1947, for Synge '[t]he tramp is not flesh and blood: he is a password to happiness.'[89] Greene cites in support of this claim Maurice Bourgeois's 1913 study *John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre*. Bourgeois considers Synge's engagement with the figure of the tramp largely favourably, but his excellent description is almost prophetic of the questions, both posed and addressed by writers in this thesis, concerning the 'role' that various marginalised groups might play in terms of providing inspiration for the modernist writer, and how the ethical implications of these might be navigated:

> Tramp life—which, we have seen, personally appealed to Synge—may be taken as expressive of the poetic revolt against settled existence, as the free escape into some ideal dreamworld of the artist who finds the daily fare of life unbearably insipid and wearisome. It is the roughest, crudest and least sophisticated life that man surrounded by civilization can live.[90]

Chapter 2 argues, however, that Synge's relationship to the peasant is always complex and ambivalent, an attitude contained in microcosm here. While the tramp might be read as a figure reduced to a mirror of the 'splendour of decay' and positioned as a foil to the mood of the metropolitan outsider, Synge also invites a sympathetic consideration of the 'human intensity' behind such 'incident[s] of tramp life', exemplified immediately after this passage by his recollection of 'a young tramp […] suffering from some terrible disease' who desperately asks for

---

[88] J. M. Synge, 'The Vagrants of Wicklow', in *Collected Works*, ed. by Robin Skelton et al., 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1962–8), II: *Prose*, ed. by Alan Price (1966), pp. 202–8 (p. 204). Further references are cited with volume and page numbers parenthetically in the text.

[89] David H. Greene, '*The Shadow of the Glen* and the Widow of Ephesus', *PMLA*, 62 (March 1947), 233–8 (p. 235).

[90] Maurice Bourgeois, *John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre* (London: Constable, 1913), p. 151. For a recent study that offers a detailed examination of the figure of the tramp in Synge's writings, and an extended engagement with Bourgeois, see Mary Burke, *'Tinkers': Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

'a few pence' from Synge for a table 'that he seemed to have made himself out of twisted rushes and a few branches of osier', that he might 'get a drink and lodging for the night' (II 204–6).

Here and in *The Aran Islands* (1907), Synge ultimately writes back against what he sees as the antidotal strain in nineteenth-century accounts of Aran islanders. For the purposes of this study, the use of the term 'antidotal' is necessarily broad. In simple terms, the word connotes a positive counteracting force to some negative or opposite, and nowhere is this more transparent than in Bourgeois's 'poetic revolt against settled existence' or 'the free escape' from a life deemed 'unbearably insipid and wearisome.'[91] The problem that arises from this position is, of course, the way it centres the figure of the poet or artist while using the encounter with various 'others' (Synge's tramps, Hurston's Jamaican Maroons, the carefree black boys of McKay's fiction) to consign them to that antidotal role. While these writers, in their engagement with the ethnographic Other, never reduce the observer/observed relationship to the sort of scientist/specimen dichotomy set forth by Pitt Rivers, and while indeed the very premise of the separation of observer and observed is reworked in innovative ways, the notion of forms of escapism and antidote as central to the ethnographic project is never fully abandoned or transcended.

Crossing the Black and Green Atlantics

Although relatively few writers have addressed the specific relationship between Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, either in terms of direct forms of influence or, in the case of this thesis, the shared search for a grammar of expression found in ethnography, I will briefly consider how my research is positioned in relation to previous work engaged with this transatlantic subject. Jeremy Braddock's *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (2012) offers a model for studying various, sometimes overlapping modernist movements through the concept of the collection, particularly in the context of art exhibitions and literary anthologies. The significance of Braddock's focus

[91] Eagleton again connects the antidotal strain of modernism with Irish nationalism, identifying a parallel to the former's 'resistance to mass commodity culture' in the latter 'set[ting] its own ancient spirit of aristocracy against the dismally standardized society on its doorstep, and so act[ing] out in its own way the radical conservatism of so much modernist art' (p. 280–1).

emerges through the fact that collection and ethnography are themselves closely interwoven, and similarly politicised, issues examined more closely in Chapters 4 and 5.

While the scope of my research is circumatlantic, considering American, Jamaican, and Irish writers, and Braddock's is primarily American, his discussion of the production of African American anthologies considers the influence of the Celtic Revival, an issue touched upon in this introduction in relation to Synge and Locke and further explored in Chapter 4. *Collecting* also offers important theoretical framings that have informed my concept of collection-as-ethnography. One example is the fact that the tendency 'to isolate the collection as an available *form* for art obscures the constitutive role of the collecting *practices* that the works invoke: archiving, ethnography, museum display, anthologization.'[92] This relationship between the form and practice of collection has already been alluded to indirectly in terms of Locke's editorial construction of *The New Negro*. Unlike the typical framing of anthologies with only an initial preface or introductory essay, as with James Weldon's Johnson's *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922), Locke employs a more interventionist approach, including a foreword and four of his own essays, and structuring the book itself like a modernist art object, evident both in the diversity of literary forms and the punctuation of the texts with illustrations by Aaron Douglas. Locke's approach is therefore doubly interventionist. Firstly, *The New Negro* emerged in the context of the popularity of what Braddock calls the 'interventionist anthology', one which 'had an agency distinct from […] that of the more expressly canon-defining modernist anthologies such as those of Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson (*The New Poetry*, 1917)' which 'make comparatively few claims upon the social' (p. 16). Secondly, essays such as 'The New Negro' employ a combination of social commentary and the use of prescriptive style. Locke suggests, for instance, that 'the Negro of the Northern centers has reached a stage where tutelage, even of the most interested and well-intentioned sort, must give place to new relationships, where positive self-direction must be reckoned with in ever increasing measure.'[93] This question of tutelage, and the related concern of white patronage, will be analysed further in Chapters 5 and 6. Both of these forms of intervention speak to the question of whether the collection, as a form of ethnographic

[92] Jeremy Braddock, *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 2. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.
[93] Locke, 'The New Negro', p. 8.

discourse, could function as 'a representative body of modernism,' and how it might frame what Braddock terms the 'ideological justification of its inclusions and exclusions' (p. 12).

Some important works which offer a more direct parallel examination of Irish and African American literature that have informed my discussion in this thesis are Tracy Mishkin's *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances: Language, Identity, and Representation* (1998), Lauren Onkey's *Blackness and Transatlantic Irish Identity* (2010), and the essay collection *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas* (2009). Through her adoption of a sustained comparison of the meanings of 'renaissance' to both African American and Irish writers, Mishkin offers a narrative overview of their similarities, points of departure, and shared networks of influence, reflecting her discussion through historiographical, racial, and political lenses. While my thesis also employs these modes of interpretation to focus the joint consideration of the Harlem Renaissance and Irish modernism, they are related to the overarching idea of why ethnography was important to these literary moments. However, Mishkin's study does offer an important consideration of comparative work that has united the two renaissances, and particularly early forms of identification and similarity articulated by African American and Irish writers themselves. As she notes in her conclusion, one of her most important contributions has been not so much as an initiator of Irish/African American literary comparison, but rather someone whose research has drawn attention to a long history of such comparisons. This history did not end with the fading of the Harlem Renaissance itself, but persisted sporadically throughout the remainder of the century. While these transatlantic comparisons existed largely within the political sphere (Mishkin notes how the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association [NICRA] drew on the 'pacifist non-violent techniques' of the American Civil Rights Movement), even these were often inflected by a reminder of the earlier eras of literary renaissance: McKay's '"We Shall Overcome" was a favorite on NICRA marches.'[94]

As Mishkin is concerned with the idea of an Irish literary renaissance which is largely synonymous with the Celtic Revival, she locates, in the temporal gap that exists between this revival and the Harlem Renaissance, important examples of direct influence of the former on the

[94] Tracy Mishkin, *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances: Language, Identity, and Representation* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida 1998), p. 102.

latter other than the famous comparisons with Irish political and cultural change referenced by Locke in 'The New Negro' and Weldon Johnson in the preface to *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922). In her introduction she identifies, for instance, a 1919 article by Willis Richardson, 'The Hope of a Negro Drama', in which Richardson distinguishes what he sees as genuine 'Negro Drama' from simply 'plays with Negro characters', and calls upon African American playwrights to see the Irish theatre movement as 'an excellent model, and one by which we ought to profit'.[95] As Mishkin's work is constantly situating the kinds of literary analysis undertaken in this thesis alongside a political comparativism, she also ties pronouncements by the likes of Richardson and Johnson, which promoted Ireland as an artistic model, to those of Marcus Garvey who looked to the Irish independence movement for inspiration: 'We believe Ireland should be free even as Africa shall be free for the Negroes of the world'.[96]

In her introduction to *Blackness and Transatlantic Irish Identity*, Onkey draws attention to the purposively problematic nature of her subtitle, 'Celtic Soul Brothers', which 'mixes the transnational "celtic" with the pan-African, anticolonial U.S. Black Power moniker "soul brother"': 'But the term is also dangerously utopian, obfuscating the pitfalls of the Irish claim to an antiracist identity based on shared experience.' What Onkey's discussion of her provocative subtitle foregrounds, then, is the dual importance of seeking out, while being critically attentive to, the idea of Irish/African American solidarity.[97] While her primary focus is on the geographically specific interaction of Irish Americans and African Americans (as opposed to the transatlantic scope of this thesis), her calls for, and her own participation in, a critical evaluation of the possibilities and limits of interracial solidarity is an important one. After outlining some of

[95] Willis Richardson, 'The Hope of a Negro Drama', *Crisis*, 19 (1919), 338–9 (p. 338).

[96] Quoted in Mishkin, p. 19.

[97] In his introduction to the 2010 *Comparative American Studies* special issue 'The Celtic Nations and the African Americas', Daniel G. Williams emphasises both the importance and the growing prevalence of the kind of caution that Onkey is describing: the contributors to the issue acknowledge, he writes, that 'comparisons of this kind are fraught with dangers and potential misunderstandings. Although the comparisons between Celtic and African American cultures will be seen as enabling and illuminating for some, others will see little more than a "self-aggrandising self victimisation" on the part of the relatively economically privileged "Celts".' Williams, 'Introduction: Celticism and the Black Atlantic', *Comparative American Studies*, 8 (June 2010), 81–7 (p. 82). For a further consideration of the 'experiential dimensions' of such comparisons, and what motivates them, see Charlotte Williams, 'The Celtic Nations and the African Americas: Reclaiming the '*lost cause*'?, *Comparative American Studies*, 8 (December 2010), 323–6.

the 'pitfalls' that intervene to work against this possibility of solidarity, Onkey offers a subtle but significant qualification to the kinds of examples that Mishkin has identified in terms of the influence that African American culture drew from Irish examples:

> While there have been flickers of dialogue when African Americans looked to the Irish as models—most famously, during the Harlem Renaissance—there is not a parallel trope of African Americans comparing themselves to the Irish, one indication of how much the Irish were associated with anti-African American sentiments in the United States.

While both my thesis and studies such as Mishkin's have paid attention to the importance of these 'flickers', and specifically why Ireland was often singled out as a cultural influence by writers such as Locke and Johnson, the distinction Onkey articulates between literary models and actual group identity speaks not only to the importance of a proper consideration of the distinct life experiences of Irish and African American people during the period of the Harlem Renaissance, but also to how such distinctions shaped later African American resentment towards Irish American racism in the following decades.

Despite these important qualifications and distinctions, Onkey's work serves as an example of the need to move beyond the discourse of 'margin and center, colonized and colonizer', an interpretive mode that she identifies with Luke Gibbons's *Transformations in Irish Culture* (1996): 'Gibbons values hybrids that seek alternative connections: "'lateral' journeys along the margins which short-circuit the colonial divide. […] Hybridity need not always take the high road: where there are borders to be crossed, unapproved roads might prove more beneficial in the long run than those patrolled by global powers".'[98] And while Onkey again points to her specifically American context to emphasise the difficulty of Gibbons's notion achieving the same resonance in that country, my thesis stresses both the significance of these '"lateral" journeys along the margins', and the precarity that stems from the very fact of their marginalised position. What Gibbons is calling for, and what Onkey also cautiously endorses, is not restricted in my work to a 'short-

[98] Lauren Onkey, *Blackness and Transatlantic Irish Identity: Celtic Soul Brothers* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 5.

circuit[ing]' between considerations of Irish and African American experiences, but also extends, in Chapter 2, to the mutual ethnographic interest of different rural communities within Ireland that Synge interacted with. Here, I relate the ethnographic processes that Synge is participating in and commenting on to the work of Elleke Boehmer who, like Gibbons, underlines the rich possibilities of work that examines the 'contact zones' between peripheries that exist in addition to those between coloniser and colonised.

The points of convergence between the collection *The Black and Green Atlantic* with my research are too numerous to detail fully. These include Robert Philipson's interpretation of McKay's novels as postcolonial phenomena and David Lloyd's description of a shift from naturalist to historicist modes of racial essentialism which is suggestive of parallels with the development of evolutionist into 'modernist' anthropology. Of course, this collection takes its title from Gilroy's theorisation of the 'Black Atlantic' in his 1993 study of the same name.[99] Among the many important interventions inaugurated by Gilroy, I want to draw attention to one which speaks to many of the anxieties concerning the reconciliation of opposites worked through by writers of the 'Black and Green Atlantic(s)'. In a 2008 interview with Gilroy, American philosopher Tommie Shelby suggests that Du Bois conceived of racial solidarity as 'sometimes a very nation-specific kind—the Negro in America—sometimes a broader, more global form of Pan-Africanism.' He then asks, 'Do you think there's a way to reconcile these dimensions of his thought, to square that circle, as it were?' Gilroy replies: 'But why should we square it? Why can't we live with that tension? We're not dialecticians. He was a dialectician, of a kind. But we don't have to be, you know? So I would rather live with that tension. That's what my book *The Black Atlantic* was supposed to be about, actually.'[100] Particularly in the African American context, but also for writers such as Joyce and McKay, it is the *irresolvability* of opposites and the possibilities that emerge from 'liv[ing] with that tension' that generate simultaneously anxiety and creative possibility.

[99] For an overview of Gilroy's influence on Irish studies, see Paul Williams, *Paul Gilroy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 140–6.
[100] Tommie Shelby and Gilroy, 'Cosmopolitanism, Blackness, and Utopia', *Transition*, 98 (2008), 116–135 (p. 119).

The grammar of Gilroy's sense of the Atlantic contributed to a small but important number of works before *The Black and Green Atlantic*, including Gibbons's *Transformations*. One of Gibbons's most important claims is made in response to Gilroy's famous assertion that 'the concentrated intensity of the slave experience is something that marked out blacks as the first truly modern people handling in the nineteenth century dilemmas and difficulties which would only become the substance of everyday life in Europe a century later.'[101] While the experience of the Great Famine and political repression in Ireland are incomparable in terms of both brutality and context to enslaved African Americans in the nineteenth century, Gibbons argues that Ireland, too, 'did not have to await the twentieth century to undergo the shock of modernity: disintegration and fragmentation were already part of its history so that, in a crucial but not always welcome sense, Irish culture experienced modernity before its time.' This parallel drawn by Gibbons is therefore particularly important in terms of the relationship of literature to slavery, colonisation, and economic subjugation. The conception of modernism 'as turning its back on the torpor of tradition in Ireland in order to embrace the exhilaration of the metropolitan avant-garde' was already outdated when Gibbons was writing, and Chapter 4 of my thesis therefore explores how Joyce stands antithetically in relation to this 'floating' conception of modernism and is instead 'carrying with [him] the nightmare of Irish history, the "ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry" of the Irish political landscape.'[102]

This study therefore offers a contribution to what Richard Rankin Russell describes as a '"Black and Green moment" in literary studies whereby the rich interactions of black and Irish cultures […] are being mapped and elucidated.'[103] I have used the term 'Irish modernism' to demarcate both a broader temporal literary period (which encompasses the writings of Joyce and Yeats in the 1930s) and to distinguish my thesis from the suggestion of a comparison of Irish and African American 'revivalism' that concerns work such as Mishkin's. While Mishkin is necessarily focused more on the Celtic Revival as a potential influence on the Harlem Renaissance

[101] Gilroy, p. 221.
[102] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), p. 6.
[103] Richard Rankin Russell, 'The Black and Green Atlantic: Violence, History, and Memory in Natasha Trethewey's "South" and Seamus Heaney's "North"', *Southern Literary Journal*, 46 (Spring 2014), 155–172 (p. 157).

owing to the distinct periods that these artistic and literary moments occupied, and while my thesis also considers various examples of these forms of influence, I move beyond both the earlier (and in many ways better-delimited) period of the Revival, and the related notion of an 'Irish renaissance'. In this way, my thesis follows the example of the 2009 collection *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive* (many essays of which have influenced my thinking), which uses this term in place of revival or renaissance in order to better accommodate a temporally, and stylistically, wider range of writers (from Synge to Joyce). Both Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance responded to an emerging imperative for a new grammar of representation for colonised and marginalised subjects. As this introduction has suggested, ethnographic discourse provided these writers models for this grammar owing to their shared interest in race, national identity, and the recovery and reimagining of cultural history. Just as this discourse was being reshaped by an increased attention to scientific detail, the methodology of participant-observation, and a conscious distancing from the nineteenth-century evolutionist model of anthropology, Irish, African American, and Caribbean writers were both contributing directly to this development and also asking how ethnographic motifs and methods might be incorporated into the production of the literary text. However, the question of how ethnography should shape and in turn be shaped by modernist writing was an intensely contested one. This politicisation of ethnography stemmed primarily from an ethical consideration of its practice and an interrogation of its efficacy. Could the 'ethnographic text', whether a scientific monograph or those writings which staged different debates about the discourse through their characters, personae, and plots, ever claim to truly, and fairly, represent the human subject of their study, whether that subject was as intimate as one's own society, or a far-flung island culture? Through the intersection of this debate with the discourses of race and primitivism, I consider how Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance both employed and reinterpreted ethnography as, variously, an antidote, an imperial practice, and a strategy through which the modernist text might, as Frantz Fanon writes, 'plunge into the chasm of the past'.[104]

[104] Frantz Fanon, 'Racism and Culture', in *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1969; repr. 1988), pp. 29–44 (p. 43).

Chapter 1

Yeats: The Celt and the Celtic Revival

> John Synge, I and Augusta Gregory, thought
> All that we did, all that we said or sang
> Must come from contact with the soil, from that
> Contact everything Antaeus-like grew strong.
> We three alone in modern times had brought
> Everything down to that sole test again,
> Dream of the noble and the beggarman.[1]
>
> — Yeats, 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited' (1937)

There exists a long and complex history of assessments of Yeats's politics (and, more recently, meta-assessments by Joseph Chadwick, Rob Doggett, and others[2]) that began during the poet's life and were particularly prominent in critical responses in the decades following his death, which I will turn to later in this chapter. While the aim here is not to contribute to arguments for or against certain interpretations of Yeatsian politics, the positionings that emerge from them are relevant to the relationship between ethnography and Yeats's conception of 'the people'. This relevance emerges in the idea that Yeats's anxieties about the masses are closely tied up with a desire for both cultural salvage and cultural continuity. Their proponents and defenders must be of 'the better blood', that old aristocratic order driven out, he believed, by new money arrivistes and the

[1] Yeats, 'The Municipal Gallery Revisited', in *Poems*, pp. 326–8 (p. 328).
[2] Joseph Chadwick, 'Violence in Yeats's Later Politics and Poetry', *ELH*, 55 (Winter 1988), 869–893; Rob Doggett, 'Writing out (Of) Chaos: Constructions of History in Yeats's "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" and "Meditations in Time of Civil War"', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 47 (Summer 2001), 137–168.

middlebrow middle-classes, 'the noisy set | Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen | The martyrs call the world' as he portrayed them in 'Adam's Curse'.[3]

A repudiation of perceived middle-class philistinism runs consistently throughout Yeats's career, and across his complicated political trajectory, from enthusiast of socialism via his interactions with the work of William Morris to quasi-fascist in his later life. In the essay 'What is "Popular Poetry"?' (1901) he describes his early attraction to and later condemnation of 'popular' poetry which he associates with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Walter Scott. To characterise this further, he establishes an opposition between these 'poets of the middle class' and an undefined primitive Other who retains an unbroken connection to an oral literary past. The former group 'have unlearned the unwritten tradition which binds the unlettered, so long as they are masters of themselves, to the beginning of time and to the foundation of the world, and who have not learned the written tradition which has been established upon the unwritten.' In order to retain the separation of these groupings, Yeats offers the problematic and incorrect suggestion that this 'unlettered' people remain illiterate in order to preserve their connection to mythical beginnings. This speaks to Yeats's paternalist vision of the Irish peasantry, articulated most unequivocally in this essay, and framed as an intimate union of high and low that he regards as splintered by the rise of the middle classes:

> Indeed, it is certain that before the counting-house had created a new class and a new art without breeding and without ancestry, and set this art and this class between the hut and the castle, and between the hut and the cloister, the art of the people was as closely mingled with the art of the coteries as was the speech of the people that delighted in rhythmical animation, in idiom, in images, in words full of far-off suggestion, with the unchanging speech of the poets.

That the attack on this 'new class' employs the language of 'breeding' and 'ancestry' is not coincidental. While it might be read from a posthumous perspective as a harbinger of fascistic attractions to hierarchies, suffused as they were with the language of social Darwinism, the more immediate suggestion is of the peasant-aristocrat relationship where the groups themselves remain

[3] Yeats, 'Adam's Curse', p. 78.

rigidly stratified even while they partake in the cosy 'mingling' that Yeats imagines. As someone whose youthful interest in socialist ideas was largely academic and even romantic, whose commitment to nationalism was largely cultural and certainly not militaristic, and who enjoyed a comfortable position as part of a wealthy Anglo-Irish family, Yeats's vision of segregated but spiritually unified classes was personally useful. It allowed him to argue for the preservation of class difference by inculpating the disruptive influence of the middle classes and their philistine tastes. This strategy also avoided the accusation of elitism by maintaining the assertion that there existed a timeless nobility inherent in the Irish peasantry. It is perhaps fitting, then, that while being remembered for poems such as 'Easter, 1916' which condemn British atrocities during the Rising, in this essay, and over twenty years later in his Nobel Prize lecture, Yeats does not agitate for practical political action. In the former, he laments that most Irish poets do not have 'something else to write about besides political opinions' and in the latter, he conjures an image of a people numbed to aesthetic appreciation by political rhetoric.[4]

In her essay on Yeats and Nietzsche, Rosemarie Battaglia explicitly equates the figure of the 'aristocratic ideal' so integral to the Yeatsian view of society to the latter's *Übermensch*.[5] While the manifestation of this ideal in 'What is "Popular Poetry"?' — of an aristocracy that lives in harmony with, but separate from, the peasantry in their mutual opposition to bourgeois materialism — does not seem identical to that of the *Übermensch*, Battaglia draws upon evidence to suggest at least their similarities.[6] She compares, for instance, Nietzsche's desire for the elite individual to strive towards a 'citadel and a secrecy where he is saved from the crowd, the many, the great majority' and Yeats's conception of a similar 'perfect community' that, as Alex Zwerdling writes, 'was conceivable because it was exclusive and could coexist with the ordinary commercial world'. This community was 'clearly intended only for a small group of men and women' — in Yeats's

[4] Yeats, 'What is "Popular Poetry"?', in *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1903), pp. 1–15 (pp. 2–13).

[5] Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche offers an explanation of Nietzsche's term relevant to Yeats's engagement with elitism: 'The notion of rearing the Superman is only a new form of an ideal Nietzsche already had in his youth, that *"the object of mankind should lie in its highest individuals"*'. 'Introduction', in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. by Thomas Common (1909; repr. New York: Modern Library, 1917), pp. ix–xxiii (p. xi).

[6] Rosemarie Battaglia, 'Yeats, Nietzche, and the Aristocratic Ideal', *College Literature*, 13 (Winter 1986), 88–94 (p. 88).

case, the Anglo-Irish coterie surrounding Lady Gregory that met at Coole Park in the 1890s.[7] The larger Unity of Culture, which Yeats would retrospectively consider as youthful idealism in his *Autobiographies*, gives way to this 'achievable' sphere that mimicked the aristocratic aspect of that vision of unity.[8]

In addition to their turning away from the crowd, Battaglia also identifies a second instance of coherence between the cultural attitudes of Yeats and Nietzsche: the belief that the aristocratic ideal should draw on the influence of Greek culture. The younger Yeats's belief in a Unity of Culture was 'no longer possible at all' because of Ireland's imbrication in a form of globalised culture:

> One cannot have a national art in the Young Ireland sense, that is to say an art recognized at once by all as national because obviously an expression of what all believe and feel, though one can have an imitation, because no modern nation is an organism like a monastery by rule and discipline, by a definite table of values understood by all, or even, as the Western peasants are, by habit of feeling and thought. Am I not right; is there not an organism of habit – a race held together by folk tradition, let us say?[9]

Despite his dejection at the impossibility of a national art, the models that the younger Yeats had tried to 'create a national literature' based on were those 'pure race[s] that 'have lived long in one place & have become perfectly fitted to that place',[10] namely 'ancient Greece and Rome and Egypt.' While lamenting the disappearance of a 'pure race' is very much suggestive of an attraction to fascistic beliefs, the impossibility of this purity is paradoxically what marks the older Yeats's turn *away* from racial essentialism. He bitterly recalls that when 'England & America were

---

[7] Alex Zwerdling, *Yeats and the Heroic Ideal* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 66.
[8] Yeats offers Byzantium as the paradigmatic example of the 'Unity of Culture' in *A Vision*: 'I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one'. In *Autobiographies* he repudiates 'the dream of my early manhood, that a modern nation can return to Unity of Culture'. *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. III: Autobiographies*, ed. by Douglas Archibald and William H. O'Donnell (New York: Scribner, 2010), pp. 521 n. 47, 229.
[9] Yeats, *Memoirs*, ed. by Denis Donoghue (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 251.
[10] Yeats, *Yeats's 'Vision' Papers, Vol. 3: Sleep and Dream Notebook, 'Vision' Notebooks 1 and 2, Card File*, ed. by Robert Anthony Martinich and Margaret Mills Harper (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992), p. 63. See Hiroyuki Yamasaki, 'Yeats and Darkness: The Hybrid Source of Values', *Journal of Irish Studies*, 20 (2005), 3–11 (p. 4).

especially mixed', Ireland 'was resisting mixture', but as it now seemed to him inevitable, 'race' itself had to take on a decidedly non-biological dimension: 'In the past pure races have been made by blood, but bloods are now so mixed that in the future they will have to be made by culture.'[11] This notion of race defined and unified through cultural production is, fittingly, what Claude McKay suggests the Celtic Revival meant to him personally: 'The Russian literary renaissance and also the Irish had absorbed my interest. My idea of a renaissance was one of talented persons of an ethnic or national group working individually or collectively in a common purpose and creating things that would be typical of their group.'[12]

This chapter focuses on Yeats's ideas of culture before this late phase of resignation, when the notion of a 'pure race' was inextricable from the conception of the 'Celt', a person regarded, because of his enduring connection to the peasantry, as superior to the urbanised, materialist English counterpart whose poetry 'takes its tune from the great cities and gets its taste from the schools and not from old custom'.[13] Two ill-defined but crucial ethno-cultural figures emerge in Yeats's writing: the Celt and the Greek. Although Nietzsche's association between the Greeks and an aristocratic ideal was important to Yeats, the older and more crucial source for conceptualising both of these groups was Matthew Arnold.

The writings of Arnold, particularly *The Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) and *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), were immensely significant in shaping and reinvigorating interest in the concept of the Celt across Britain and Ireland in the Victorian period. This very popularisation was responsible for arousing divisive responses from writers of the Celtic Revival who in turns embraced, adapted, and condemned this Englishman writing about Irish affairs. Tracing the critical reception of Arnold's portrayal of the Celt, T. J. Boynton has argued that the prevailing discourse typical of the 'Irish Studies' school, 'spearheaded by critics such as Seamus Deane, David Lloyd, David Cairns, and Shaun Richards', has engaged in a 'postcolonial reappraisal of Arnold's thought' in which his 'race theories have been identified as a sort of Trojan horse by which, under the guise of celebrating the racial talents of the Celt, Arnold sought to shore up Anglo-Irish colonial

[11] Yeats, *'Vision Papers'*, p. 63.
[12] McKay, *A Long Way Home*, ed. by Gene Andrew Jarrett (New York: Lee Furman, 1937; repr. London: Rutgers University Press, 2007), p. 246.
[13] Yeats, 'The Galway Plains', in *Ideas of Good and Evil*, pp. 333–338 (p. 337).

rule through the pseudoscientific codification of an imperially instrumental definition of Irishness.'[14] While Boynton's essay points to the more recent emergence of an 'ethnological school' within the context of Arnold criticism, and more nuanced accounts of his commitment to Anglo-Irish colonialism, the 'Trojan horse' metaphor favoured by the likes of Deane remains an effective descriptor of the Arnoldian dialectic in which the praise of Celtic culture is strategically employed as a countermeasure to his treatment of the Irish in the political sphere, such as his famous description of the Celt being 'ineffectual in politics.'[15]

In a 1900 review of recent translations of Gaelic literature, T. W. Rolleston suggests that Arnold's Celtic writings came at a time when '[t]he lack of such translations was much felt' and that his influence was correlative to the increasing circulation of both the 'imaginative literature of the Celt' and historical works such as Standish O'Grady's in the second half of the century.[16] I argue that Revivalist writers were constantly engaged in an explicit distancing of their conceptions of the Celt from those of Arnold, but that in these defiant acts of positioning the scale of his influence is revealed. The most common evidence of this influence in the Revival is in the association of the Irish with Hellenism, a common motif in Arnold's writing that I will return to. For instance, after asking his readers '[w]ho were those Celts' in *A Literary History of Ireland* (1899), Douglas Hyde turns immediately to a comparison with the Greeks,[17] and among the various Hellenistic comparisons in O'Grady's *History of Ireland* series, many resort to a thoroughly racialised rhetoric which is itself tied to the identification of a common literary history: 'In the times of which Homer sang, the Greek nobles had yellow hair and blue eyes. At the time when the heroic literature of Ireland was composed, the Irish nobles had yellow hair and blue eyes.'[18] Some of the most important texts critical of Arnold in this period are D. P. Moran's articles from 1898 to 1900 collected in *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (1905). He launches an explicit

[14] T. J. Boynton, '"Things That Are Outside of Ourselves": Ethnology, Colonialism, and the Ontological Critique of Capitalism in Matthew Arnold's Criticism', *English Literary History*, 80 (Spring 2013), 149–172 (p. 149–50).
[15] Matthew Arnold, 'On the Study of Celtic Literature, in *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. by R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 291-386 (p. 346).
[16] T. W. Rolleston, 'Some Recent Translations from the Gaelic', *All Ireland Review*, 26 May 1900, p. 2.
[17] Douglas Hyde, *A Literary History of Ireland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899), p. 1.
[18] Standish O'Grady, *History of Ireland: The Heroic Period*, 2 vols (London: Sampson Low, Searle, Marston, & Rivington, 1878–80), I, p. 15.

attack on Arnoldian Celticism, and offers instead a theory of racial identity that seems ironically more extreme and essentialist by comparison. While acknowledging the pride of and affection for 'Grattan, Flood, Tone, Emmet and all the rest who dreamt and worked for an independent country', Moran resists any top-down, individualist basis for cultural identity, arguing bluntly instead that '[t]he foundation of Ireland is the Gael, and the Gael must be the element that absorbs.'[19] This is just one of many examples of how Revivalist responses to the 'Celt', even in polemical texts such as Moran's, frequently expressed ambivalent or contradictory formulations of how this figure was situated in relation to nation, ethnicity, and culture. While Moran's prioritisation of 'the Gael' might seem to speak to a corresponding political program built around ethnic identity, his essays had the opposite emphasis, with the suggestion, as Daniel G. Williams notes, that 'Gaelic culture […] be placed "on top" of the nation's cultural hierarchy[,] represent[ing] a move from politics to culture as the location of the nationalist struggle'.[20] Here Moran is in alignment with Yeats's own sense of a general shift from political to cultural priorities at the *fin-de-siècle*, something that he would reflect on in his 1923 Nobel Prize lecture:

> The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish War, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891. A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned away from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived and the race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event's long gestation. Dr. Hyde founded the Gaelic League, which was for many years to substitute for political argument a Gaelic grammar, and for political meetings village gatherings, where songs were sung and stories told in the Gaelic language. But the great mass of our people, accustomed to interminable political speeches, read little, and so from the very start we felt that we must have a theatre of our own. The theatres of Dublin had nothing about them that we could call our own. They were empty buildings hired by the English travelling companies and we wanted Irish plays and Irish players. When we thought of these plays we thought of everything that was romantic and poetical, for the nationalism we had called up – like that every generation had called up in moments of discouragement – was romantic and poetical.[21]

[19] D. P. Moran, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1905), pp. 36–7.
[20] Daniel G. Williams, *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority: From Arnold to Du Bois* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 122.
[21] Yeats, 'The Irish Dramatic Movement: A Lecture Delivered to the Royal Academy of Sweden', in *Autobiographies*, pp. 410–18 (pp. 410–11). See Williams, *Ethnicity*, p. 122.

It might be tempting to read into Yeats's description of his 'disillusioned and embittered' compatriots a sense that he shared in their disappointment at the frustrations of political progress, but as this paragraph continues it is clear that these various examples of 'substitut[ing] for political argument a Gaelic grammar' were seen by Yeats as a welcome corrective for a populace grown numb to the arts under the influence of 'interminable political speeches'.

Despite this general alignment between Moran and Yeats in terms of racial essentialism and the apparent endorsement of a shift to cultural revival, Moran's forceful opposition between 'Celt' and 'Gael' marks the moment of departure from both Yeats and the Arnoldian influence that Moran saw in him:

> We were all on the lookout for someone to think for us, for we had given up that habit with our language. Matthew Arnold happily came along just in the nick of time, and in a much quoted essay suggested, among other things, that one of the characteristics of Celtic poetry was 'natural magic' […] Then yet another Irish make-believe was born, and it was christened 'The Celtic Note,' Mr. W. B. Yeats standing sponsor for it.[22]

While Moran's insistence on this distinction may appear perplexing or simply semantic, it is perhaps more intelligible in terms of his interpretation of Arnold's Celt as a foreign, patronising fiction, and crucially one that would serve as a distraction from native, grassroots change and revival. So, while Yeats shared with Moran an insistence on the importance of cultural revival, for the former this was closely associated with English-language literary production as opposed to, say, promotion of the Gaelic language or Gaelic sports. High art was prioritised over the horizontal modes of voluntary association in Irish culture. Yeats's belief in the aristocratic nature of the peasantry can then be seen as the kind of out-of-touch, bourgeois fantasy against which Moran was expressing frustration. By pointing to (and inventing) the aristocratic-primitive, Yeats was simultaneously offering a thinly veiled adaptation of the Montainesque noble savage and obscuring the real material impoverishment of the Irish peasantry.

[22] Moran, p. 104.

Owing to internal attacks on the Arnoldian Celt from the likes of Moran (despite the proximity of many of his theories to Arnold's), Yeats felt the need to set out his position on the anxiety of Arnold's influence, such as when he responded to the criticism that Moran levelled at him in a letter of 1900 published in Moran's own nationalist *The Leader*. Here Yeats rejects the magnitude of the Arnoldian inheritance that had been ascribed to him and suggests 'that the characteristics [Arnold] has called Celtic, mark all races just in so far as they preserve the qualities of the early races of the world.'[23] As a rebuttal to Moran's belief that he had invested in essentialised constructions of the Celt, Yeats offers instead a claim of a universal dimension to Arnold's description and a continuum between the ancient and contemporary peasantry. As Williams and John Kelleher have noted, Yeats would continue to borrow from Arnold, even specifically suggesting that, 'were it not for one or two delicate and musical translations' in his predecessor's *The Study of Celtic Literature*, 'Welsh poetry would not even be a great name to most of us'.[24] Yeats's deflection from Moran's critique involves an appeal to the universal aspect of Arnold's Celticism — the suggestion that what inspired Arnold's essentialist descriptions could 'mark all races' who share this preservationist impulse. Far from distancing himself from Arnold, then, Yeats here follows the sort of cross-cultural comparativism in O'Grady's *History of Ireland* in re-emphasising the appeal to an elect group of 'races' (the Irish, the Greeks, and for the later Yeats, the Indians) whose poetic abilities are seen as imbricated with their commitment to cultural continuity and preservation.

Yeats's essays of the 1880s share with the writings of Hyde and O'Grady the maintenance of the Arnoldian association between the Irish and the Greeks, in both cultural terms and the sense of a shared ethnic 'temperament'. The Greek correspondence was preferred to the Roman as the latter 'was identified with a vulgar and brutalizing materialism, correspondent with empire and England', and the Revivalists found a form of resistance to this materialism in the Hiberno-

[23] Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, Vol. II: 1896–1900*, ed. by Warwick Gould, John Kelly and Deirdre Toomey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 568.
[24] Yeats, 'Mr. Rhys' *Welsh Ballads*', in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol IX: Early Articles and Reviews*, ed. by John P. Frayne and Madeleine Marchaterre (New York: Scribner, 2004), p. 391. See also John Kelleher, 'Matthew Arnold and the Celtic Revival', in *Perspectives of Criticism*, ed. by Harry Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 197–221.

Hellenic equivalency.[25] The ironic simultaneity of an explicit rejection of Arnoldian Celticism by the Revivalists with their adoption of many of his cultural theories is most famously offered, and satirised, in *Ulysses*, where both Buck Mulligan in 'Telemachus' (with his desire to 'Hellenise' the island) and the nationalists in 'Cyclops' look to invent Classical and European genealogies as a form of resistance to British imperialism. Indeed, Joyce's ironic treatment of both Mulligan and the nationalists centres on the specific Arnoldian Hellenic-Hebraic dichotomy from *Culture and Anarchy*. As Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman have noted, 'Arnold's essentially intellectual distinction underwent a series of modulations as it was popularized in the closing decades of the nineteenth century', becoming a general opposition between philistinism (Jewish) and bohemianism (Greek).[26] Mulligan appears baffled by their amalgamation in the figure of the Jewish Bloom whom he catches inspecting the Greek nudes at the National Museum: 'O, I fear me, he is Greeker than the Greeks. His pale Galilean eyes were upon her mesial groove' (*U* 9.616–17). While Arnold is not spared his own satirisation in *Ulysses*, Joyce does at least contrast Mulligan's incredulity at the possibility of Hellenic/Hebraic union with the proposal in Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* of a moderate reorientation of British culture in the Hellenic direction, and ultimately, the expression of belief in their potential reconciliation. Or, as 'The Cap' exclaims in the 'Circe' episode: 'Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet' (*U* 15.2095–6).

Yeats's engagement with Arnoldian Hellenism is more ambivalent, and while he avoided any direct ethnico-historical connection between Ireland and Greece, he frequently drew comparisons between the two that blurred the lines between merely cultural similarities and the sort of innate qualities suggested by Arnold and attacked by Revivalists such as Moran. When Yeats, for instance, writes that 'the Greek has the same perceptive, emotional temperament as the Celt', he is following Arnold's repeated insistence in *Culture and Anarchy* of the Hellenic 'spontaneity of consciousness' which he believed the Victorian Briton should aspire to absorb, as an antidote to a prevailing 'Hebraism' characterised by 'cultivated inaction' and a narrow minded

[25] Len Platt, *Joyce and the Anglo-Irish: A Study of Joyce and the Literary Revival* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1998), p. 111.
[26] Don Gifford and Robert J. Seidman, '*Ulysses' Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's 'Ulysses'*, 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 16.

emphasis on 'the religious side of man'.[27] Hellenism therefore marks an important site of confrontation in Yeats's desire to both distance himself from Arnold and to justify this heritage. As it was Arnold's specific 'invention' of the Celt that Moran took issue with, Yeats's justification involves a shift towards a universalist perspective, into which both the Irish and the Greeks are portrayed as possessing the equally fictitious 'qualities of the early races of the world'. Yeats emphasises this sense of a cultural commonality rather than a direct or historical connection as early as 1893 in 'The Message of the Folk-lorist' in which he draws on the Darwinian language of common descent to suggest that '[t]he root-stories of the Greek poets are told to-day at the cabin fires of Donegal'.[28] This focus on the affinities with oral literature was no coincidence, as Yeats repeated this sentiment in 1899 with the assertion that '[t]he audiences of Sophocles and of Shakespeare and of Calderon were not unlike the audiences I have heard listening in Irish cabins to songs in Gaelic'.[29] Similarly, writing about the first play to be produced at the Abbey Theatre, *On Baille's Strand* (1903), he expressed a desire to hear 'Greek tragedy, spoken with a Dublin accent'.[30] However, as with the anxiety evident in the need to qualify the influence of Arnold, 'The Message of the Folk-lorist' also looks to articulate what was for Yeats an important point of departure between Greek and Irish culture:

> The folk-lore of Greece and Rome lasted us a long time, but having ceased to be a living tradition, it became both worn out and unmanageable, like an old servant. […] For lack of those great typical personages who flung the thunderbolts or had serpents in their hair, we have betaken ourselves in a hurry to the poetry of cigarettes and black coffee, of absinthe, and the skirt dance, or are trying to persuade the lecture and the scientific book to look, at least to the eye, like the old poems and dramas and stories that were in the ages of faith long ago.[31]

[27] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. by J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), pp. 132, 143, 146, 149, 150, 156, 158, 162–3.
[28] Yeats, 'The Message of the Folk-lorist', in *Early Articles*, pp. 209–213 (p. 210).
[29] Yeats, 'The Theatre', in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. VIII: The Irish Dramatic Movement*, ed. by M. FitzGerald and R. J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 2003), pp. 147–151 (p. 148).
[30] Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 331.
[31] Yeats, 'Message', p. 209.

Yeats conjures here an image of literary bohemianism in a metropolitan centre as a point of contrast with what he regards as the 'living tradition' of the Irish peasant-aristocrat. In his view, the Hellenic affinity is therefore only valid if we adopt a synchronic perspective which allows Irish and Greek culture, separated temporally, to be united spiritually, in contrast to those forms of Western literature whose reliance on Greek and Roman influences has become 'worn out and unmanageable'.

Invited into this dichotomy as an ally of the 'cigarettes and black coffee' is 'the lecture and the scientific book'. This is an important bracketing, for Yeats felt not only the need to navigate between Arnoldian and more contemporary Revivalist conceptions of the Celt, but also to establish his distaste for what he saw as an overly scientific approach to folklore. Through his various engagements with the relationship between contemporary Irish art and Hellenism, it was the intersecting spirit or soul of the two that became his primary focus, and the same is evident in his cautious attitude to folkloric approaches that foregrounded their supposedly scientific nature. In a letter to *The Academy* of 1890 concerning his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888), Yeats defended the text while championing the heightened spiritual sensitivity of his own method: 'The man of science is too often a person who has exchanged his soul for a formula; and when he captures a folk-tale, nothing remains with him for all his trouble but a wretched lifeless thing with the down rubbed off and a pin thrust through its once all-living body'.[32] Yeats would not only take issue with this scientism on the grounds of its dehumanising, 'formulaic' character. In a review of D. R. McAnally's *Irish Wonders* in the previous year he would even go as far as to offer a disparaging Kuhnian model of scientific revolutions against which the steadfastness of tradition was an antidote:

> There are two boats going to sea. In which shall we sail? There is the little boat of science. Every century a new little boat of science starts and is shipwrecked; and yet again another puts forth, gaily laughing at its predecessors. Then there is the great galleon of tradition, and on board it travel the great poets and dreamers of the past.[33]

[32] Yeats, 'Poetry and Science in Folk-lore', *The Academy*, 11 October 1890, p. 320.
[33] Yeats, '*Irish Wonders*', in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. VII: Letters to the New Island*, ed. by George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York: Macmillan: 1989), pp. 91–7 (p. 97).

This early condemnation of 'the man of science' constitutes what Sinéad Garrigan Mattar has identified as Yeats's 'romantically primitivist Celticism' before it underwent a 'shift[] […] into something more self-critical, rigorous, and modernist'[34] in Yeats's later career, a trajectory that she qualifies with Warwick Gould's suggestion that when Yeats 'came to despise "scientific" folklore it was at least with more than a smattering of science that he did so. […] he saw the harvest (as distinct from the analysis) of folklore as an urgent necessity, and as a preliminary to creative activity.'[35] This is achieved by Yeats through frequent suggestions that those less rigorous folklorists, aided by their imaginative faculties, actually produced more faithful representations of the folklore they were collecting and anthologising: 'To me, the ideal folk-lorist is Mr. Douglas Hyde. A tale told by him is quite as accurate as any "scientific" person's rendering; but in dialect and so forth he is careful to give us the most quaint, or poetical, or humorous version he has heard.'[36] In a 1897 article for *Blackwood's Magazine*, Andrew Lang draws attention to the incongruous coexistence identified by Gould. Lang advocates for the scientism against which Yeats would react while echoing the sceptical position of Moran towards Arnold's Celt: 'Comparative science dispels the Celtic illusion that anything whatever is particularly Celtic, or dependent on Celtic race and blood.'[37] It is perhaps for this reason that Yeats, responding to Lang in 'The Celtic Element in Literature' (1898), adopts a defensive position that involves distancing himself from Arnoldian ideals in order for his rebuttal of Lang to appear more contemporary and persuasive. However, Yeats's turn away from Arnold is only partial: he seeks to demystify Arnold's 'natural magic' but merely reterritorialises it as 'the ancient religion of the world, the ancient worship of nature'.[38]

Part of this attempted pseudo-scientific counter-narrative emerged from Yeats's approach to the 'capturing' of folklore, and although this put him at odds with scientific folklorists of the late nineteenth century, in many ways it steered him towards a methodology that would anticipate

[34] Garrigan Mattar, p. 41.
[35] Warwick Gould, 'Frazer, Yeats and the Reconsecration of Folklore', in *Frazer and the Literary Imagination*, pp. 121–153 (pp. 123–4).
[36] Yeats, 'Poetry and Science', p. 320.
[37] Andrew Lang, 'The Celtic Renascence', *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1897, pp. 181–91 (p. 189).
[38] Yeats, 'The Celtic Element in Literature', in *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol IV: Early Essays*, ed. by George Bornstein and Richard J. Finneran, (New York: Scribner, 2007), pp. 128–238 (p. 130).

or reflect concurrent developments in anthropology. In 1911 George Moore wrote of a discussion he had with Yeats in which the latter intimated that '[i]t was only from them [the peasants] one could learn to write, their speech being living speech, flowing out of the habits of their lives, struck out of life itself, he said'.[39] Although this sentiment is partly a reiteration of his elevation of the 'living tradition' from 'The Message of the Folk-lorist', it also establishes the necessity of recording the speech of the peasantry *as is*, just as 'Folk-lorist' ends with a call to 'listen humbly to the old people telling their stories, and perhaps God will send the primitive excellent imagination into the midst of us again'.[40] Yeats, then, flirts with the kind of ethnographic methodology that involved recording the subject of study without interpretation, an approach that Bronisław Malinowski, publicly at least, would later espouse, and that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985), would question the very possibility of.[41]

We do not need to look beyond Moore's humorous depictions of Yeats[42] and Yeats's own critical writings to see that he was not primarily motivated either by his own conception of ethnographic authenticity or out of a desire for the oral tradition of folklore to exist as an end in itself. Nowhere is this clearer than at the close of 'Folk-lorist' above, in which the call to 'listen humbly to the old people' is seen merely as a necessary step for the civilised 'us' to receive some communion with this 'primitive excellent imagination'. Peasant wisdom therefore functions here in much the same way as African art would do for modernists such as D. H. Lawrence and Picasso, with 'the primitive [being] sent up into the service of the Western tradition (which is then seen to have partly produced it)', shifting the focus away from ethnographic salvage to artistic inspiration.[43] It is therefore clear that, even though Yeats was not content with the simplicities of the 'romantic primitivism' that he had inherited, even his occasional enthusiasm for

[39] George Moore, *Hail and Farewell: Ave* (London: Heinemann, 1911; repr. 1947), p. 42.
[40] Yeats, 'Folk-lorist', p. 213.
[41] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313.
[42] Moore, for instance, recalls 'the hieratic Yeats and Lady Gregory out walking, seeking living speech from cottage to cottage', although it was 'Lady Gregory braving the suffocating interior for the sacred cause of Idiom' while 'Yeats remain[ed] seated under the stunted hawthorn usually found growing at the corner of the field'. *Ave*, p. xi.
[43] Foster, p. 49.

anthropological rigour regarding the collection and dissemination of folklore did not detract from this lifelong affirmation of belief in the peasant-artist-aristocrat triad.

Although Gould and Garrigan Mattar in particular offer a detailed examination of the relationship between science and Yeats's primitivism, many of the early critical responses to his work demonstrate what they see as the intersection of Yeats's politics with his romanticisation of the peasantry. In 1940, the year after Yeats's death, Louis MacNeice makes this point explicitly, writing dismissively of a reductive, pastoralising Yeats who 'had for a long time regarded the essential Ireland as incarnate in the country gentry and the peasantry, his ideal society being static and indeed based upon caste.'[44] For MacNeice, then, the conservative-fascist politics and artistic elitism epitomised by Yeats's late eugenicist text *On the Boiler* (1938) were part of a mutually reinforcing relationship with his static view of Irish society. L. C. Knights, writing two years later, directly acknowledged MacNeice's concerns about the conjunction of the Yeatsian worldview and the contemporary rise of fascism, but expanded this into a more general critique of Yeats's neo-Romanticism which had given rise to 'a nostalgia for an imagined past in which painful complexities are evaporated'. The critical history of his relationship to romanticism and primitivism, from Moran and Moore onwards, therefore suggests that, although he chose poetic directions away from the simplistic romantic primitivism of his *fin-de-siècle* period, this re-emerged sporadically and, as Knights observes, 'even in his middle and later periods, he continued to use Romantic glamour as an escape from difficult or painful problems.'[45] What arises, then, is an ironic juxtaposition between the democratic impulse in Yeats's calls for the peasantry to be listened to, and the decidedly anti-democratic nature of his construction of the aristocratic-primitive itself. And, indeed, he had made clear long before the rise of fascism that the kind of anti-democratic tendencies that MacNeice takes issue with were inherently tied up with art. In the review of McAnally's *Irish Wonders* he proclaimed 'I am not a democrat in literature for I beleive [*sic*] that a writer must get his point of view wholly from the few.'[46] Yeats would later try to justify these positions by drawing attention to what he believed was the tendency towards mob rule in

[44] Louis MacNeice, 'Yeats's Epitaph', in *W. B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by William H. Pritchard (London: Penguin, 1972), p. 170.
[45] L. C. Knights, 'W. B. Yeats: The Assertion of Values' (1974), in Pritchard, p. 182.
[46] Yeats, '*Wonders*', p. 14.

any democratisation of the arts. Society, for Yeats, had dangerously approximated 'a Court of opinions and morals' and would, as a result, soon 'reject on one ground or another almost every man of vigorous personality. The weak and the tame would alone speak through it'.[47]

While this anti-democratic facet of Yeats's writing is indisputable and also persistent throughout his career, it is worth noting that in this same review of *Irish Wonders*, Yeats reaffirms his commitment to a form of universalism that stands as an alternative to democratisation: 'Tradition is always the same. The earliest poet of India and the Irish peasant in his hovel nod to each other across the ages, and are in perfect agreement'. Here, in appealing to the innate wisdom and proximity to the supernatural of the primitive subject, Yeats finds that he must situate that subject outside of history, a positioning which relates to the theme of timelessness inherent to Celtic folklore that Yeats had emphasised in his *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*: 'There is a country called Tír-na-n-Og, which means the Country of the Young, for age and death have not found it; neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it.'[48] In the construction of this ethnographic map, Indian and Irish aristocratic peasants are positioned on a plane of identity with the temporal gap dismissed as subservient to the greater synchronic perspective. It is here, through the elision of any temporal, geographical, or colonial specificities, that Yeats's aristocratic primitive demonstrates its closest alignment with the Arnoldian Celt. At the same time, however, it might be argued that Yeats, who like many modernists was influenced heavily by Frazer, was expressing a view that approximated the development of ethnographic modernity, with Frazerian evolutionary anthropology — in which primitive cultures evolved towards civilisation — being rejected in favour of a synchronic vision that stressed the continuity *in the present* of an aristocratic primitivism of the Irish peasantry. The function of the aristocratic-primitive within Yeats's ethnographic vision is therefore marked more than anything by a series of contradictions, many of which Yeats seems to have consciously embraced, wherein the binaries of universalist/nationalist, primitive/civilised, and democratic/elitist are constantly dissolved and, despite fluctuations in approach throughout his career, ultimately unresolved.

---

[47] Quoted in *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, Vol. III: 1901–1904*, ed. by John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. xlix.

[48] Yeats, 'T'Yeer-Na-N-Og', in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, ed. by Yeats (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1888), p. 200.

For Yeats there was no better place to attempt to find a representation of the aristocratic primitive than in that most isolated part of his own country: the Aran Islands. After a visit here in 1896 with Arthur Symons that would serve as the genesis of the latter's 'The Islands of Aran', Yeats experienced a conflict between his desire to produce an artistic representation of the life of the islanders and a sense of being 'hampered by his lack of Irish.'[49] In his preface to J. M. Synge's *The Well of the Saints*, Yeats claims that, in response to this lack, he offered advice to the younger Irishman in Paris the same year: 'Give up Paris. You will never create anything by reading Racine, and Arthur Symons will always be a better critic of French literature. Go to the Aran Islands. Live there as if you were one of the people themselves; express a life that has never found expression.'[50] Yeats proposes an ethnographic methodology which goes beyond participant-observation and instead pre-empts Malinowski's chauvinist admission in his diary entries that those people and cultures perceived as primitive cannot 'express' themselves: 'I get ready; little gray, pinkish huts. Photos. Feeling of ownership: It is I who will describe them and create them.'[51] From the outset then, Yeats's persuasive words to Synge foreground their own problems and contradictions: the pretension to a proto-Malinowskian ethnographic methodology that nevertheless betrays Malinowski's desire for authorial control, the acknowledgement of Synge's inherent difference from his ethnographic subject ('*as if* you were one of the people'), and finally, in the desire for Synge to 'make it new' by escaping Paris and the influence of Symons, the inspiration of a work that itself borrows from Symons's own travelogue.[52]

---

[49] Declan Kiberd, 'Synge's Tristes Tropiques: *The Aran Islands*', in *Interpreting Synge: Essays from the Synge Summer School 1991–2000*, ed. by Nicholas Grene (Dublin: Lilliput, 2000), pp. 82–110 (p. 90).
[50] Yeats, 'Preface to the First Edition of *The Well of the Saints*', in *Works IV*, pp. 216–221 (pp. 216–17).
[51] Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, trans. by Norbert Guterman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967; repr. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 140. In *Argonauts* Malinowski underlined the importance of 'grasp[ing] the native's point of view, his relation to life, […] realiz[ing] his vision of his world', but in order to achieve these objectives, it is the ethnographers themselves who are elevated to semi-divine figures: 'What is then this ethnographer's magic, by which he is able to evoke the real spirit of the natives, the true picture of tribal life?' Malinowski, *Argonauts*, p. 6.
[52] As Kiberd and others have noted, there is evidence that casts doubt on the accuracy of Yeats's reflection. In his *Saints* preface Yeats says that he had first met Synge 'six years ago', which would indicate 1899, whereas Synge's diary and a letter Yeats later sent to Lady Gregory confirm the meeting as occurring in 1896. Kiberd is keen to stress that in the gap between Yeats's supposed advice and Synge's visit to Aran, the latter would have encountered influences more consequential than his brief meeting with Yeats: 'The

Even if one could argue that this Yeatsian modification of ethnographic methodology would indeed offer, through its fulfilment in Synge's *The Aran Islands*, an authentic 'voice for the voiceless', this is problematised by Yeats's suggestion that Aran 'has never found expression.' In his biography of Synge, W. J. McCormack has drawn attention to the 'substantial body of prose (and factual) literature about Aran' circulating earlier than 1896, including a biography of Irish antiquarian George Petrie that Synge himself had read.[53] This fact, in conjunction with his borrowings from Symons, intensifies the irony of the notion of his ethnography as pioneering work. In turning to Synge's text, I will initially situate it in relation to Symons's to draw attention to the latter's influence, and to their shared production of a literary style that fuses the romantic with the anthropological.

length "long before" give Yeats away, for they call attention to the lengthy period between the advice in 1896 and the visit in 1898. An intense exposure to Celtic Studies filled Synge's life in these intervening years.' Kiberd, *Synge and the Irish Language* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 37.

[53] W. J. McCormack, *Fool of the Family: A Life of J. M. Synge* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000), p. 194. See also John Brannigan, *Archipelagic Modernism: Literature in the Irish and British Isles, 1890–1970* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 36.

Chapter 2

Synge: *The Aran Islands*, Capitalism, and Ethnography

Islanders too
are for sculpting.[1]

— Seamus Heaney, 'Synge on Aran' (1966)

In the 'The Islands of Aran', Symons writes of his experience on returning to the Irish mainland: 'I seemed to have stepped out of some strange, half magical, almost real dream, through which I had been consciously moving on the other side of that gray, disturbed sea, upon those gray and peaceful islands in the Atlantic.' Far from his visit serving the purpose of demythologising any preconceptions of Aran, it remains, although 'almost real', a spectral, surreal presence for Symons. As he goes on to recall how his memory 'resolved itself into definite shape' in the following days, the reader might expect an attempt at a more objective account of his visit, and yet even after 'remember[ing] every detail of those last three days', Symons regards Aran as otherworldly, categorically divorced from the remainder of Ireland and Europe: 'I had been so far from civilization, so much further out of the world than I had ever been before.'[2] Symons's account of this geographically close but seemingly alien island culture adopts the primitivist trope of situating the Other outside of time, or more specifically, outside of the rationalistic framework of time so

[1] Seamus Heaney, 'Synge on Aran', in *Death of a Naturalist* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 52.
[2] Arthur Symons, 'The Isles of Aran', *Savoy*, December 1896, pp. 73–86 (p. 73).

significant to the machinations of empire.[3] Synge's *The Aran Islands*, meanwhile, is a text constantly wrestling between this dreamlike impressionism and the incorporation of romantic tropes on the one hand, and a dedication to ethnographic authenticity on the other. This dialectic forms the underlying structure of the entire text and it is through this that it derives its conflicting style, but also its richness, its *Aufhebung*.

In addition to the influence of Symons, Synge's preparatory reading ahead of his visit to Aran also demonstrates a significant influence on this dialectic. Following his meeting with Yeats, Synge began studying at the Sorbonne under Celtic expert Henri d'Arbois de Jubainville, 'sur la civilisation Irlandaise comparée avec celle d'Homer.' As Anthony Roche has detailed, Synge continued with the course's reading list even after departing Paris, and the texts most frequently referred to in his diaries of this period are '*The Voyage of Bran Son of Febal to the Land of the Living*, a volume containing Kuno Meyer's translation of the Old Irish poem of the same name and an essay by Alfred Nutt on "The Happy Otherworld".'[4] As with its appearance in Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, the Celtic Otherworld, or Tír na nÓg, the 'Land of Youth', is a place in which timelessness is a prerequisite for sustained youthfulness and which therefore also informs some of the near-mystical properties that Synge seems to associate with the islands. He recalls a story of an islander whose crimes see him imprisoned for a period in Galway and, divorced from his native land, he becomes 'feeble and emaciated' (II 96). He is keen, however, to stress the possibly fictitious nature of this account such that the notion of the otherworldly, preserving qualities of Aran are not dismissed outright, but have their mythical aspect foregrounded. Similarly, when meeting the islander Michael after a period of absence, he indicates his surprise that life in Connaught and association with 'townsmen and sailors' has not corrupted the young man's 'refinement' (II 105). This surprise underlines Synge's preconceptions, but he does not allow these to defer to a sense of realism, and in this way the timeless islander versus corrupted mainlander dichotomy collapses.

[3] See particularly Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
[4] Anthony Roche, 'J. M. Synge: Journeys Real and Imagined', *Journal of Irish Studies*, 16 (2001), 78–98 (p. 81)

When describing the interplay of weather and the islands themselves, an interplay which is also responsible for the sense of disorientation in Symons's text, Synge describes a 'golden haze behind the sharp edges of the rock' and later how 'a light haze on the cliffs of the larger island […] gave me the illusion that it was still summer', which both seem to mark the influence of *The Voyage of Bran* which, in the Meyer translation, portrays 'a wondrous land […] | Incomparable in its haze.'[5] The difference that Synge introduces, however, is that these hazy impressions are constantly brought into focus, with Synge as ethnographer positioning himself as one who will dissolve or *resolve* this haze and document for the reader the harsh reality of everyday life. This process of resolving, of putting into focus (which will become a literal 'focussing' of the camera lens as part of his later ethnographic methodology), is evident from the very beginning of the narrative. Synge begins in an almost deliberate evocation of his predecessor by recalling the 'dense shroud of mist' that accompanies his morning voyage to Aranmór from Galway and a resultant sense of disoriented placelessness brought about by the limitations on his vision that this mist produces. His first sighting of Aran is a notable departure from Symons however: 'A dreary rock appeared at first sloping up from the sea into the fog; then, as we drew nearer, a coast-guard station and the village' (II 49). The bleak landscape that Synge encounters is not romanticised or turned into a spectral presence as in Symons's text, although in the interrelationship of island and islanders Synge seems to position the latter as somehow transcendent with respect to their surroundings: 'The rain and cold seemed to have no influence on their vitality and as they hurried past me with eager laughter and great talking in Gaelic, they left the wet masses of rock more desolate than before' (II 50). Synge has no intention to mystify or romanticise the greyness of the island itself, but 'what it is that briefly irradiates the landscape' here is the human presence. A similar 'irradiating' experience occurs soon after when, observing '[t]he red dresses of the women who cluster round the fire' the writer senses 'a glow of almost Eastern richness' (II 58). It is when recalling the impressions that the islanders (and particularly the women) left on him, that Synge is most likely to stray towards romantic musings and even Orientalism.

Returning to the influence of Symons, it is these aspects of *The Aran Islands* which convey Synge's impression of the timelessness of Aran, something that has been frequently commented

[5] Kuno Meyer, *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (London: Constable & Company, 1911), p. 6.

on in the critical responses to the text. Maurice Bourgeois's *John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre*, which David Greene would describe in 1947 as 'still the standard work on Synge', anticipates and is perhaps responsible for initiating the association future critics would make between Synge's work and timelessness, and the wider context of this relationship with regards to primitivism.[6] Quoting from the work itself, Bourgeois begins his discussion by arguing that its 'central impression' is 'one of utter primitiveness':

> Synge, by living in common with Aran fishermen and observing them in his own peculiar manner, was tilling practically virgin soil. He touched the rough grain of peasant nature. He got down to the bare elemental substance of a basic humanity ignorant of the world-made man and of the man-made world alike. And the prehistorically childlike quality of the Aran aborigines was felt by Synge all the more acutely as he was coming straight from over-civilized countries. He could not help comparing notes, and perceiving that, though the two social types are at bottom one and the same, the wilder one possesses a kind of aristocratic superiority. The daily toil and struggle for existence of those 'beings who feel their isolation in the face of a universe that wars on them with winds and seas,' the sheer conflict of Man and Nature left to confront each other without a single barrier between them, transcends the combatants into legendary supermen.[7]

This paragraph touches upon almost every aspect of Synge's primitivism that later critics would analyse: the project of finding a (debatably) unexplored culture to write about, the importance of the proximity of both ethnographer and subject to the soil, the evolutionist tropes that associate the primitive with both prehistory and childhood, the notion of Aran as a foil to and respite from 'over-civilized countries', the Yeatsian belief in the 'aristocratic superiority' of the peasant, and finally the sense of the islanders as somehow transcendent, external to time, 'ignorant of the world-made man and of the man-made world alike.' Bourgeois's description is, on the whole, impressively accurate and even prescient of future critical concerns, and while it would be too simplistic to suggest that Synge and his ethnographic project offer at every turn a more nuanced attitude to each

[6] Greene, 'The *Playboy* and Irish Nationalism', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 46 (April 1947), 199–204 (p. 204).
[7] Bourgeois, p. 63.

of these primitivist tropes, *The Aran Islands*'s self-conscious tone and seeming awareness of its dialectic nature do occasionally invite this possibility.

One such example is in Synge's complex handling of what Conor Cruise O'Brien describes as the Revival's preoccupation with a 'rural-to-universal perspective'.[8] Synge is undoubtedly concerned with this perspective, and it manifests in the 'universalising' of the islanders through use of a vast range of comparisons including, among others, mediaeval society, animals, the aristocracy, artists, and Chinese culture:

> Every article on these islands has an almost personal character, which gives this simple life, where all art is unknown, something of the artistic beauty of mediaeval life. (II 58)
>
> […] they seem, in a certain sense, to approach more nearly to the finer types of our aristocracies—who are bred artificially to a natural ideal—than to the labourer or citizen, as the wild horse resembles the thoroughbred rather than the hack or cart-horse. (II 66)
>
> The continual passing in this island between the misery of last night and the splendour of to-day, seems to create an affinity between the moods of these people and the moods of varying rapture and dismay that are frequent in artists, and in certain forms of alienation. (II 74)
>
> The outrage to a tomb in China probably gives no greater shock to the Chinese than the outrage to a hearth in Inishmaan gives to the people. (II 89)

While these comparisons are problematic both in terms of the hyper-primitivist choice of counterparts and avoidance of a 'scientific' anthropological method, Synge is also able to explore their limitations and their contingency, drawing attention to how these impressions of universalism and timelessness are themselves being eroded by their relationship to colonial capital. For instance, near the end of Book II, Synge establishes another animal comparison, '[t]he charm which the people over there share with the birds and flowers', but notes how it 'has been replaced here by the anxiety of men who are eager for gain. The eyes and expression are different, though the faces

[8] Conor Cruise O'Brien, '1891–1916', in *The Shaping of Modern Ireland*, ed. by O'Brien (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 21.

are the same, and even the children here seem to have an indefinable modern quality that is absent from the men of Inishmaan' (II 116). Capital irrupts into the space where formerly the possibility of a unity of nature and islander was possible. In a notebook draft, Synge had gone further in a passage, understandably withheld from the published version, that points to the origins of this unwelcome presence: 'The thought that this island will gradually yield to the ruthlessness of "progress" is as the certainty that decaying age is moving always nearer the cheeks it is your ecstasy to kiss. How much of Ireland was formerly like this and how much of Ireland is today Anglicized and civilized and brutalized?' (II 103). It is not only British capital, however, that has disrupted this image of unity, but also Synge's revisions of his preconceived ideas of the islander character. Near the close of Book III, he recalls how he 'noticed in the crowd several men of the ragged, humorous type that was once thought to represent the real peasant of Ireland' (II 140). This stereotype, Synge acknowledges, did not emerge in a vacuum, nor was it without specific referents like the one described, but, like the frustrated protagonist of Joyce's *Stephen Hero* who chastises his friend for rehearsing 'old stale libels', he recognises the potential harm of the stage Irishman as the dominant cultural image.[9]

While *The Aran Islands*, and particularly the earlier notebook versions, unequivocally announce Synge's Marxian thinking and his attribution of colonial capitalism to much of Aran's deprivation, he did not bring to bear upon the text a rigorously ideological or materialist framework. David Krause has pointed to the 'eclectic communism' of Sean O'Casey as a description which is also applicable to Synge. The impetus for Synge's socialist leanings was 'bottom up', crystallising through his time on Aran and his direct contact with the poor, just as the younger O'Casey's politics were informed by growing up in the urban, but equally deprived areas of Dublin. As O'Casey wrote in a letter to Brooks Atkinson: 'Of course, I am a Shelleyan Communist, and a Dickensian one, & a Byronic one, and a Whitmanian one, & one like all those who thought big & beautifully, & who cared for others, as I am a Marxian one, too.'[10] This aestheticised socialism is characteristic of Synge's, one which did not seek to establish a hierarchy

[9] Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. by Theodore Spencer, John, J. Slocum, and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions, 1963), p. 64.
[10] Quoted in David Krause, 'Synge's Aesthetic Regeneration of Ireland', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies,* 20 (July 1994), 74–88 (p. 86).

concerning art and politics, and which was generally distrustful of 'all governments & parties'. This aversion to institutions gestures to the anarchist persuasion of Synge's socialist beliefs that Mary Burke and others have discussed, but also to what Bourgeois sees as an equivalent hostility to 'the idea of "movements" or "schools"' of the Revival and the Gaelic League.[11]

One of the potential shortcomings of Synge's socialist vision concerns this imbrication of art and politics, in the sense of the paradox that he articulates wherein the very horrors of Irish poverty are seen to produce creative individuality. As he laments in the article 'From Galway to Gorumna', 'it is part of the misfortune of Ireland that nearly all the characteristics which give colour and attractiveness to Irish life are bound up with a social condition that is near to penury.' These observations form part of Synge's synchronic perspective on primitivism: the penurious circumstances are a local 'misfortune' that is absent when one looks across to 'countries like Brittany' where 'the best external features of the local life—the rich embroidered dresses, for instance, or the carved furniture—are connected with a decent and comfortable social condition' (II 286). What is ironic here is the suggestion that only a commercialised form of culture, a 'selling out' (one that anticipates Mulligan's mercantile exploitation of ethnography in *Ulysses*, considered in the following chapter), would mitigate the material problems of the Irish peasant. As Garrigan Mattar has noted, citing Colin Rhodes on this aspect of Breton culture, 'the wearing of native costumes in Brittany was more the fruit of a nascent tourist industry'.[12] In his admiration of the unity of culture and prosperity of these Bretons, Synge's earlier journalistic accounts of the west of Ireland announce a naivety concerning the machinations of the 'folklore industry', anticipating a similar perspective in *The Aran Islands*. In this later text, Synge disparagingly describes a foreign 'ceannuighe' or pedlar who arrives on Aran and attempts to sell 'cheap knives and jewellery' (II 138). Synge is reluctant, however, to admit to an inversion of this process by the islanders themselves as part of his desire to ignore the quotidian discussions 'of the tides and fish' and to 'catch the real spirit of the island' instead (II 58). As David Fitzpatrick notes,

---

[11] Bourgeois, p. 88.

[12] Garrigan Mattar, p. 171. As Colin Rhodes notes, 'The "traditional" local dress and customs that are prominent in late nineteenth-century representations of Brittany remain even today part of the tourist's experience. […] This was not a reminder of the region's Celtic past, but a nineteenth-century development'. *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p. 25

> Manifestations of modernity therefore seem trivial and superficial, whereas folklore promises to reveal a deeper communal reality. For captives of Synge's prose, it is unthinkable that the islanders might, on the contrary, have become modern Irishmen exploiting their insular traditions for commercial gain or for the amusement of tourists.[13]

In recounting the arrival of the foreign pedlar, Synge remarks that he 'was surprised to notice that several women who professed to know no English could make themselves understood without difficulty when it pleased them' (II 138). There is some truth, then, behind the idea that Synge himself was duped by his desire to encounter authenticity and his inability to imagine that the perceived exotic otherness of Aran women produced through the language barrier might indeed have been, as Fitzpatrick suggests, either for commercial or entertainment purposes.

The notion of Synge's naivety has been occasionally remarked by critics but is particularly prominent in letters written by friends and family during his lifetime. In 1901, after Synge had had his manuscript for *The Aran Islands* rejected, his mother wrote to his brother Samuel Synge: 'Poor Johnnie! We could all have told him that, but then men like Yeats and the rest get round him and make him think Irish literature and the Celtic language and all these things that they are trying to revive are very important, and, I am sorry to say, Johnnie seems to believe all they tell him.'[14] Letters such as these reveal the anxiety that those close to Synge felt concerning the young writer being duped by Revival ideology and Yeatsian aesthetic imperatives.

Another facet of the naivety implicit in this aestheticised socialism is visible in Synge's simplification, in Marxian terms, of the material conditions of Aran life. Continuing in the critical tradition of commenting on Synge's evocation of timelessness, particularly in *The Aran Islands*, Burke suggests that Aran was for Synge 'a Revival Eden situated in mytho-historic cultural time, while Europe, to the detriment of its deteriorating, over-specialized population, has moved forward with history and industrial and evolutionary "progress".'[15] To believe, as Burke suggests, that

---

[13] David Fitzpatrick, 'Synge and Modernity in *The Aran Islands*', in *Synge and Edwardian Ireland*, ed. by Brian Cliff and Nicholas Grene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 120–158 (p. 136).
[14] Quoted in David H. Greene and Edward M. Stephens, *J. M. Synge 1871–1909* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 125.
[15] Burke, p. 120.

Europe has 'moved forward' only with respect to an alienating conception of progress, is to position the primitive (or more accurately, to construct it) as a foil to such alienation, and a potential site of respite from it. This framing, to borrow Jean Baudrillard's critique of Marx's own approach to the primitive, might be said to offer only an 'analysis of the contradictions of Western society' which cannot lead in any meaningful way 'to the comprehension of earlier societies (or of the Third World). It has succeeded only in exporting these contradictions to them.' Synge's treatment of the cultural Other in *The Aran Islands* engages with this export of contradictions, but rather than strictly rehearsing Marx's belief in 'a correlation between the analysis of our society's contradictions and the comprehension of earlier societies', it is ironically the very evocation of Aran as timeless which resists the reductive imposition of a shared materialist framework onto the machinations of island life. Synge instead presents a vision of a society that exists, simultaneously and contradictorily, at the whim of, and romantically detached from, emergent capitalist modernity.[16]

While Synge is aware of the textual nature of the Aran he describes, and while he has no pretences to be producing a straightforwardly ethnographic text, he nonetheless interweaves the tropes and methodologies typical of the cultural anthropologist, from his interest in photographing the islanders to his discussions of the causes of their deprivation. It is through this hybrid style that the text resists classification, not only in the opposition between fiction and ethnography, but also in the internal divisions within ethnographic discourse. The Malinowskian use of photographs, for instance, sits alongside the Frazerian tendency to universalise and to equate Aran culture to other 'primitive' societies separated both historically and geographically. But the thoroughly 'modern' use of photography as both a part of Synge's ethnographic methodology, and as a cultural curiosity imported from the metropolis, complicates this distinction between the 'new' and 'old' periods in the history of anthropology.

The most significant 'official' ethnography of the Aran Islands, as opposed to Synge's stylistically hybrid text, is a report presented to the Royal Irish Academy by English anthropologist A. C. Haddon and the Irish Charles R. Browne in 1892. They introduce their work as being 'the first-fruits of the Anthropometric Laboratory' that Haddon had helped to establish, and the

[16] Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. by Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975), p. 89.

majority of the report is indeed based on their anthropometric findings, much of which are documented and corroborated by the use of photography. Given the inherently quantitative nature of anthropometry, there is an unsurprising reduction of subject-to-object in these photographs: 'full-face and side-view portraits were secured of thirteen of the subjects we measured.'[17] This is suggestive of the emerging proto-forensic use of photography to better document criminals that had become popular in Paris in the 1880s where its chief exponent, Alphonse Bertillon, combined detailed anthropometric measurements with the portrait/profile photograph pairing that persists today.[18] While it is unknown if Synge had read the account of Haddon and Browne, before his own visit to Aran the anthropological (and often specifically anthropometric) use of photography had been established as a purely scientific tool as opposed to a more general form of entertainment or memorialising. Despite the technological modernity of this practice, however, the photographs themselves, like those of Bertillon, offered little precision concerning 'ethnical characteristics' and, as Justin Carville notes, Haddon and Browne 'had to combine statistical tables with detailed measurements to be read in conjunction with some of the photographs' in order to provide the level of desired precision.

The six references to photography in *The Aran Islands* are at most only semi-ethnographic, and Synge's combination of showing and taking photographs enacts a blurring of observer/ observed which results in an inversion of the kind of pretension to accuracy attempted by the dehumanising anthropometric strategies of Haddon and Browne. The first three instances recall a time when he used them to become closer to a family and 'a beautiful young woman' who 'leaned across my knees to look nearer at some photograph that pleased her' (II 106). However, in a moment anticipating Joyce's parody in *Ulysses* of those who assume an association between so-called primitive peoples and childlike fascination — 'The glasses would take their fancy, flashing' — Synge soon finds that his communication with the islanders breaks down once 'the novelty of [his] photographs has passed off'. The penultimate reference, however, offers the most ironic inversion of the pretensions inherent in Malinowski's 'Photos. Feeling of ownership':

[17] A. C. Haddon and Charles R. Browne, 'The Ethnography of the Aran Islands, County Galway', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 2 (1891–93), 769–830 (p. 778).
[18] See Jonathan Finn, *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 23–8.

> We nearly quarrelled because he [Michael] wanted me to take his photograph in his Sunday clothes from Galway, instead of his native homespuns that become him far better, though he does not like them as they seem to connect him with the primitive life of the island. With his keen temperament, he may go far if he can ever step out into the world. (II 136)

While it is not unreasonable for Synge to desire here a minor 'staging' given that the homespuns are not a fake ethnographic product, the interaction demonstrates, as Justin Carville writes, 'that the islander's [*sic*] were becoming increasingly aware of the production of their identity through the photographic image.'[19] In terms of both ethnographic documentation and technological spec(tac)ularism, photography has failed.

In 'In West Kerry', Synge recalls bringing his previous pseudo-ethnographic work to another rural family: 'I showed them some photos of the Aran Islands and Wicklow, which they looked at with eagerness' (II 251). Instead of their interests being reflected back upon Synge through the trope of 'inverse' ethnography, the islanders are most fascinated by photographs of other rural parts of Ireland. This marks, then, a depoliticised version of horizontal communality across cultural 'contact zones'. Elleke Boehmer's study, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920* (2002), which examines this horizontality in the writings of Lady Gregory, Yeats, and others, builds on Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) in stressing the importance of critical work that is alert to those contact zones 'positioned *between* peripheries' that exist outside of the coloniser/colonised dichotomy.[20] Work such as Boehmer's interrogates the idea of the peripheries of empire as homogenous and, while not approaching this idea from the standpoint of political struggle, Synge's description of the Aran islanders' engagements with these corresponding peripheries in his photographs reflects Boehmer's concerns along ethnographic lines.

[19] Justin Carville, 'Visible Others: Photography and Romantic Ethnography in Ireland', in *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive*, ed. by Maria McGarrity and Claire A. Culleton (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 93–114 (p. 110).
[20] Elleke Boehmer, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 2.

The brief uses of photography in *The Aran Islands* mark Synge's desire to represent the islanders as fully autonomous subjects who react in unexpected ways and, in Michael's case, emphasise the 'staged' nature of much ethnographic work concerning Aran. Synge's intentions are obviously at odds with the empirical survey of Haddon and Browne, but the latter's priorities, particularly their introductory section on the land ('physiography'), suggest a genealogical proximity to much of the pre-Revival writing about Aran. Burke traces this genealogy by comparing Revival accounts with the likes of Richard Pococke's *Tour in Ireland in 1752*, noting that '[t]he most striking difference between [them] is the attention the eighteenth-century traveller pays to the islands' rental value and agricultural productivity; he has nothing to say of the islanders.'[21] Within this genealogy, Pococke's *Tour* is an extension of the colonial-cartographic designs of English writers dating back as early as Giraldus Cambrensis' *Topgraphia Hibernicae* (1187) and perhaps most famously Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), the title of which, as Julia Reinhard Lupton notes, invokes '[t]he continuum between the political sciences of cartography and policymaking'[22], with the text offering 'a survey of *the land*, a fundamentally geographical perspective in which the topographic, synchronically systematising, and visually ordering connotations of "view" comprehend and organise the text's chronological moments.'[23] By 'couch[ing] Irish history as *natural history*', Spenser's *View* and Pococke's *Tour* can be read as early attempts to legitimise imperialism through an appeal to objectivity, a common practice within the field of colonial ethnography that would develop in later centuries.

Burke groups Pococke's travelogue together with a seemingly quintessential text of this genre, Martin Haverty's 1857 ethnological report of Aran, by emphasising their limited interest in the lives of the islanders themselves. Haverty's report seems to distance itself from the Spenserian mode of surveyance by demonstrating a proto-Revivalist investment in the peasantry, even while this interest frames them as an aesthetically pleasing extension of the landscape:

---

[21] Burke, p. 123.

[22] 'view, n.': 'A formal inspection or survey of a property or area of land, carried out by a specially appointed or qualified person or group; (also occasionally) a document resulting from such an inspection.' *OED Online*, September 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8917980219> [Accessed October 2023]

[23] Julia Reinhard Lupton, 'Mapping mutability: or, Spenser's Irish plot', in *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534–1660*, ed. by Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 93–115 (p. 95).

> The inhabitants of the village had crowded to the shore, and their picturesque appearance, while collected in groups, the men in their costume of fishermen, and the women and girls wearing the characteristic red petticoats, and, for the most part, red or blue bodices, made the effect very striking in the eyes of strangers.[24]

As Burke's study focuses on the significance of the tinker figure in Synge's writing, she draws an important parallel between the reinvigoration of interest in both this figure and the peasant islander in the Revival: 'Much as the tinker is suddenly differentiated as a picturesque feature of the rural landscape during the Revival, the hitherto unindividuated islander abruptly emerges from the sublime and archaeologically fertile Aran scenery in the same period.'[25] What Haverty's report demonstrates however, through its very use of a term such as 'picturesque', is that a romantic conception of the peasant was emerging as early as the 1850s in specifically ethnological texts, even while this conception remained firmly 'unindividuated'.

Haverty's report therefore anticipates the ethnographic-romantic dialectic of the Revival that would preoccupy Synge almost half a century later, even while *The Aran Islands*, as I have attempted to show, is able to negotiate the complexities and contradictions of this dialectic without dismissing them. The materialist interest is not absent in Synge's text but instead returns in a revised, anti-capitalist form where it shares space with the romanticised outlook popularised by Symons and the Revivalists. Not only does the hybrid nature of the text contribute to a unique pseudo-ethnographic style, it also allows it to resist the Baudrillardian critique of Marx's universalist model of historical materialism: in other words, it is precisely because Synge concerns himself both with the lives of individual islanders and the specific, localised functioning of capitalist exchange as part of these lives that allows his text to avoid a simplistic exportation of contradictions to the space of the cultural and geographical Other.

So while O'Brien's identification of a 'rural-to-universal' impulse in *The Aran Islands* remains useful, it is important to consider this in relation to the focus on specificity and

[24] Martin Haverty, *The Aran Isles: or, A Report of the Excursion of the Technological Section of the British Association from Dublin to the Western Isles of Aran, in September, 1857* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1859), p. 11.
[25] Burke, p. 123.

individuality that allows a departure from both the likes of Haverty and Baudrillard's Marx. The impulse, which is closely tied to the prevailing theme of Aran as a timeless space that began with Bourgeois, continues in more recent critical studies such as those by Burke and Elaine Sisson. It is certainly true that, as Sisson claims, '[i]n *The Aran Islands* the islanders become a human ideal existing outside of history, transformed from the local into the universal.'[26] The comparison with the Aran texts of Pococke and Haverty demonstrates that Synge is keen to avoid a wholehearted embrace of this Frazerian positioning, but Sisson's analysis is supported by the fact that it is often those moments of ethnographic specificity in the text which spiral outward into the mode of universalising that she identifies. The early description of the 'Eastern richness' conveyed to Synge by the red dresses of the islanders and his subsequent association of them 'the artistic beauty of mediaeval life' offers a parallel to the Yeatsian anxieties about what the peasant can come to signify in the modern world. These anxieties coalesce around the same 'perpendicular' structure I used to describe Yeats's attitude to the folk in the introduction to Ezra Pound's collection *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*: the difficulty of conveying a sense of primitive life to the reader necessitates for both writers 'horizontal' comparisons, both to other 'primitive' peoples and to those Eastern cultures (Indian, Chinese, Japanese) which remain, for Yeats, 'unbroken', possessed of a 'common mind', in contrast to the Irish psyche which he believes is 'broken into a dozen minds that know nothing of each other'.[27] Synge and Yeats participate in the primitivist framing of these cultures that are regarded as 'unified', and this is also apparent in their shared disdain for a specifically urban form of (working class) modernity they juxtapose with peasant life. Synge considers the islanders through the lens of his own anarchic impulses. Their criminality is partially exculpated by their very Otherness: 'It seems absurd to apply the same laws to these people and to the criminal classes of a city. The most intelligent man on Inishmaan has often spoken to me of his contempt of the law, and of the increase of crime the police have brought to Aranmor.' His assessment of the invasive presence of the police is justified, but in this contrast between the rural and urban poor, the plight of the latter is marginalised while the former are granted an almost childlike

[26] Elaine Sisson, '*The Aran Islands* and the Travel Essays', in *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge*, ed. by P. J. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 52–63 (p. 60).
[27] Yeats, 'Introduction', in Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (London: Chiswick Press, 1912), pp. vii–xvi (p. xi).

exceptionalism and a legal position outside of society. The rejection by the Abbey Theatre of Sean O'Casey's socialist plays, set in Dublin slums and utilising local dialect, speaks to this tendency towards anti-urbanism in the writings of Yeats and Synge: the possibility of authentic folklife and cultural idiosyncrasy in the metropolis was a threat to the 'imagined community' of islanders that Synge's text occasionally reifies.

The dialectical structure of *The Aran Islands*, mediating between scientific and romantic ethnographic styles, complicates an understanding of Synge's engagement with primitivism, but the rural/urban dichotomy established in the text only serves to intensify certain tropes historically ascribed to 'primitive' peoples, including freedom, virtue, and authenticity. The dialectic I have described in terms of Synge's style is echoed by its relation to the binary within primitivism, romantic versus modernist, that Garrigan Mattar evokes in order to suggest that the text is not easily categorisable into either. Although the text demonstrates a tendency towards the former which has 'has little to do with the "realities" of savage existence', Synge also shows an awareness of how a partial isolation from the capitalist forces of the British Empire is paradoxically responsible for both the islanders' impoverishment and their limited protection from the specific forms of alienation that industrial capitalism generated.[28] Synge here offers a more nuanced version of the typical modernist primitivism characterised by Boas and Lovejoy as 'the discontent of the civilized with civilization' and instead suggests in very materialist terms that economic distance from the centre of empire may provide some benefits in terms of the life quality of the islanders.[29] Nowhere is this clearer than in this unequivocally Marxian analysis: 'It is likely that much of the intelligence and charm of these people is due to the absence of any division of labour, and to the correspondingly wide development of each individual, whose varied knowledge and skill necessitates a considerable activity of mind' (II 132). It is specifically this type of analysis of the islanders' economic life that goes some way to collapsing the interest in *difference* (cultural, historical, and economic) between Aran, Ireland as a whole, and the British Empire that is evident throughout Symons's earlier account. As Nicholas Daly has astutely observed, 'The essential move that Synge makes is the location of the essence of the primitive in a certain type of production.

[28] Garrigan Mattar, p. 3.
[29] Boas and Lovejoy, p. 7.

Once reconceived as a mode of production rather than a special place, or form of society, the primitive can be reproduced by the individual.'[30] At the same time however, it is Synge's reliance on a Yeatsian association between the peasant and the aristocrat that works to undermine his assessment of the material reality of the islanders. As a result, his observation that 'they seem, in a certain sense, to approach more nearly to the finer types of our aristocracies […] than to the labourer or citizen, as the wild horse resembles the thoroughbred rather than the hack or cart-horse' (II 66), in addition to its problematic comparison of peasant to animal, sits awkwardly in relation to his appreciation of their specific form of unalienated labour later in the text.

Texts such as Haverty's *The Aran Isles* and Haddon and Browne's study, in moving from descriptions of the land to its peasant inhabitants, from 'physiography' to 'anthropography', suggest there is little to distinguish the two in terms of 'features' of the landscape. Synge too draws frequent associations between the land and the peasant, but he does not typically regard the moods of the latter as imbricated in the fluctuations of the former, as in the encounter referenced earlier where he observes that '[t]he rain and cold seemed to have no influence on their vitality'. On the contrary, as this 'vitality' floats above the dreariness of the landscape, Synge's islanders are positioned in a dominant and independent relationship to their surroundings. However, the more solemn episodes in the narrative reveal the romantic and idealised nature of Synge's depiction of the islanders' simultaneous oneness with, and resistance to, the temperamentalities of nature. The structure of the text sees a discussion of the very real material injustices caused by the Inishmaan evictions interspersed with folkloric accounts which could be read as diffusing the degrading reality of the former. In one instance, however, Synge unites these two elements of the narrative structure: 'Two recent attempts to carry out evictions on the island came to nothing, for each time a sudden storm rose, by, it is said, the power of a native witch, when the steamer was approaching, and made it impossible to land.' When, later, the 'morning […] broke beneath a clear sky of June', the 'dramatic pageant' of the evictions is allowed to proceed. Moments such as these confirm Synge's complex relationship to Garrigan Mattar's romantic/modernist binary of primitivism as the text allows in this single moment the coexistence of the islanders' own folk history of

[30] Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the 'Fin de Siècle'*: *Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 134.

supernatural intervention, and the proximity of the encroaching threat of external imperial forces. Here again, Aran exceptionalism is set against the vulgar, thuggish urban working class, the 'low rabble' who serve as lackeys of 'the body of magnificent armed men' carrying out the evictions. There is, therefore, an inconsistency in Synge's political positioning here. He stands with the 'primitive men' against 'these mechanical police' and their attendant rabble who 'represented aptly enough the civilization for which the homes of the island were to be desecrated.' However, Synge's partial adoption of the timelessness trope previously associated with Aran gains new meaning in this light. He is not only disdainful of this urban rabble because of their enthrallment to empire, but also because they lack the kind of dignified aristocratic presence that he and Yeats associated with the peasantry. While acknowledging in 'A Landlord's Garden in County Wicklow' 'the tragedy that is bound up with the lives of farmers and fishing people', he 'feel[s] the tragedy of the landlord class also' and expresses nostalgia for their 'high-spirited and highly-cultivated aristocracy.' The socialist leanings suggested by Synge's solidarity with the Aran poor are mediated then by this aristocratic longing and the sort of eco-conservative posture found in Philip Larkin's 'Going, Going' that relates environmental degradation to the destabilising of traditional modes of life:

> And that will be England gone,
> The shadows, the meadows, the lanes,
> The guildhalls, the carved choirs.
> There'll be books; it will linger on
> In galleries; but all that remains
> For us will be concrete and tyres.[31]

The Aran Islands therefore offers both resistance to and participation in Marianna Torgovnick's ironic description of modernism's mythologising of the primitive in her influential study *Gone Primitive* (1990): 'Is the present too majestic? Primitive life is not—it is a precapitalist Utopia in which only use value, never exchange value, prevails. Is the present sexually repressed?

[31] Philip Larkin, 'Going, Going', in *High Windows* (London: Faber, 1974), p. 22.

Not primitive life—primitives live life whole, without fear of the body'.[32] Nonetheless, Synge's esteem for the forms of material exchange on the islands betrays a desire for a continued isolation of the Aran way of life which would relegate it to that position of timelessness evoked so frequently in both ethnographic accounts of the islands and the critical history of Synge's text. A tension then arises between Synge's romanticised *vision* of the islands, his 'desire to construct Aran as an Eastern, pre-Celtic space outside the capitalist and evolutionary nexus' and his keen awareness, particularly in Part III of the text, that the power of this nexus is very much evident in the economic conditions of island life. Burke explains this tension in the following way: 'For Synge to acknowledge that the island group was anything less than a *tabula rasa* was to admit his fear of the menace posed to these Orientalized "primitives" by Darwinian theory and the forces of Western modernity.'[33] She therefore offers an intriguing nuance, suggesting that Synge's construction of a *tabula rasa* encodes an obscuration of his fear of the forces of modernity, but that this very combination of obscuring and idealising serves only to intensify the reader's acknowledgement of Sygne's anxieties, and how they may have contributed to the imposition of a misrepresentative ethnographic lens. It is perhaps an uncharitable conclusion, however, given that Synge does not shy away from the effects of the 'menace' of capitalism in descriptions such as those of the evictions.

The difficulty of yoking an authentic ethnographic narrative to a faithful representation of the persistent influence of Irish myth witnessed in *The Aran Islands* is articulated by Synge in relation to his later fictional works. In a 1908 letter to John Quinn he expresses his wariness of 'saga people' during his composition of *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1909): 'These saga people when one comes to deal with them, seem very remote; – one does not know what they thought or what they ate or where they went to sleep, so one is apt to fall into rhetoric'.[34] The methodology of *The Aran Islands*, with its often uneasy mix of anti-capitalist analysis and romanticism, serves as a defence against any such 'fall into rhetoric' and as a site of resistance to the sense of Aran's

[32] Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 8.
[33] Burke, p. 14.
[34] Synge, letter to John Quinn, 4 January 1908, in *The Collected Letters of J. M. Synge*, ed. by Ann Saddlemyer, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), II, pp. 121–2.

mythical remoteness that he found in Symons. His anxiety about the Deirdre mythos therefore retrospectively outlines his earlier process which sought to unite a thorough examination of the mundane details of Aran life with an expression of the persistent influence of folklore on the islanders he encountered.

While this folklore is an integral part of his ethnographic interests, as it was for Yeats and Gregory, Synge chastises 'the possibility of a "purely fantastic, unmodern, ideal, breezy, springdayish, Cucuhalanoid, National Theatre"' and insists that '[n]o drama can grow out of anything other than the fundamental realities of life.' Both Yeats and Synge, in their expression of 'the discontent of the civilized with civilization', make use in their writings of a horizontal, present-tense lens that focuses on 'the mode of life of existing primitive […] peoples', but in contrast to Yeats's suggestion of a split between the metropolitan Irish writer and their peasant subject, Synge's articulations of his artistic intentions frequently shifted this split to one between Ireland as a whole and a vaguely defined hegemonic modernity that was antithetical to art:

> In Ireland for a few years more, we have a popular imagination that is fiery and magnificent, and tender; so that those of us who wish to write start with a chance that is not given to writers in places where the springtime of local life has been forgotten, and the harvest is memory only, and the straw has been turned into bricks.

This position concerning the privilege of the artist is a departure from Yeats's sense that Irish peasants cannot express themselves, even if this is what Synge's oeuvre ultimately achieved. Here, in the preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*, it is those whose environments have become industrialised and who have experienced a disconnect from the communalism of 'local life' that Synge believes will struggle to represent themselves through writing. This pastoralist attitude reinforces his disdain for what he sees as urban vulgarity, and is made further ironic by the fact that Synge is himself an 'urban' writer who, like Joyce's Haines, considered in the following chapter, seeks out 'the folk' for artistic inspiration. But Synge also voices here a critique not explicitly stated by Yeats of the inauthenticity and disconnectedness of many Revival writers, and in doing so, he offers some resistance to his mother's concerns that the movement was exploiting his naivety and appropriating his writing for their own ends.

What Synge demonstrates then, is a refusal to endorse those aspects of Revivalism that sought to promote an authentic Irishness by circumventing the significance of Catholicism to the island and positioning it as detrimental to what they saw as the 'true' heritage of Irish myth: 'I speak here not of the old and magnificent language of our manuscripts, or of the two or three dialects still spoken, though with many barbarisms, in the west and south, but of the incoherent twaddle that is passed off as Irish by the Gaelic League' (II 400). Here then we see perhaps the most significant expression of why an ethnographic interest in his own country was so essential to Synge's writing. Uniting again the synchronic and the diachronic, he recognises the importance of documenting surviving regional dialects and preserving ancient manuscripts, but juxtaposes these tasks with the production of a fake 'twaddle' that many Revivalists have tried to pass off as authentic. There is no clearer expression of this frustration than in the dialectical nature of *The Aran Islands*, a text that interweaves ethnographic attentiveness and an attempt at cultural salvage with the production of a creative meditation on all aspects of Aran life, from the material to the mythological.[35]

Synge's synthetic style offers a parallel to, if not a direct fulfilment of, Yeats's vision for Irish poetry in 'The Literary Movement in Ireland' (1899): 'The poetry that comes out of the old wisdom must turn always to religion and to the law of the hidden world, while the poetry of the new wisdom must not forget politics and the law of the visible world; and between these poetries there cannot be any lasting peace.'[36] In this more nuanced adaptation of Douglas Hyde's desire for a synthetic art 'to render the present a rational continuation of the past'[37] Yeats seems to offer a warning about irresolvable conflicts within poetics, an early conclusion that the centre cannot hold. This is, however, ultimately an optimistic vision, with Yeats looking to the arriving twentieth century and suggesting the possibility of a triumphant Irish art born out of the meditation on the

[35] As Declan Kiberd has observed, Synge's accusation of 'twaddle' was 'no idle slur', both owing to the fact that 'his extensive studies had revealed to him the richness of the language in its earlier historical phases', and that proficiency in Irish among the Gaelic League members was poor: 'Hyde had observed of the Gaelic Union, the predecessor of the League, that only six of its members could speak Irish correctly.' Moreover, as the teachers of the League's classes were themselves often students unfamiliar with the language there resulted in what R. A. Breatnach has described as 'a travesty of Irish, pronounced as if it were English'. Kiberd, *Synge*, pp. 223–4.
[36] Yeats, *Early Articles*, p. 467.
[37] Hyde, *History*, p. vii.

relationship between heritage and politics. As Dominic Manganiello has argued, of the various writers who engaged with 'the quest for Ireland's national identity' in the wake of the Revival, it was Yeats who remained hopeful, while Joyce and George Moore identified the necessity of exile in the production of the national epic.[38] Joyce would no doubt have been dissatisfied with this comparison with Moore. In the 'Scylla and Charybdis' episode of *Ulysses* he positions Moore as a naive member of the Revival whose peers view in his work the fulfilment of their artistic designs: 'Our national epic has yet to be written […] Moore is the man for it' (*U* 9.310–11). However, the exilic drive of many of Moore's characters such as Rodney from 'In the Clay' who 'looked upon Dublin as a place to escape from'[39] is not too dissimilar from Joyce's own wanderings or Little Chandler's assertion in *Dubliners* that '[y]ou could do nothing in Dublin.'[40] Joyce's writing, and *Ulysses* in particular, ironically offers a far more detailed ethnographic account of Irish life than Synge's *Aran*, but its production was only made possible by Joyce's exile 'which is, in Joyce's work, at the origin of every movement.'[41] Synge, like Joyce, also lived abroad to pursue his artistic ambitions. It was only by returning to Ireland (at Yeats's purported suggestion) and living among a people who were simultaneously of a shared nationality *and* intensely otherworldly, that Synge could produce the text that he would come to regard as the starting point for all the subsequent plays that would ensure his fame. As the following chapter will show, not only are Joyce and Synge united in their blending of the ethnographic and the artistic as part of a self-positioning removed from those Revivalists that 'so embellish […] | Their labyrinth of fables',[42] they are also attuned to the political and ethical dimensions of ethnography.

[38] Dominic Manganiello, *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge, 1980), p. 215.
[39] George Moore, 'In the Clay', in *The Untilled Field* (London: George Bell, 1903), p. 11.
[40] Joyce, 'A Little Cloud', in *Dubliners* (London: Grant Richard, 1914; repr. London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), pp. 76–94 (p. 79).
[41] Hélène Cixous, *The Exile of James Joyce*, trans. by Sally Purcell (New York: David Lewis, 1972), p. 4.
[42] George Gordon Byron, *Don Juan* (London: Thomas Davison, 1819), p. 104.

Chapter 3

Joyce I: *Ulysses*, Race, and Ethnography

I

In 1912 Joyce wrote his own, little-known travel memoir of the Aran Islands in Italian for the Triestine newspaper *Il Piccolo della Sera*, drawing on the experience of his final visit to Ireland earlier that year. The article is significant in relation to Joyce's later engagements with Irish cultural politics in *Ulysses* and beyond, as the 1922 novel explicitly echoes this article in various ways, including, fittingly, a description of an islander who will later be transformed into a phantom incarnation of Synge himself, and a meditation on the tensions between Ireland's complex relation to empire, Europe, and the Americas which Joyce will expand on in the 'Cyclops' episode.

For a writer famous for living in permanent exile, the west of Ireland exerted a somewhat magnetic influence on Joyce. Aran is mentioned in *Stephen Hero* where Stephen learns that 'Emma had gone away to the Isles of Aran with a Gaelic party'[1] and in 'The Dead', where Molly Ivors's invitation to Gabriel Conroy to accompany her there casts it as both an area of escape and a place to cultivate a perspective that looks beyond Ireland itself: 'We're going to stay there a whole month. It will be splendid out in the Atlantic.'[2] While Conroy, functioning as a pseudo-biographical precursor to Stephen, shares with his creator a persistently ambivalent attitude towards the sort of Revivalist optimism that Ivors represents, he does seem genuinely drawn to the west as Joyce's consciously neutral conclusion to the story implies: 'The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward.'[3] In a series of letters in late 1909, Joyce conveys his own

[1] Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, pp. 161–2.
[2] Joyce, 'The Dead', in *Dubliners*, pp. 199–256 (p. 215).
[3] Ibid, p. 255.

westward attraction, in which his 'wondering and longing' for his wife Nora becomes entwined with her western origins: 'I leave for Cork tomorrow morning but I would prefer to be going westward, toward those strange places whose names thrill me on your lips, Oughterard, Clare-Galway, Coleraine, Oranmore, toward those wild fields of Connachy in which God made to grow "my beautiful wild flower of the hedges, my dark-blue rain-drenched flower".'[4] Nine years later, Joyce explained to Forrest Reid that Nora could be an 'authentic' actor in Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904), which Joyce had produced across Switzerland, because of her Galwegian accent: 'I enclose also a photograph of my wife who took a part in Synge's play. As she was born within sight of Aran I think Synge's words were spoken with the genuine brogue.'[5]

Situated at the midpoint between Joyce's letter to Nora and the publication of *Dubliners* in 1914, his travelogue, 'The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran', articulates the sense of intrigue that western Ireland held for him. It also demonstrates a possible origin of his parodic response to ethnography and ethnographers in *Ulysses*, represented most famously by the Englishman Haines, but also by Synge himself. Writing in a detached, ethnographic style in the article, Joyce pronounces: 'The fisherman of Aran has sure feet. He wears a rough sandal of untanned cowhide, without heels, open at the arch, and tied with rawhide laces.'[6] Ironically this 'he', bearing a plural meaning in Joyce's homogenising description of the islanders, becomes the specific 'he' of Synge in *Ulysses*: the 'rough sandal' is the pampootie with which Buck Mulligan will clad Synge while joking with Stephen in 'Scylla and Charybdis': 'The tramper Synge is looking for you, he said, to murder you. He heard you pissed on his halldoor in Glasthule. He's out in pampooties to murder you' (*U* 9.571–3). Mulligan attempts not only a parody of Synge's speech but also of his 'tramping' and his appropriation of 'native' garb ('pampootie' being a word of Aran origin).[7] This image of a murderous Synge also aligns him with the spectral presence that Shakespeare makes in Stephen's theory, as the ghost in *Hamlet*. In 'Scylla' John Eglinton raises Synge's name as a potential 'Irish

[4] Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Stuart Gilbert and Richard Ellmann, 3 vols (London: Faber 1957; New York: Viking, 1966), II, ed. by Ellmann (1966), p. 273.
[5] Joyce, letter to Forrest Reid, 1 August 1918, in *Letters*, I, ed. by Gilbert, pp. 117–118.
[6] Joyce, *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. by Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking, 1959), p. 236.
[7] 'pampootie, n.', *OED Online*, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8194297015> [Accessed 5 August 2023]

bard[]' that might rival the 'Saxon Shakespeare' (*U* 9.44–5), but when Stephen recalls meeting Synge in Paris, although the latter is figured as a Stephen/Joyce double — 'His image, wandering, he met. I mine' — Synge cannot transcend, for Stephen at least, an imitation of *As You Like It*'s Touchstone: 'I met a fool i'the forest' (*U* 9.581–2). Later in 'Circe', Bloom is momentarily transformed into a similar Syngean figure who unites Shakespearean imagery with that of the 'tramper' or spailpín in a passage replete with both Irish words and the association, popularised by *Punch*,[8] between the Irish and pigs:

> (*in caubeen with clay pipe stuck in the band, dusty brogues, an emigrant's red handkerchief bundle in his hand, leading a black bogoak pig by a sugaun, with a smile in his eye*) […] Let me be going now, woman of the house, for by all the quee goats in Connemara I'm after having the father and mother of a bating. (*with a tear in his eye*) All insanity. Patriotism, sorrow for the death, music, future of the race. To be or not to be.
>
> (*U* 15.1959–64)

Within the brothel setting of this scene, 'woman of the house' refers most directly to Zoe Higgins, the 'young whore' (*U* 15.1284) who is here in dialogue with Bloom, but the phrase also seems to be a conscious echo of Synge's ethnography: it occurs five times in *The Aran Islands*, in a neutral, domestic sense. The 'dusty brogues' complement the earlier reference to pampooties to reinforce the idea of 'going native' characteristic of Joyce's Shakespeare/Synge hybrid. 'Bogoak', wood preserved by that most famous aspect of Irish geography, appears three times in the novel. In the 'Cyclops' episode 'a bogoak sceptre' is gifted to the Citizen as one of four 'evangelical symbol[s]' laid on a 'muchtreasured and intricately embroidered ancient Irish facecloth' (*U* 12.1438–9) which, Ellen Carol Jones writes, 'bears every conceivable reconceptualization of ancient and medieval Ireland promoted by the nineteenth-century cultural nationalists—and the seventeenth- to twenty-first-centuries travelers and tourist industries.'[9] On the one hand, the Citizen is therefore

[8] For example, the caption 'DOG, DOG, BITE PIG | PIG WON'T GET OVER STILE | AND I SHAN'T GET HOME (-RULE) TO-NIGHT' from 'THE OLD WOMAN AND HER PIG', *Punch*, 18 February 1893, p. 79. See also Michael de Nie, 'Pigs, Paddies, Prams and Petticoats: Irish Home Rule and the British Comic Press, 1886-93', *History of Ireland*, 13 (January–February, 2005), 42–7.

[9] Ellen Carol Jones, 'Memorial Dublin', in *Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism*, ed. by Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 59–121 (p. 107).

engaged in a desperate brandishing of an embodiment of a literally fossilised Irish past, but despite the comic exaggeration of this coronation scene, bog oak is also a reminder of the relationship between English colonisation and the deforestation of Ireland. Bog oak, manifested literally in a sceptre or used descriptively for a pig, 'vindicates the stories of ancient Ireland and of colonial misdeeds—proof rising from the soft land, bearing witness to the past.' Fashioned into a sceptre bog oak may serve as a comic phallic symbol, but, as Katherine O'Callaghan argues, 'the close anagram of spectre in "sceptre" of bog oak, and the further spectral associations to the word *Sceptre* in *Ulysses*, suggest that it is a quasi-spectral or un-dead return ("woodshadows"), which occurs when the bog spews forth its petrified remains.'[10]

The nationalist emphasis on de- and reforestation in 'Cyclops' (which includes a page-long list of 'Irish National Foresters' imbued with sylvan puns [*U* 12.1266–79]) forms one of the many double meanings so crucial to the episode, where exaggerated nationalist stereotypes often mask a deeper set of genuine grievances concerning the history and memory of colonisation. This doubling continues in *Finnegans Wake* where, in a discussion about the naming of a tree in Part Three, the suggestion of 'tod, too hard parted!' is offered. John B. Vickery has noted in relation to this line that '[w]hat is "death" in German is "father" in Welsh, and between them they encompass man's death and the state which naturally and psychologically presages it.'[11] Again, the aggrandised scene is undercut both by a more sombre reflection on death and the hauntological presence of wood whose naming recalls *Hamlet*, as referenced explicitly by the spectral Synge in 'Circe' and suggestively by the spectre/sceptre of Stephen's ashplant which he describes in similarly ghostly terms as '[m]y familiar, after me, calling, Steeeeeeeeeeeephen!' (*U* 1.1628–9). Joyce therefore offers up the interpretations of Synge in *Ulysses* as either a reincarnation of Shakespeare himself (by Eglinton in 'Scylla') or as a Touchstone figure (through Stephen's recollections). However, he supersedes both with the version in 'Circe' whose stereotypical dress

[10] Katherine O'Callaghan, 'Joyce's "treeless hills": Deforestation and Its Cultural Resonances', in *Memory Ireland, Volume 4: James Joyce and Cultural Memory*, ed. by Oona Frawley and Katherine O'Callaghan (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 95–111 (p. 108).
[11] Vickery, '*Finnegans Wake* and Sexual Metamorphosis', *Contemporary Literature*, 13 (Spring 1972), 213–242 (p. 235).

and demeanour belie the impression of a writer sincerely committed (if perhaps fruitlessly) to the recovery, preservation, and narration of an ancient, near-fossilised, and spectral Irish past.

The spectral evocations of Synge-as-ethnographer in *Ulysses* are afforded a fondness which sets them against the characterisation of Haines, even though Joyce regards both sarcastically in terms of their attachment to the 'future of the race'. While the affectionate Shakespearean connections to Synge allow Joyce to make light of what might he regards as Synge's overblown ethnographic style in texts such as *The Aran Islands*, Haines is positioned in 'Telemachus' as a character whose ethnographic thinking speaks to the darker implications of racial theorising. Responding to Stephen's protestations against '[t]he imperial British state', Haines concedes in a patronising tone: 'An Irishman must think like that, I daresay. We feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame' (*U* 1.643–9). However, his next pronouncement, 'I don't want to see my country fall into the hands of German jews either' (*U* 1.666–7), compels a reinterpretation of his concession: Haines can only acknowledge Stephen's displeasure at being a colonial subject because of his own paranoia concerning what believes to be the creeping Jewish influence on his country. The first example of antisemitic discourse in the novel therefore imagines Haines as a forerunner of Garrett Deasy in 'Nestor', who famously pronounces that 'England is in the hands of the jews' (*U* 2.345–6), as well as many of the nationalists in 'Cyclops' who are suspicious of Bloom's Jewish heritage.

II

Although Joyce's fiction is set in Dublin, the urban centre of the emerging Irish state, the narrative of *Ulysses* is heavily indebted both to the mythologised spaces of the rural west produced in the preceding decades in the ethnography of the Revival, and to a grammar of race and racialisation that Revival writers such as Yeats foregrounded in their work. Before looking more closely at the creative redeployments of ethnographic discourse in *Ulysses*, I will therefore examine some of the origins of Joyce's thinking and writing about race and racial essentialism in order to illustrate the

intersection of these concepts with the politics of ethnography.[12] An interest in racial discourse is one of the prominent features of Joyce's earliest writings although, as Vincent Cheng has detailed, various definitions of the word 'race' are used interchangeably in these texts.[13] In an essay written when he was sixteen the word is initially used to refer to animal species before Joyce turns to a human context: 'The next important subjugation is that of race over race. Among human families the white man is the predestined conqueror. The negro has given way before him, and the red men have been driven by him out of their lands and homes.' This text announces a belief in an inherent connection between racial categorisation and subjugation, and anticipates Stephen's conception of the milkwoman in 'Telemachus' as 'serving her conqueror' (*U* 1.405). Despite critical interest in Joyce and race, scant attention has been paid to this early essay, perhaps specifically because of the 'Victorian' lens through which race is conceived. While Richard Ellmann and Ellsworth Mason acutely observe that 'his subject was clearly force, and his theme the paradoxical one that force should be used to bring about the rule of kindness', they also argue that the essay shows Joyce taking 'the same stand' as he would later in *Ulysses* when 'Bloom tells the Cyclopian Citizen, "But it's no use. Force, hatred, history, all that."' The evidence from the essay suggests instead a development in Joyce's thought rather than a consistent thread. As the young Joyce moves from the 'subjugations of the elements' to the 'subjugation of animals' (both of which he seems to regard favourably), he employs a typical Darwinian mode of thinking: 'It may be that the desire to overcome and get the mastery of things, which is expressed in man's history of progress, is in a great measure responsible for his supremacy.' This evolving chain of subjugations, Joyce seems to suggest, should serve as the model for the 'subjugation of [man's] own mental faculties'. He advocates a conservative nurturing of the artist's 'great gift' to suspend the anarchic potential of the artwork:

> Otherwise in the arts, in sculpture and painting, the great incidents that engross the artist's attention would find their expression, in huge shapelessness or wild daubs; and in the ear

[12] Critical readings of Joyce and race are extensive, but the following have been particularly influential for this chapter: Vincent J. Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Len Platt, *Joyce, Race and 'Finnegans Wake'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); John Brannigan, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
[13] Cheng, *Empire*, p. 16.

> of the rapt musician, the loveliest melodies outpour themselves, madly, without time or movement, in chaotic mazes, 'like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.'

This subjugation of an apparently destabilising exuberance is then directly linked to an 'overcoming' of 'the lower races of the world'.[14] *Ulysses*, as Laura Doyle argues, therefore offers an explicit repudiation of this position in which this early 'masculinist racialism' is inverted by 'a novel that both parodies that racialism and creates the very "chaotic mazes" and "huge shapelessness" against which he warns "unsubdued" artists in this essay'.[15]

The 'predestined conqueror' of Joyce's essay offers a curious Humean is/ought choice. Given Joyce's later anti-racist positioning, we might read 'predestined' as meaning 'dictated by the random fluctuations of history' rather than suggesting an 'ought' linking 'the white man' and the 'conqueror'. However, this unusual phrase is itself complicated by just what exactly Joyce means by 'race' in the first sentence. As Cheng points out, Joyce's treatment is typical of 'white European cultures […] in the imprecision and malleability of his usage of the term "race"'.[16] Stephen Dedalus's famous evocation of 'the uncreated conscience of my race'[17] at the close of *Portrait* employs the term in a way that seems to encode both a national and an ethnic context, but the use of 'uncreated' might even operate theologically, as Pericles Lewis suggests, with racial conscience for Joyce being 'itself the source of all experience, something permanent like God and unlike all mortal creatures'.[18] This reading would support the teenage Joyce's sense of racial histories as at least partially 'predestined'. As one of Joyce's most memorable lines it has received considerable critical attention in itself, but John Brannigan has argued for a re-evaluation of what it says about Joyce's attitude to race:

---

[14] Joyce, '[Force]', in *Critical Writings*, pp. 17–22.
[15] Laura Doyle, 'Races and Chains: The Sexuo-Racial Matrix in *Ulysses*', in *Joyce: The Return of the Repressed*, ed. by Susan Stanford Friedman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 149–189 (p. 154).
[16] Cheng, *Empire*, p. 16.
[17] Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. by Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking, 1964; repr. 1970), p. 253.
[18] Pericles Lewis, 'The Conscience of the Race: The Nation as Church of the Modern Age', in *Joyce through the Ages: A Nonlinear View*, ed. by Michael Patrick Gillespie (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), pp. 85–106 (p. 88).

> It is more common in Joyce criticism to find Stephen's aspiration to forge 'the uncreated conscience of my race' read as an indication of Stephen's (and Joyce's) critical departure from the orthodoxies of the nationalist racial imagination, inventing a presumably liberal sense of moral values for a race badly in need of them. However, the fixity of notions of race in *Portrait* should alert us to the more likely meaning that Stephen's solution to the political and cultural problems of his age is to turn to race, and specifically to the idea that human beings exist in separate and distinctive racial groups, as the *a priori* of human experience and expression.[19]

The untenability of this 'liberal' conception of race for Stephen/Joyce arises because both are colonised writers subjected to pseudo-scientific concepts of race employed by the British Empire to justify its imperial practices. This racial pseudo-science, combined with the fact that race was an ill-defined word, facilitated the production of an essentialist rhetoric through which British popular and 'scientific' writing could make any number of claims about the relationship between the Irish, their physical appearance, and their character. The association of the Irish with pigs in *Punch* was only one of a set of derogatory stereotypes that also included simian appearances, violent temperaments, and inherent anarchist sentiments. Victorian caricatures therefore served to reify, and to popularise, beliefs such as that of Matthew Arnold that the Irish were 'ineffectual in politics'.

These stereotypes were a particularly useful method of encoding and containing 'otherness' in a way that benefited imperial dictates. As Homi Bhabha has suggested, 'despite the "play" in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial power produces the colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible.'[20] Or, as Frantz Fanon writes, the colonised culture, 'once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression.'[21] The British press therefore used the 'play' of exaggeration inherent in racial stereotypes to mask the relationship between representation and oppression while simultaneously providing 'fixed' traits of Irishness for their readers (fictitious though they might have been) that would help to concretise existing notions of racial and cultural

[19] John Brannigan, *Race*, p. 51.
[20] Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994; repr. 2004), pp. 94–120 (p. 101).
[21] Fanon, 'Racism and Culture', p. 34.

hierarchy. For Thomas Carlyle, the tension between an inability to achieve a fixed conception of the Irish and his advocacy of a continuing union between Britain and Ireland was disturbing. In 'The Repeal of the Union', published in the year of revolutions, 1848, Carlyle opens with the declaration that the 'one thing wanting to make [Ireland] happy' is the

> total disseverance from this Island; perfect and complete Repeal of the Union, as it is called. If, some night, the Union could but be completely shorn asunder, repealed and annihilated for ever, the next morning Ireland, with no England henceforth to molest her, would awake and find herself happy.

It is this very recognition which leads to Carlyle having to combine his persistent belief in the Union with an exasperated rehearsal of the white man's burden: 'the stern Destinies have laid upon England a terrible job of labour in these centuries' (the governance of Ireland), 'a heavier, terribler job of labour than any people has been saddled with in these generations!' Despite the exasperation, Carlyle's language anticipates the sense of racial predestination and hierarchisation in Joyce's teenage essay on force. For Carlyle, the Irish had either to 'become British' or become 'extinct; cut off by the inexorable gods.'[22] The 'terrible job of labour' that British governance would entail was therefore not only related to its practicalities, but also to the *awkwardness* of the colonial dynamics in which the Irish were inscribed: their proximity to Britain and their 'resistance […] to neat classifications'.[23] Such was Carlyle's frustration with this resistance that he offered, in private, far less deferential 'suggestions' for its resolution. In a letter written to Ralph Waldo Emerson the year following his essay on the Union, Carlyle reflected on the Irish 'question':

> What is to be done? asks every one; incapable of hearing any answer, were there even one ready for imparting to him. 'Blacklead these 2 million idle beggars,' I sometimes advised,

[22] Thomas Carlyle, 'The Repeal of the Union', in *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. by John M. Ulrich, Lowell T. Frye, and Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), pp. 181–190 (p. 181).
[23] Luke Gibbons, 'Race Against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13 (1991), 95–117 (p. 96).

> ‘and sell them in Brazil as Niggers,—perhaps Parliament, on sweet constraint, will allow you to advance them to be Niggers!’[24]

In Carlyle’s colonial imagination, the difficulty of categorising the Irish is resolved both through a dislocation across the Atlantic away from the heart of empire and a restructuring of racial hierarchies to associate them with enslaved Africans.

In a letter to Richard Monckton Milnes several years earlier, Carlyle recounted a trip to the North East of England and Scotland in which his positive racialising of the ‘Scotland Scotch’, because of his own ancestry in the region, is set against his sense of their degeneration in recent times: ‘They are all Danes, these people, stalwart Normans: terrible Sea-Kings are now terrible drainers of Morasses, terrible spinners of yarn, coal-borers, removers of mountains’. While for Carlyle this degeneration seems contingent on environmental factors, the Celts by contrast are beyond saving: ‘The windy Celts of Galloway meet us, not many miles from this, on the edge of Nithsdale: is it not a considerable blessing to have escaped being born a Celt?’[25] While it is unlikely that Joyce would have read this letter, it brilliantly foreshadows Stephen’s musings in ‘Proteus’, where the arrival of ‘Dane vikings’ is conceived in terms of a history of violence against the local Celtic populus, ‘a horde of jerkined dwarfs, my people’ (*U* 3.304–5).[26]

The year after Carlyle’s letter to Emerson, the anatomist Robert Knox, reflecting on a visit to the Scottish lowlands in 1814, drew a direct correlation between biology and character: ‘Civilization but modifies, education effects little […] [the Celt’s] morals, actions, feelings, greatnesses, and littlenesses, flow distinctly and surely from his physical structure; that structure which seems not to have altered since the commencement of recorded time.’ This inherently ‘unaltered and unalterable’ nature of the Celt, as Knox described it, was a frustrating but undeniable fact for which he suggested a ‘solution’ of displacement reminiscent of Carlyle’s: ‘The

[24] Carlyle, letter to Emerson, 28 August 1849, in *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle*, ed. by Joseph Slater (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 456.
[25] Carlyle, letter to Milnes, 19 July 1841, in *Emerson and Carlyle*, p. 192.
[26] See Bossche, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991), pp. 125–141.

source of all evil lies in *the race*—the Celtic race of Ireland. […] The race must be forced from the soil; by fair means, if possible; still they must leave. England's safety requires it.'[27]

At the intersection of science and anthropology, however, racial essentialism was both more dangerous and more useful for imperial purposes. L. Perry Curtis has documented the shift in physiognomic and anthropometric discourses from the mid-Victorian interpretation of racial classifications as correlated with certain character traits to the late-Victorian emphasis on quantitative research that avoided these unscientific correlations, while still attempting a systematic categorisation of races. Both approaches included 'researchers' who were keen, as Curtis says of Richard Tuthill Massy, 'to rescue the Celts of Great Britain and Ireland from the lowly position assigned to them by Anglo-Saxons,' although in doing so their insistence on racial distinction was intensified instead of being diminished.[28] Massy's suggestion in *Analytical Ethnology* (1855), written partly as a response to Knox's *The Races of Men*, that '[t]he leg and foot of the Celt are beautiful, the elastic, graceful walk, matchless', for instance, serves then as a biologically determinist precursor to the more general associations between the Celt and artistic sensibility made by Matthew Arnold.[29] The shift to the late-Victorian prioritising of quantitative analysis is exemplified by John Beddoe who even produced a mathematical formula, an 'Index of Nigrescence', 'designed to quantify the amount of residual melanin in the skin or corium and in the iris of the eye as well as the follicles of the hair.' Beddoe's findings, published in *The Races of Britain* (1885) and input into his index, explicitly associated Celtic ancestry with 'nigrescence' or African phenotypes. Despite Beddoe divorcing his methodology from the likes of Massy and Daniel Mackintosh,[30] his conception of 'Africanoid Celts', which became popular in the late nineteenth century, 'put the finishing touches on the later Victorian image of the Irish. The more

---

[27] Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850; repr. Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, 1969), pp. 213, 253.

[28] Curtis notes, however: 'For every flattering portrait of Irish Celtic physiognomy, usually drawn by someone who took pride in the "Celtic blood" running in his veins, there were ten treatises stressing the superior looks, faculties, and achievements of the Saxon, German, or Teutonic races' (p. 17).

[29] Richard Tuthill Massy, *Analytical Ethnology: The Mixed Tribes in Great Britain and Ireland Examined* (London: H. Bailliere, 1855), p. 6.

[30] Mackintosh explicitly connected '*Gaelic Physical Characteristics*' (e.g. 'forehead retreating; large mouth and thick lips') with '*Gaelic Mental Characteristics*' (e.g. 'deficient in depth of reasoning power; headstrong and excitable'). *On the Comparative Anthropology of England and Wales* (London: Trübner, 1866), pp. 15, 16.

familiar and amusing Paddy of stage, song, and cartoon had given way to a Celtic Caliban who seemed incapable of appreciating Anglo-Saxon civilization.' The very process of creating detailed, supposedly empirical racial categorisations had real political implications:

> Intermittent rebellions and chronic agrarian unrest in Ireland […] seemed to confirm the notion that Irish Celts were a subrace or people with habits antithetically opposed to English norms of thought and behavior. The price paid by Irishmen for increasing political activity and agrarian protest was the substitution of epithets like Caliban, Frankenstein, Yahoo, and gorilla for Paddy.[31]

The sense of the Celt as a hermetic racial group therefore influenced both political sentiments in Britain and contemporary notions of Irish culture, and as with the example of Massy's biological essentialism, these varied from the derogatory to the flattering. Knox for instance, in keeping with his belief that the Irish 'be forced from the soil', maintained a complete denial of a Celtic cultural history — 'As a race, the Celt has no literature […] nor science, nor arts'[32] — while writers such as the philologist Ernest Renan and, as detailed in Chapter 1, Matthew Arnold, asserted the belief in the Celt's inherent poetic and artistic talent. Renan's *The Poetry of the Celtic Races* (1896) draws a connection between the apparently hermetic nature of the Celts — 'the race has remained pure from all admixture of alien blood' — and the stereotype of Irish poetic sensibility.[33] This Hibernophile assessment, although apparently reverent, was still dependent on racial essentialism: Celtic artistic talent was seen as an inherent attribute of race rather than an effect of cultural environment or education. Despite the disparity of Renan's and Knox's opinions, both utilised the

[31] L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd edn (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997), pp. 19–20, 21, 22.
[32] Knox, *Races*, p. 218. In this regard, Knox is the perfect antagonist to Joyce's Bloom, as his Celtophobia was matched by his antisemitism, and along similar lines: 'Literature, science, and art they [the Jews] possess not. It is against their nature' (p. 140). See Cheng, *Empire*, p. 29.
[33] For example, 'it is only necessary to open the authentic monuments of the Gaelic genius to be convinced that the race which created them has had its own original manner of feeling and thinking, that nowhere has the eternal illusion clad itself in more seductive hues, and that in the great chorus of humanity no race equals this for penetrative notes that go to the very heart.' Renan, *The Poetry of the Celtic Races and Other Essays*, trans. by William G. Hutchinson (London: Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1896), p. 2.

notion of the Celt as a racial group synonymous with the Irish so as to facilitate the ease of analysing them as a distinct, ethnographic subject.

In *Portrait*, Stephen may desire to fly by the nets 'of nationality, language, religion',[34] but he is also chastised for his adoption of essentialist discourse in the earlier *Stephen Hero*, where Joyce has the character Madden interrogate what he regards as the protagonist's stereotypical conception of the Irish. Stephen expresses his concern about the membership of careerist 'civil servants', 'relatives [of] the police and the constabulary', and those faithful to 'Mother Church' in the Gaelic League. Joyce wrote in the margin of his draft, 'Priests and police in Ireland', and Stephen voices his belief in the tendency of both to collaborate in service of authoritarian colonial rule, despite Madden's protestations:

> — We remain true to the Church because it is our national Church, the Church our people have suffered for and would suffer for again. The police are different. We look upon them as aliens, traitors, oppressors of the people. [Madden]
> — The old peasant down the country doesn't seem to be of your opinion when he counts over his greasy notes and says 'I'll put the priest on Tom an' I'll put the polisman on Mickey.' [Stephen]

It is to this impersonation that Madden takes offence, assuming Stephen heard it in 'some "stage-Irishman" play. It's a libel on our countrymen.' Stephen continues sarcastically: 'No, no, it is Irish peasant wisdom: he balances the priest against the polisman and a very nice balance it is for they are both of a good girth', causing Madden to offer his condemnation: 'No West-Briton could speak worse of his countrymen. You are simply giving vent to old stale libels — the drunken Irishman, the baboon-faced Irishman that we see in *Punch*.'[35] On the one hand, Stephen seems to come off better in this argument, particularly in his recognition of the synergetic pairing of Church and state (emphasised by Joyce's marginal annotation) in the service of empire, an idea that will be explored later in relation to the 'Wandering Rocks' episode. At the same time however, Madden's accusation that Stephen is unable to express his political positions without recourse to a form of

[34] Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 203.
[35] Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, pp. 64–5.

racial stereotyping is an idea of Joyce's that does not disappear with his abandonment of *Stephen Hero* in 1905.

The use of interior monologue for Stephen in *Ulysses* offers to the reader an insight into the (admittedly occasional) instances of racist ideology and essentialism that Stephen would not feel comfortable expressing outwardly. These frequently enter into play in the novel as part of a wider discourse of *ethnographic* imagination. Although Joyce associates this particularly with his alter-ego through the latter's reflections on the relationship between race and history, it is also evident in the thoughts of Leopold and Molly Bloom. While Joyce's treatment of ethnographic discourse is frequently satirical, this tends to occur during third-person narration (of Haines in 'Telemachus' and Father Conmee in 'Wandering Rocks'), where stereotypes of that discourse are more easily identifiable. Stephen's and Bloom's thoughts, however, provoke a reconsideration of the observer/observed dichotomy of ethnography, a reconsideration that was itself being undertaken at that very moment by the fieldwork of Malinowski and the publication of his *Argonauts* in 1922.

III

By incorporating the English Haines as a casual ethnographer in 'Telemachus', Joyce has Stephen consider the discourse of ethnography and its racial implications from the outset of the novel. In the first discussion of Haines, Buck Mulligan identifies him as '[a] ponderous Saxon' who 'can't make [Stephen] out' (*U* 1.51; 54). Before Haines's first appearance, Stephen asserts that '[t]he cracked lookingglass of a servant' is 'a symbol of Irish art' (*U* 1.146), to which Mulligan replies: 'Cracked lookingglass of a servant! Tell that to the oxy chap downstairs and touch him for a guinea. He's stinking with money and thinks you're not a gentleman' (*U* 1.154–8). Later, succumbing to Mulligan's ploy, Haines addresses Stephen while adopting the rhetoric of the ethnographer in the field:

> —I intend to make a collection of your sayings if you will let me.

> Speaking to me. They wash and tub and scrub. Agenbite of inwit. Conscience. Yet here's a spot.
> —That one about the cracked lookingglass of a servant being the symbol of Irish art is deuced good.
>
> (*U* 1.480–4)

As Paul K. Saint-Amour has noted, Joyce here not only 'satirizes the colonizer's quest to appropriate an authentic colonial expression or creation', but also 'gestures at the intellectual property regime that makes such appropriations legally legitimate and economically attractive. Among the borders copyright patrols is the one that divides oral and written language'.[36] Haines's seemingly meek request for permission from Stephen exists therefore to mask its patronising nature, and also a desire for profit from the crystallisation of the oral into writing. William D. Jenkins suggests that Joyce took inspiration for Haines's 'collection' line from his reading of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895), in which the Englishman Munro's attitude to the character Cullingworth reflects that of Haines to Stephen: 'He shoots off a whole column of aphorisms in a single evening. I should like to have a man with a note-book always beside him to gather up his waste.'[37] Joyce inserted this text into Bloom's library in the 'Ithaca' episode in a late revision of *Ulysses*: '*The Stark-Munro Letters* by A. Conan Doyle, property of the City of Dublin Public Library, 106 Capel street, lent 21 May (Whitsun Eve) 1904, due 4 June 1904, 13 days overdue' (*U* 17.1375–7).[38] As the book is lent on the eve of Whitsun which 'commemorates the inspiration of the Apostles by the Holy Spirit', Jenkins asks if there is 'a hint here of an inspiration provided by the library book? And since the borrowed book is overdue, does it suggest that a debt of some sort has been acknowledged?'[39] The very act of acknowledging his debt to Doyle and its potential influence on Haines's desire to make a collection of Stephen's sayings therefore offers

[36] Paul K. Saint-Amour, *The Copywrights: Intellectual Property and the Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 164.
[37] Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Stark Munro Letters* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1895; repr. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1912), p. 133.
[38] For a discussion of Joyce's insertion of Doyle's text in Bloom's library, and its imperialist connotations, see Thomas Jackson Rice, 'Conan Doyle, James Joyce, and the Completion of *'Ulysses'*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 53 (2016), 203–34.
[39] William D. Jenkins, 'It Seems There Were Two Irishmen', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 15 (1969), 63–71 (p. 69).

an ironic comment on Haines's ethnographic practice and his ultimate lack of indebtedness to an oral literature that he seeks to inscribe in a text under his own name.

Ultimately however, Joyce's use of interior monologue establishes a vista onto the mind of the 'native' subject, as Haines imagines Stephen, only for the latter to reflect back upon Haines his own ethnographic counterpoint. Stephen interprets Haines's request in terms of a performative form of colonial guilt, anticipating the latter's resigned conclusion later in the chapter that 'history is to blame'. The 'Agenbite of inwit' is a translation of *Sommes des Vices et Vertus* (1279), a French 'manual of virtues and vices' by Friar Lorens, into the Kentish Middle English dialect by Dan Michel of Northgate which was 'intended to remind the layman of the hierarchy of sins and the distinctions among them.'[40] Stephen, internally at least, therefore disturbs the observer/observed dichotomy by imagining an element of the literary history of Haines's England, specifically as a *translation*, establishing a parallel to the translation that Haines's chapbook, whatever its attempts at fidelity, would necessarily embody. However, while Stephen attributes here the *Aȝenbite of Inwit*, the 'again-biting of in-wit',[41] the 'remorse of conscience' (*U* 9.809–10), to Haines as a Lady Macbeth figure who 'scrubs' away at colonial guilt, the phrase, which recurs several times in *Ulysses*, is truly applicable only to Stephen himself, and the guilt he feels for the death of his mother.[42]

Mulligan's sarcastic suggestions of additions to Haines's chapbook imagine the Englishman in the process of distorting the ethnographic subject through excessive commentary: 'That's folk, he said very earnestly, for your book, Haines. Five lines of text and ten pages of notes about the folk and the fishgods of Dundrum. Printed by the weird sisters in the year of the big wind' (*U* 1.365–7). This dwarfing of the 'native' text by a commentary encodes a specific

[40] Gifford and. Seidman, p. 22. The allusion was first traced by Ernst R. Curtius in 1929. See Curtius, 'Technique and Thematic Development of James Joyce', trans. by Eugène Jolas, *transition*, 16–17 (June 1929), 310–25. See also Weldon Thornton, *Allusions in 'Ulysses': A Line-by-Line Reference to Joyce's Complex Symbolism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961; repr. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973), pp. 20–1.

[41] This might also function as a comment on Stephen's 'conscience of my race' line from *Portrait*. As John Brannigan notes, 'conscience' in the *OED* is 'first explained […] as "inward knowledge or consciousness', which took the place in Middle English of "inwit".' The linear trajectory of conscience hoped for in *Portrait* — 'I go forth to encounter […]' — is turned in on itself in *Ulysses* by the Agenbite of inwit.

[42] See for example Francis Bulhof, 'Agendath Again', *James Joyce Quarterly,* 7 (1970), 326–32 (p. 328).

reference to Yeats, whose *In the Seven Woods* contains a colophon stating that it was 'printed, upon paper made in Ireland, and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats at the Dun Emer Press, in the house of Evelyn Gleeson at Dundrum in the county of Dublin, Ireland, finished the sixteenth day of July in the year of the big wind 1903.'[43] Mulligan's 'weird sisters', in addition to providing the *Macbeth* reference that prompts Stephen's '[t]hey wash and tub and scrub', also signifies the female publishers of Yeats's text (including his sister), with the use of 'Dundrum' and 'the big wind' confirming the borrowing.[44] The phrase 'upon paper made in Ireland' may seem incidental or insignificant, but it was for the Yeatses a small declaration of nationalist independence. In 1898 Maud Gonne wrote to Yeats that the 'Cork Hall committee have been getting into trouble for having had some of their printing done on *English made paper*. The question of the Irish manufacture is a hot one in Dublin just now, & rightly so.'[45] Synge conceived of the manner of the publication of his *The Aran Islands* in similarly political terms, writing to Elkin Mathews in 1905: 'One or two of my plays have made me very unpopular with a section of the Irish Catholic public, and I feel that it would be a great advantage to me to have [*Aran*] published and printed in Dublin on Irish paper'.[46] The insistence on using Irish paper functions for the Yeatses, Gonne, and Synge as a minor form of nationalist and protectionist defiance, but by reflecting these concerns through Mulligan's Shakespearean-Yeatsian reference, Joyce suggests a satirical equivalence between their desire to produce a 'genuine' Irish folk-text and Haines's chapbook project. As 'Irish paper' must presumably come from Irish trees, the importance ascribed to the physicality of the text and its material origins by the Revivalists becomes, then, merely a counterpart to Synge's 'bogoak pig' in 'Circe' and the Citizen's 'bogoak sceptre' in 'Cyclops'. As the example of Haines shows, after all, the provenance of the folk-text's materiality is secondary to the ways in which its meaning might be distorted through commentary, the '[f]ive lines of text and ten pages of notes'.

---

[43] Yeats, *In the Seven Woods* (Dundrum: Dun Emer, 1903), p. 64.
[44] See Marion Witt, 'A Note on Joyce and Yeats', *Modern Language Notes*, 63 (1948), 552–3.
[45] Maud Gonne, letter to Yeats, 22 February 1898, in Maud Gonne MacBride and Yeats, *The Gonne-Yeats Letters*, ed. by Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 84. See David Holdeman, *Much Labouring: The Texts and Authors of Yeats's First Modernist Books* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 48–9.
[46] Synge, letter to Elkin Mathews, 11 November 1905, in *Theatre Business: The Correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J.M. Synge*, ed. by Ann Saddlemyer (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), p. 84.

Ironically, of course, Mulligan's commentary *on* commentary simultaneously functions as Joyce's prediction that his own works will be subjected to a body of annotations and critical work that will far exceed the quantity of the original.[47]

In the following episode, 'Nestor', Stephen's thoughts return to Haines's request after he offers to his students the quip about a pier being 'a disappointed bridge':

> For Haines's chapbook. No-one here to hear. Tonight deftly amid wild drink and talk, to pierce the polished mail of his mind. What then? A jester at the court of his master, indulged and disesteemed, winning a clement master's praise. Why had they chosen all that part? Not wholly for the smooth caress. For them too history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawnshop.
>
> (*U* 2.42–7)

Stephen therefore gives voice to his depressed sense of acting in the role of ethnographic informant, in contrast to Mulligan's enthusiasm for 'ethnographic pimping'.[48] Demonstrating the superiority of his 'native' intelligence to Haines is for Stephen a fleeting and shallow endeavour that does nothing to destabilise the larger colonial situation, that of '[a] jester at the court of his master'. History, then, is not only a vague signifier used by Haines to circumvent an engagement with England's colonial legacy, but also something reduced to mere narrative, a tale too often heard that refuses to foreground the colonial dynamics that have, for Stephen and his students, made 'their land a pawnshop.'

Despite his attitude towards Haines in 'Telemachus', Mulligan appreciates the financial possibilities of embracing the false authenticity of Celtic artefacts when he suggests that Stephen use his lookingglass line on the 'the oxy chap downstairs and touch him for a guinea.' Mulligan justifies this inverted, trickster ethnography by reference to the deceitful practices of Haines's own family: 'His old fellow made his tin by selling jalap to Zulus or some bloody swindle or other. God, Kinch, if you and I could only work together we might do something for the island. Hellenise it' (*U* 1.156–8). As jalap is a Mexican medicinal root, Mulligan implicitly defends his own swindle

[47] Tim Conley suggests that Joyce's parody of unhelpful annotations in *Finnegans Wake* II.2 functions as a form of acknowledging that this prediction in *Ulysses* has come true. Conley, *Joyces Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 65.
[48] Cheng, *Empire*, p. 159.

by drawing a parallel with the imperial pursuits of Haines's father who similarly (Mulligan believes) falsified the nationality (and hence authenticity) of a product to be sold. By seeking to exploit the exploiter, Mulligan resists and undermines the ethnographic pursuits of Haines while simultaneously remaining complicit with a system of exploitation that looks to capitalise on Celtic heritage. In this way, although Haines appears as the stereotyped representation of the ethnographer in the novel, he is subject to the same financial exploitation and patronising ethnographic discourse that he directs towards his 'native' subjects, Stephen and the milkwoman. The comic naivety of Haines's ethnographic practice in 'Telemachus' climaxes in his attempt to speak Irish to the woman, who mistakes it for French. As with the request to make a collection of Stephen's sayings, however, Joyce uses the stream-of-consciousness technique to flow from Haines's banal words to Stephen's more complex relationship to the ideas latent in them:

> Old and secret she had entered from a morning world, maybe a messenger. She praised the goodness of the milk, pouring it out. Crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in the lush field, a witch on her toadstool, her wrinkled fingers quick at the squirting dugs. They lowed about her whom they knew, dewsilky cattle. Silk of the kine and poor old woman, names given her in old times. A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer, their common cuckquean, a messenger from the secret morning.
>
> (*U* 1.399–406)

Stephen is able to demystify the notion of the woman as '[a] wandering crone', but he nevertheless attempts to transform her into a mythic artefact (the 'messenger' a reference to Athena disguised as Mentes of the Taphians in Book I of the *Odyssey*) in order to locate her relationship to the systems of power represented by Haines (the conquerer) and Mulligan (the betrayer). Although filtered through a mythic lens, Stephen is disposed to conceive of the milkwoman as a type of her race, just as at the end of *Portrait* he interprets another milkwoman in Davin's story as someone 'reflected in other figures of the peasant women whom he had seen standing in the doorways at Clane as the college cars drove by, as a type of her race and of his own […].[49] Stephen's attitude therefore allows the possibility of exposing the imperial forces at work in the subjugation of the

[49] Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 183.

Irish, but this critique is only made available through his own analysis of race and the sense of where he positions himself in terms of this concept.

The discussion of race at the end of *Portrait* looks optimistically to the future, even while it doubts itself: 'I go 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'. In *Ulysses* however, Stephen's consciousness is orientated towards the past, the nightmare of history from which he is trying to awake. While on Sandymount Strand in 'Proteus', Stephen's thoughts repeat a similar mythologising discourse directed towards the milkwoman of 'Telemachus'. This occurs through a meditation on history that begins with his observation of the midwife Mrs Florence MacCabe:

> One of her sisterhood lugged me squealing into life. Creation from nothing. What has she in the bag? A misbirth with a trailing navelcord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back, strandentwining cable of all flesh. […] Gaze in your *omphalos*.
>
> […] Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze. Belly without blemish, bulging big, a buckler of taut vellum, no, whiteheaped corn, orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting. Womb of sin.
>
> (*U* 3.35–44)

Stephen therefore embeds himself, at the outset, in this 'strandentwining cable' which is at one moment unbroken and lifeless. The *omphalos*, a concept repeated throughout *Ulysses*, functions as the literal focus of *navelgazing*: by considering the fleshly umbilical cord of history, Stephen inaugurates an autoethnographic reflection on his own genealogy which reaches back to '[c]reation from nothing'. In *Finnegans Wake*, the navel returns several times, but its first appearance serves as a direct mirror to this passage in *Ulysses*. Following a conversation between Mutt and Jute, the narrator suggests that the reader '(Stoop) if you are abcedminded'.[50] The 'meandertale' being told, even as it 'knits knowledge' like Stephen's cable, issues forth 'with a rush out of his navel reaching the reredos of Ramasbatham' (*FW* 18.22–9). The tale, Joyce suggests, does not 'link back' unbroken to Adam and Eve in an 'abc' fashion, but instead begins literally in the middle, at the *omphalos*, spreading from multiple mythico-religious sources (Buddhism: the rush said to have

[50] Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking, 1939), p. 18. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text as '*FW*', followed by page and line numbers.

grown from Siddhartha's navel; Hinduism: Rama, an avatar of Vishnu), and proceeds anyway in a meandering fashion, touching both the Edenic origin that Stephen imagines ('Ramasbatham' or Ramsbottom in Lancashire is adjacent to the village of Edenfield, like Stephen's Edenville) and the Darwinian model of human origins as an alternative to Genesis encoded in the meandertale's neanderthal.

For Stephen, however, the umbilical implication of the *omphalos* is consistent with the concept of lineage, and later in the episode the train of thought begun by his observation of the midwives prompts him to consider the relationship between historical 'races' and his own, in language that reflects Carlyle's distinction between Danes and Celts:

> Galleys of the Lochlanns ran here to beach, in quest of prey, their bloodbeaked prows riding low on a molten pewter surf. Dane vikings, torcs of tomahawks aglitter on their breasts when Malachi wore the collar of gold. […] Then from the starving cagework city a horde of jerkined dwarfs, my people, with flayers' knives, running, scaling, hacking in green blubbery whalemeat. Famine, plague and slaughters. Their blood is in me, their lusts my waves. I moved among them on the frozen Liffey, that I, a changeling, among the spluttering resin fires. I spoke to no-one: none to me.
>
> (*U* 3.300–309)

Stephen's image seems to endorse the form of racial distinction suggested by the likes of Massy, with the proud, gleaming Vikings set against the starving dwarfs, but where Stephen departs from this Victorian ethnographic discourse is the way in which these physical differences originate unequivocally from a proto-colonial violence, 'Famine, plague and slaughters.' For Gregory Castle this passage is redemptive of the ethnographer Stephen, as 'the Manichean structure of colonial domination is destabilised by the metropolitan intellectual's assertion of racial identity' with these predecessors.[51] However, by juxtaposing two static, stereotyped racial groups, Dane Vikings and Celtic dwarfs, with his own 'protean' self, 'a changeling' who exists both in the present of 1904 and this imagined past ('I moved among them'), Stephen betrays his anxiety about his relationship to a racial lineage by remaining at one remove from it, reiterating the hierarchy that separates the

[51] Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 217.

multifaceted observer from the unchanging 'observed' of ethnographic study. Stephen may concur with Knox's notion of the Celt as 'unaltered and unalterable', but he stops short of applying this to himself. Castle's reading becomes more persuasive, however, if Stephen's protean self-portrait is considered as a reaction against the primitivist conceptions of the Irish employed by British racial and ethnographic discourse. This combination of a concurrent engagement with, and critique of, forms of counter-primitivism was one of the dominant motifs of Harlem Renaissance negotiations of cultural heritage, an issue explored in the following chapters.

IV

The modes of ethnographic discourse employed by Bloom in the novel are often framed in similar terms to the historico-racial matrix that Stephen works through in the Telemachiad. This is notably the case in 'Cyclops' where Bloom's Jewish heritage is scrutinised by the patrons of Barney Keirnan's public house.[52] As with the problem of the hierarchical relationship between ethnographer and colonised subject embodied by Haines and Stephen, Joyce uses 'Cyclops' to invert the anthropological gaze (eye/I) of the novel, which has followed Bloom's thoughts concerning various Dubliners for several episodes, and positions him instead as the subject of a specifically nationalist ethnography. Crucially, the episode does not actually occur 'live' so to speak, as with the rest of *Ulysses*, but is instead a later recounting of events in the pub between 5pm and 6pm by the episode's 'I' or 'Nameless One' (*U* 15.1143).[53] Nationalist ethnography is, therefore, already inflected from the outset by the framing chosen by the Nameless One. Bloom and the other 'subjects' under consideration are not presented 'as is' in the manner Malinowski professed to employ, but instead through a highly politicised and stylised lens, echoing the recounting of the original Cyclops narrative, *after the event*, by Odysseus to King Alcinous in Book IX of the *Odyssey*.

[52] Elsewhere, however, Bloom's approach is far more playful, as in 'Lestrygonians' for instance, when he is choosing his lunch at Davy Byrne's: 'Sandwich? Ham and his descendants musterred and bred there (*U* 8.742)'. While Stephen's consideration of Judaeo-Christian lineages is traced back in 'Proteus' to the sombre image of the 'Womb of sin', Bloom takes an equally sombre narrative, the Hamitic line, and imagines it as part of a happy gastronomic union.

[53] I will use this name, ascribed to the initial narrator of 'Cyclops' in the 'Circe' episode, to avoid confusion.

The Nameless One's antisemitism surfaces early on, as he recounts Bloom joining the other patrons and discussing the issue of capital punishment:

> So they started talking about capital punishment and of course Bloom comes out with the why and the wherefore and all the codology of the business and the old dog smelling him all the time I'm told those jewies does have a sort of a queer odour coming off them for dogs about I don't know what all deterrent effect and so forth and so on.
>
> (*U* 12.450–4)

This is the first of several instances in the episode where the Nameless One and his fellow nationalists express distaste towards Bloom's use of scientific discourse. Just what exactly this 'codology' might be is significantly framed first through the Nameless One's dismissive remark and only later through Bloom's (purported) reported speech. He has tried to explain capital punishment sociologically in terms of the 'deterrent effect' and also responds to Alf, who has informed the group about post-mortem erections from hanging ('I heard that from the head warder […] after the drop it was standing up in their faces like a poker' [*U* 12.459–62]), in scientific terms:

> —That can be explained by science, says Bloom. It's only a natural phenomenon, don't you see, because on account of the…
>
> And then he starts with his jawbreakers about phenomenon and science and this phenomenon and the other phenomenon.
>
> (*U* 12.464–7)

The reported speech is cut off in the Nameless One's account, with his vague generalities about phenomena replacing what presumably would have been a more substantial attempt at explanation by Bloom. Vagueness and hearsay are therefore allied together in the service of antisemitism, with the Nameless One noting that his belief that 'those jewies' have a 'queer odour' is something he's been 'told'.

Narratologically, the opposition between the narrator's half-truths and Bloom's attempts at logical explanations is complicated by the fact that in the following paragraph, the episode's third-person narrative voice (which is distinct from that of the Nameless One) creates a parody of Bloom-as-scientist: 'The distinguished scientist Herr Professor Luitpold Blumenduft tendered

medical evidence to the effect […]' (*U* 12.468). The possibility of a 'neutral' or unbiased narrative middleground is thereby denied. While 'Luitpold Blumenduft' is not in itself antisemitic, but rather simply 'foreign' sounding (and therefore suspicious to the nationalists), the German of the surname — 'flower scent or fragrance'[54] — connects Bloom to the Nameless One's 'queer odour' and invokes, Fritz Senn suggests, 'a whole history of specific anti-Semitism' through 'the vicious custom of giving Jews in Europe nasty names with evil connotations'.[55] In *The Odyssey of Style in 'Ulysses'* (1981), Karen Lawrence inaugurated an important discussion about the stylistic changes that Joyce employs as he moves from 'Sirens' to 'Cyclops'. 'Whereas in "Sirens" the consciousness of the main character acts as an anchor to the reader in the face of the bizarre narrative antics, in "Cyclops," the sound of Bloom's mind thinking is gone, and his dialogue is vulnerable to the narrator's "rewriting."'[56] While the shift in Joyce's narrative technique does indeed emphasise this vulnerability, the parodic Herr Professor paragraph cannot be a facet of the Nameless One's 'rewriting' owing to his previous demonstration of unintelligence. It may even be the case that this unmoored narrative style is most closely aligned with Bloom himself in a manifestation of internalised antisemitism. Bloom, after all, uses derogatory phrases ('Ikey touch that' [*U* 4.103]) and possesses the antisemitic German novel *Soll und Haben* [*Debit and Credit*] by Gustav Freytag (*U* 17.1383). Both the Nameless One, who is unable to properly represent Bloom's ideas because he does not understand them, and the overblown, parodic narrative voice, problematise the issue of objective representation and invert the general structure of Bloom-as-observer, analysing him almost as a racialised specimen.

As happens frequently in 'Cyclops', Joyce's satirical presentation of the nationalists is accompanied by a secondary, partially obscured encoding of their own colonial subjugation. As M. Keith Booker argues, the patrons demonstrate an 'opposition to Bloom's fascination with discourses (like science) that are closely implicated in the British colonial domination of Ireland'.[57] In order to fit in with the codified, nationalist discussion, Bloom attempts to flaunt his scientific

[54] Gifford and Seidman, p. 332.
[55] Fritz Senn, 'The Joyce of Impossibilities', in *Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative*, ed. by Colleen Jaurretche (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 197–212 (p. 208).
[56] Karen Lawrence, *The Odyssey of Style in 'Ulysses'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 118.
[57] M. Keith Booker, '*Ulysses', Capitalism, and Colonialism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), p. 132.

acumen while arguably remaining detached from the implications of the use of capital punishment against political enemies of the British state. In response to Bloom's interjection, the Citizen (alter-ego of Gaelic Athletic Association founder Michael Cusack) is 'waiting for the wink of the word' with his own political counter-discourse, and recites to Bloom 'the fellows that were hanged, drawn and transported for the cause' of 'a new Ireland' (*U* 12.479–83).

The racial discrimination directed at Bloom may be read in terms of the pub-goers' xenophobic and anti-cosmopolitan bent, one which the exilic Joyce, writing *Ulysses* in Europe, would have been keen to satirise. However, the nationalists' fear of foreigners is not categorically anti-European, or indeed wholly primitivist or protectionist. Operating through the Homeric precedent and the episode's organ of the Cyclopean eye, Lenehan voices a fear that Ireland is the object of continental scrutiny and exploitation: 'Europe has its eyes on you' (*U* 12.1265). This is met with a defiant response from the Citizen: 'And our eyes are on Europe, says the citizen. We had our trade with Spain and the French and with the Flemings before those mongrels were pupped, Spanish ale in Galway, the winebark on the winedark waterway' (*U* 12.1296). In order to establish an equivalence with the British Empire, and a counter-discourse to imperialism itself, the Citizen is impelled like Stephen to examine what he regards as his own racial history, one which involved cultural exchange through trading. Although the Citizen is anxious to highlight the controlling position of the Irish in this commodity exchange, he nevertheless betrays a pride at Irish-continental relations that preceded those of the 'mongrel' British. The Citizen therefore embodies a more complex racial consciousness than the xenophobic Nameless One, while still figuring his specific brand of internationalism in materialist and martial terms: 'We'll put force against force […] We have our greater Ireland beyond the sea' (*U* 12.1364–5).

Despite this appreciative nod towards Irish histories of cultural and material exchange, the Citizen and his peers are threatened by Bloom because of his resistance to racial and cultural classification:

> —And after all, says John Wyse, why can't a jew love his country like the next fellow?
> —Why not? says J. J., when he's quite sure which country it is.
> —Is he a jew or a gentile or a holy Roman or a swaddler or what the hell is he? says Ned. Or who is he?

(*U* 12.1628–1632)

The nationalists' attitude thereby appropriates the 'form of narrative' that Bhabha suggests is used to *produce* the colonised, 'whereby the productivity and circulation of subjects and signs are bound in a reformed and recognizable totality', despite the fact that for these nationalists such a discourse functions as a mirror, reflecting the strategies of categorisation that the British have applied to the Irish onto Bloom in a modified form.[58] In Joyce's second draft J. J. O'Molloy's quip was originally attributed to Stephen, one which receives a laugh from Old MacHugh who responds: 'That's Gallic […] Paris did that for you.'[59] By evoking Stephen's self-exile in Paris, MacHugh inadvertently draws a contrast between this willed continental escape and the Jewish experience of forced exile and homelessness in which Stephen's humour is anchored.[60] Although Stephen was later removed from 'Cyclops' entirely, the drafts show that Joyce was keen not to restrict antisemitism to the novel's nationalists. MacHugh's comment suggests that this attitude was common to intellectual Parisian circles and this discourse seems to have permeated Stephen's consciousness: in 'Nestor', for example, Deasy's famous assertion that 'England is in the hands of the jews' arouses in Stephen the memory of 'goldskinned men quoting prices on their gemmed fingers […] [o]n the steps of the Paris Stock Exchange' (*U* 2.364–5). Rather than being merely the domain of the 'Cyclops' nationalists, antisemitism is at its fiercest in the Unionist Deasy, and even the cosmopolitan Stephen is culpable as he inadvertently imagines the Stock Exchange scene in the ethnographic terms of skin colour and Jewish racial stereotypes. However, as Stephen begins to consider the mental image he has conjured, 'Not theirs: these clothes, this speech, these gestures' (*U* 2.367), he implicitly compares the complex position of the European Jew in relation to empire in terms that echo his sense of discomfort at English words on an Irish tongue in *Portrait*: 'His language, so

[58] Bhabha, 'Other', p. 101.
[59] Buffalo MS 6, 2[r], quoted in *Joyce's Notes and Early Drafts for 'Ulysses': Selections from the Buffalo Collection*, ed. by Philip F. Herring (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977), p. 170.
[60] Knox, for instance, prefaces his assertion that Jews lack '[l]iterature, science, and art' with an summary of this idea: 'From the earliest recorded times the Jews had commenced wandering over the earth, and seem to have been trafficking in cast-off garments in Italy before Rome itself was founded. Wanderers, then, by nature—unwarlike—they never could acquire a fixed home or abode. […] It is against their nature—they never seem to have had a country, nor have they any yet' (p. 138).

familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech.'[61] In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Fanon expresses a similar idea in even starker, existentialist tones: 'The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language.'[62] The colonial subject's encounter with the mother tongue and the mother culture involves a struggle between a desire for acceptance and a persistent sense of this culture being somehow, and forever, '[n]ot theirs'.

That the Stephen/O'Molloy joke feeds off the idea of Jewish homelessness is significant in terms of the anxiety of Ned Lambert's following question which struggles to locate and define Bloom in racial and religious terms. As Bloom does not conform to one category, the question instead frames him as mongrel in contrast to the notion of a pure Irish race. Although Joyce is clearly derisive of the nationalists' need to categorise Bloom (or to reject him as a hybrid), it is important to consider the implications of their desire to define themselves as purely Irish by contrast. In response to racist, anti-Irish sentiment derived from both the British press and the emerging 'science' of racial anthropology, many Revivalists sought to employ a counter-narrative of Irish supremacy. As Cheng has illustrated, this supremacist narrative often relied on a 'reverse ethnocentrism' in order to draw a distinction between the Irish and what the Citizen conceives of as the 'mongrel' British:

> the very notion that there was still a pure and distinct Celtic race still living in Ireland was an essentialist construction that, ironically enough, was equally acceptable (in fact essential) to *both* the Irish Nationalist and the Anglo-Saxon imperialist, for both depended (emotionally and psychologically) on the notion of themselves as a pure race and distinct from others.[63]

Cheng argues that in addition to this essentialism, nationalist rhetoric often unconsciously mimicked colonial discourses to promote its simultaneous purity and supremacy. Douglas Hyde's influential essay 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland', for instance, triumphed the

[61] Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 189.
[62] Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967; repr. London: Pluto Press, 2008), p. 8.
[63] Cheng, *Empire*, p. 50.

superiority of the Irish and argued for the separation of the Celts from what the Citizen calls the 'brutal bloody Sassenachs' (*U* 12.1190–1). However, although British imperialism and Irish nationalism often shared these monocultural and supremacist sentiments, the desire to de-Anglicise Ireland also emerged as a specific anti-imperialist response to the foreign British presence. Joyce therefore uses 'Cyclops' to stage a satire of those elements of nationalist rhetoric that offered a thinly veiled mirror (the 'cracked lookinglass of a servant'), of British colonialist-supremacist narratives. As I suggested in Chapter 1, Yeats is similarly aware of this colonial mirroring and attempts, with limited success, to reclaim and reformulate its tenets (such as Arnold's conception of the Celt), in contrast to Joyce's preferred mode of satire.

V

In *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934), Frank Budgen describes Joyce writing the 'Wandering Rocks' episode 'with the map of Dublin before him on which were traced in red ink the paths of the Earl of Dudley and Father Conmee. He calculated to a minute the time necessary for his characters to cover a given distance of the city.'[64] The episode details the movements and interactions of various Dublin citizens in nineteen vignettes, and the meticulous timing and plotting that Budgen details would have extended to various characters. Joyce, however, chose for the skeleton of the episode the paths of Conmee and the Earl around which he was able to construct the remainder of the spatial plotting. A representative of Stephen's 'two masters', 'the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church' and 'the imperial British state' (*U* 1.638; 643–4) therefore dominate the first and last (and two largest) sections of the episode. Their mutual complicity is even enacted through a chiastic exchange: 'A constable on his beat saluted Father Conmee and Father Conmee saluted the constable' (*U* 10.98–9). Joyce originally conceived of the episode as an '*Entr'acte*', 'a pause in the action' which has 'absolutely no relation to what precedes or follows'[65] and Budgen

[64] Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1934; repr. 1960), p. 124.
[65] Joyce, letter to Budgen, 24 October 1920, in *Letters*, I, p. 149.

describes its characters as 'isolated masses of matter floating through space'.[66] Despite these claims, and although the episode facilitates a certain communisation of the narrative voice by moving beyond the thoughts of Stephen and Bloom, its citizens are anything but isolated from the controlling forces of Church and state that border it, and from an ethnographic consciousness that pervades it.

Earlier in 'Lotus-eaters', Bloom sees a notice for a sermon by Conmee on 'the African mission' before his thoughts turn to missionary practice in general:

> Save China's millions. Wonder how they explain it to the heathen Chinee. Prefer an ounce of opium. […] He's not going out in bluey specs with the sweat rolling off him to baptise blacks, is he? The glasses would take their fancy, flashing. Like to see them sitting round in a ring with blub lips, entranced, listening. Still life. Lap it up like milk, I suppose.
>
> (*U* 5.326–37)

The sermon reappears in 'Wandering Rocks' as Conmee ponders 'the millions of black and brown and yellow souls that had not received the baptism […] It seemed to Father Conmee a pity that they should all be lost, a waste, if one might say' (*U* 10.143–152). Bloom's internal question is derisive of the missionary practice of Father Conmee because he believes the latter's understanding of the 'native' subject to be erroneous and reductive. Through the language of his criticism, however, Bloom imagines this would-be colonised/baptised subject as passive and easily enthralled by Western technology and commodity. While Bloom's attitude to Conmee looks to stage a critique of the ethnographic mode, he cannot escape the racialised presuppositions of Victorian ethnography even as he does so. He is dismissive of Conmee's project in terms of its inefficient *technique* rather than from a moral standpoint, and although he hints at the resistance of the 'heathen Chinee' to gullibility or patronising missionary practices, this collapses with the reference to opium which in turn leads to the image of an 'entranced' African population. In 'Wandering Rocks', Conmee shares Bloom's interest in efficiency, but it is employed here in terms of the 'waste' of unbaptised souls, a word choice that figures the population in material terms. The apparently benevolent attitude of Conmee as he considers these souls in relation to their race

[66] Budgen, p. 124.

betrays a patronising posture which presents the ethnic/religious Other as incapable of securing its own salvation. Similarly, the pleasant, innocuous tone of the scene contributes to the sense that the episode is somehow narratively democratic, whereas in fact, as with the 'Herr Professor' paragraph of 'Cyclops', Joyce has the narrative voice itself adopt Conmee's imperial missionary discourse. The short paragraph preceding Conmee's thoughts on the mission, 'Mr Eugene Stratton grimaced with thick niggerlips' (*U* 10.141–2), imitates both Bloom's 'blub lips' and Conmee's racial musings, complicating any possibility of an objective narrative voice.

Although in instances such as these the narrative of the episode seems to function in terms of the 'Uncle Charles Principle' in its adoption of Conmee's style, the surface impression of 'Wandering Rocks' is of a neutral, de-politicised text which functions like the kind of ethnographic writing that Malinowski was looking to produce in *Argonauts*.[67] The episode may be full of movement, but the meticulously calculated path of each of the citizens (the 'symbol' in the Gilbert schema) suggests that they function like cogs in a mechanical system (mechanics being the 'art' in both Gilbert and Linati) or labyrinth (the 'technic' in Gilbert).[68] As almost all sections begin with the name(s) of the citizen(s) it concerns, the temptation might be to view these as isolated snapshots of Dublin life which are, as with Malinowski's functionalist approach, organ-like entities which contribute to the healthy functioning of the whole. The notion of hermetic units working together is tempted by the structure of the sections, which frequently name and put forward new characters for consideration.

In describing the construction of a canoe by the Trobriand people, Malinowski speaks favourably of the need for order and the division of labour within the community:

> The canoe is constructed by a group of people, it is owned, used and enjoyed communally, and this is done according to definite rules. […] There is therefore a social organisation underlying the building, the owning, and the sailing of a canoe. […] All the stages of work, at which various people have to co-operate, must be co-ordinated, there must be someone in authority who takes the initiative and gives decisions […]

[67] See Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 15–38.
[68] Joyce, 'The Gilbert and Linati Schemata', in *Ulysses*, ed. by Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 735–8.

Malinowski's description of the 'canoe's sociology' appears to establish striking parallels with the interaction of the 'units' in 'Wandering Rocks', both in terms of the narrative of the episode and the way that narrative is framed. In both texts, people are generally divided based on forms of labour, and seem to go about these 'according to definite rules'. However, co-operation is impossible without 'someone in authority' — 'the chief, or the headman of a village' in *Argonauts* and the surveillant, imperial presence of the viceregal cavalcade in 'Wandering Rocks'. As important as the '[t]he sociological differentiation of functions', Malinowski argues, is '[t]he magical regulation of work':

> The forces that keep the natives to their traditional course of behaviour are, in the first place, the specific social inertia which obtains in all human societies and is the basis of all conservative tendencies, and then the strong conviction that if the traditional course were not taken, evil results would ensue.[69]

The force that impels the regulation of the Trobrianders is therefore not physical, but rather a form of 'social inertia' born of generations of belief in adherence to traditional practices. Malinowski's insistence on the synergetic authority exerted by the combination of the chief's authority on the one hand, and 'magical regulation' on the other, offers therefore a parallel to the equivalent harmonising forces of Church and state in Dublin. Crucially, the form of control that they are able to exert is not felt by the citizens *as* control, as imposition, but instead as a natural, organic part of life.

This, at least, is what an initial reading of Joyce's episode seems to present, exemplified by the cosy meeting of Church and state in the salutes of Father Conmee and the constable. On closer inspection, any notion that the episode will sustain its implicit mirroring of the neat sociological divisions that Malinowski observed in (or imposed upon) Trobriand society becomes untenable, both at the level of the action and the structure of Joyce's text. Narratives overlap and intrude one another, with characters frequently appearing suddenly in short paragraphs without warning before disappearing again. The conversation between Mulligan and Haines in section sixteen, for example, gives way jarringly to the reappearance of '[t]he onelegged sailor' (*U* 10.7)

[69] Malinowski, *Argonauts*, pp. 113–115.

who 'growled at the area of 14 Nelson street' (*U* 10.1063) and who was first introduced in section one. Within section sixteen, Joyce also offers several potential allusions to ethnographic discourse. The actions of John Howard Parnell, observed by Mulligan and Haines, are described in strange, exaggerated language — 'John Howard Parnell translated a white bishop quietly and his grey claw went up again to his forehead whereat it rested' (*U* 10.1050–1) — suggesting a combination of the (often misplaced) self-assuredness and highly specialised language of the ethnographic observer. Haines begins to read 'his newbought book' (*U* 10.1060), Douglas Hyde's *Lovesongs of Connacht*, first mentioned in 'Scylla and Charybdis', where Mulligan tells those assembled at the library that Haines has gone to buy it, thus missing Stephen's discussion of Shakespeare. John Eglinton offers a satirisation of the 'gone-native' Haines ('The peatsmoke is going to his head') while Stephen is reminded bitterly of Haines's condescending attitude and desire to appropriate the folk in the novel's opening episode: 'We feel in England. Penitent thief. Gone' (*U* 9.100–101). Section sixteen of 'Wandering Rocks' appropriately ends with Haines reiterating his own stereotypes, rather than those he is inclined to read into the Dubliners he encounters: 'This is real Irish cream I take it, he said with forbearance. I don't want to be imposed on' (*U* 10.1094–5). Similarly, he is convinced that Stephen 'has an *idée fixe*' (*U* 10.1068), but this is ironically better suited to Haines himself and the ethnographic structure of 'Wandering Rocks' that Joyce distorts, William Mottolese writes, by 'undermin[ing] his own emerging plan, offering and then rendering inadequate totalizing conventions of ethnographic representation.'[70] As the sections of the episode and their characters bleed together and interrupt one another, then, the notion of the anthropological specimen, the desire of the ethnographer for the 'native' subject under observation to possess a fixed and definable character, is unravelled and shown to be illusory.

While 'Wandering Rocks' imitates, only to then resist the characteristics of the ethnographic text, the Dublin citizens in its midst are still subject to the monitoring of the sentry-like presence of Church and state, even at the level of narrative structure as suggested earlier. Conmee is seen constantly 'checking-in' with those he encounters and his obsession with order is foregrounded in the episode's first paragraph where he 'reset[s] his smooth watch' (*U* 10.1–2).

[70] William C. Mottolese, '"Wandering Rocks" as Ethnography? Or Ethnography on the Rocks, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 39 (Winter 2002), 251–274 (p. 262).

The chaotic reality of the episode's plot, however, resists his strict adherence to a temporal order. When he encounters Mrs Sheehy he enquires about her sons: 'were they getting on well at Belvedere? Was that so? Father Conmee was very glad indeed to hear that' (*U* 10.20–1). As Hugh Kenner has noted, the historical sons, Richard and Eugene Sheehy 'were of Joyce's (hence Stephen's) generation and long since out of Belvedere,' and so the anachronism of this detail draws attention to Conmee's erroneous time-consciousness.[71] As with the earlier use of 'niggerlips', the text silently adopts traits of Conmee's speech and seems complicit with his desire for narrative and temporal dominance. Because Mrs Sheehy's reply is omitted between Conmee's two questions, his error remains hidden and unaccounted for. Joyce therefore seems to promote the idea that inattentive readings of his novel will result in a subconscious complicity with those intrusions of regressive, racialised language into the style of the text itself.

In addition to the dubious racial descriptions of the narrative voice and the effect of the intrusion technique discussed above, the episode also questions more generally the observer/observed distinction that was so crucial to ethnographic writing. Narrative authority is complicated by the episode's treatment of frames of reference. For example, a piece of litter cast by Bloom into the Liffey in 'Lestrygonians' (*U* 8.5) reappears and initially 'rode lightly down the Liffey' (*U* 10.294–5), but when it is seen again the reference frame has inverted and now 'North wall and sir John Rogerson's quay […] sailing westward, sailed by a skiff, a crumpled throwaway' (*U* 10.752–3), a playful reimagining where the paper is static and wall and quay are seen sailing past. This occurs even at the level of the sentence. M'Coy recalls seeing Bloom buying a book containing 'the stars and the moon and comets with long tails. Astronomy it was about' (*U* 10.527–8). Although possibly a quirk of M'Coy's speech, it is plausible that the inversion in the second sentence, given the book's content, is a nod towards frames of reference in astronomical terms, with celestial bodies always seeming stationary in relation to their orbital centres.[72] Joyce's complication of narrative perspective may not have been employed as a pastiche of ethnographic texts specifically, but this use of frames of reference undeniably scrutinises and plays with the role of omniscient narrators that would attempt to maintain an objective distance between themselves

[71] Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980; repr. 1987), p. 66.
[72] See Jeffrey Drouin, *James Joyce, Science, and Modernist Print Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 69.

and the supposedly static object of their study. In *Ulysses*, and 'Wandering Rocks' in particular, Joyce gestures at the ingrained instability of the observer/observed dichotomy, and enacts versions of its collapse and inversion by drawing attention, often parodically and comically, to ethnography's excesses, ironies, reliance on racial essentialism, and complicity with imperialism.

Chapter 4

Joyce II: Collection, Curation, and the Museum

> One could say that, through no fault of their own, museums' proliferation sped up the process of the past's commodification in response to the growing demand for the 'source,' the hieratic repository of the 'original.'[1]
>
> — S. D. Chrostowska, 'Consumed by Nostalgia?' (2010)

I

Discussing the relationship between migration and enculturation in *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Arjun Appadurai argues that the geographical displacement of cultural groups creates an atmosphere in which 'the invention of tradition (and of ethnicity, kinship, and other identity markers) can become slippery as the search for certainties is regularly frustrated by the fluidities of transcultural communication.' Tensions arise, therefore, between the cultural history of a group and its lived experience in the present:

> As group pasts become increasingly part of museums, exhibits, and collections, both in national and transnational spectacles, culture becomes less what Pierre Bourdieu would have called a *habitus*, a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions, and more an arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiple and spatially dislocated audiences.[2]

[1] S. D. Chrostowska, 'Consumed by Nostalgia?', *SubStance*, 39.2 (2010), 52–70 (p. 62).
[2] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 44.

This shift identified by Appadurai speaks to the difficulties of the 'conscious choice[s]' of the curator, whether of a museum exhibition or a literary anthology, who attempts the difficult task of representing culture through the production of the 'collection'. These choices are complicated particularly, I suggest, in the context of the collection in African American and Irish literary modernism owing to the difficulties of 'forging' or synthesising multitemporal visions of art. Firstly, the collection must negotiate with the past, and specifically the ways in which discourses such as primitivism and ethnography have equated the past with the present. The dynamics of this negotiation are evident, for instance, in anthologies of Irish folktales and poetry: do writers such as Douglas Hyde and Yeats suggest a continuity with a romanticised folk past within the pages of the anthology to reify this equivalence of past and present, or do they emphasise instead the 'pastness of the past'[3] and its irreconcilability with the present through a nostalgic tone of loss? Secondly, the collection must act as a representative text of the present, of its writers and the movement that they produce through their writing. As this and the following chapter will consider, this was particularly significant in an immediate economic context for writers of the Harlem Renaissance. The very editorial processes that would shape Countee Cullen's most famous poem, 'Heritage', were influenced by the compensation promised through its inclusion in Alain Locke's anthology *The New Negro*. Finally, the collection had to look forward, to gather together texts that might represent for posterity the specificities and ideologies of a specific literary moment, but also to act as a literal form of preservation for those texts that might otherwise be marginalised or forgotten. Appadurai's reference to 'spatially dislocated audiences' indicates that the relationship between the collecting practice and the sense of these multitemporal responsibilities was further problematised geographically. For example, should the collection be national(ist), or transnational, or attempt to speak for a nation at all? This and similar questions are themselves reflected in the tension between the phrase 'Harlem Renaissance' and the titles of its most famous anthologies which are far less localised: *The American Book of Negro Poetry* (1922), *The New Negro* (1925), and simply *Negro* (1934).

[3] Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen, 1920; repr. 1957), pp. 47–59 (p. 49). For Eliot, tradition involves 'in the first place, the historical sense,' which in turn 'involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence'.

In his preface to the former, James Weldon Johnson articulates the difficulties of accommodating these various responsibilities within the space of the collection, suggesting that '[w]hat the colored poet in the United States needs to do is something like what Synge did for the Irish; he needs to find a form which will express the racial spirit by symbols from within rather than by symbols from without […]'.[4] As Jeremy Braddock writes in his study of modernist collections, Locke found a similar model in Ireland, 'follow[ing] Johnson in articulating the enabling performative gestures of identification with the minoritarian renaissance associated with Synge' (p. 174). Synge, and the Celtic Revival more generally, therefore served as a productive model for the Harlem Renaissance by providing a comparative instance of a literary movement that looked to accommodate the emergence of American and European modernism alongside the collection, interpretation, and reimagining of folklore.

Braddock details how many African American literature anthologies sought to grapple with the anxiety of 'using' and productively transforming this cultural history, of '"remaking the past" out of the contingencies of a fractured historical record' (p. 84). As I have suggested, this negotiation of a temporal fracturing was further exacerbated by the contingencies of a politically and geographically fractured present. Anthologies such as *Negro Poetry* and *The New Negro*, particularly in their prefaces, frequently express this anxiety of representation and cultural history in terms of the politics of (auto)ethnography. Thus Locke identifies one of the tasks of his collection as the un-writing of the 'stock figure' of the 'Old Negro' that both black and white political and artistic discourses had contributed to.[5] The compilation of both anthologies therefore demonstrate their ethnographic interest in two ways: firstly, the anthology has to oppose an ethnography 'from without' that would stereotype and misrepresent the black subject, and secondly their process of collecting cultural objects, both folkloric and modern, and deciding in what ways to exhibit these in their collection, suggests a form of salvage ethnography, of preservation more usually associated with the anthropologist in the field. Although simple equations of black, Irish, and Jewish diasporic experiences overlook the complex historical specificities of each, and although history provides many counterexamples to any implied

[4] James Weldon Johnson, 'Preface', in *The American Book of Negro Poetry*, ed. by Johnson (New York: Harcourt Press, 1922), p. 47.
[5] Locke, 'The New Negro', p. 3.

solidarity (as Joyce was keen to show in 'Cyclops'), the significant influence of the Celtic Revival on the Harlem Renaissance demonstrates the shared difficulties of representing both cultural history and art through the space of the collection.

Writing about the significance of physical, grounded cultural artefacts in relation to the creation of national identity, Elizabeth Crooke argues that in the museum, '[c]hosen objects can authenticate the nation, provide inspiration for the future and legitimise present-day aspirations', intentions which seem to resonate with the representative task faced by both the ethnographer and those involved in the creation of literature anthologies.[6] Within the context of the Harlem Renaissance and the wider Black Atlantic, the complexities of these temporal considerations are intensified by the absence of a national space through which an institution such as a museum could serve to encode a cultural narrative: as a diasporic set of artistic practices, the Black Atlantic can have no national museum, just as any museum *of* the Black Atlantic (in America, Europe, or elsewhere) would not command the authoritative and avowedly 'representative' force of such an institution.

In the previous chapter I discussed how the politics of collection emerges in the interactions between Stephen, Buck Mulligan, and Haines, and in doing so marks the first significant engagement with ethnography in *Ulysses*. This chapter will explore how Joyce pursues this interrogation of 'collecting' as a political act in the form of the museum in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Staging this interrogation through a fictive embedding, and often a comical one, is possible for Joyce because he did not share the same anxieties concerning the anthologising and curation of his own work experienced by the writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Chapter 5, in turn, therefore examines how these anxieties, which included concerns about compensation, editing, and the dictates of (white) patronage, shaped the production of Renaissance texts, while also being reflected *within* these texts themselves, constituting many of their central ideas and motifs.

The curated space is one in which colonial and nationalist forces often collide, particularly with regard to the contestation of authority over ethnographic narratives, but these discourses are not mutually exclusive, and the ironies of their convergence may be felt in the appropriation of

[6] Elizabeth Crooke, *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 14.

racial essentialism and colonialism in both the black and Irish nationalist movements. The denunciation by Marcus Garvey in 'Africa for the Africans' of African Americans who desire 'to exercise a kind of an autocratic and despotic control as others have done to us for centuries' seems incongruous with his 'Dream of a Negro Empire', 'when Africa will be completely colonized by Negroes, as Europe is by the white race.'[7] Douglas Hyde evokes a related *counter*-colonial discourse in 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' where he suggests that 'the [Irish] race diverging during this century from the right path' was as responsible as colonisation for 'this failure of the Irish people'.[8] As I examined in the previous chapter, Irish nationalist appeals to racial essentialism were frequently only thinly veiled and slightly modified reformations of similar essentialist rhetoric and imagery popularised by the Victorian British press.

I have suggested that Joyce's work seeks to interrogate many of these hypocrisies of nationalist thinking, most famously in his description of nationalist xenophobia and antisemitism directed towards Bloom in 'Cyclops'. During this confrontation, Bloom is asked to define a nation, and offers two seemingly contradictory answers: 'A nation is the same people living in the same place […] Or also living in different places' (*U* 12.1422–8). His correction appears almost comical, but as a Jewish outsider, the two definitions serve as corresponding sites of resistance to the antisemitism he experiences: a nation can be a collection of cultural groups unified geographically, or it can be an international, diasporic community, even if, particularly in the Jewish context, its diasporic qualities are in part necessitated by a history of persecution in the face of unified nationalist and racist forces. As I will demonstrate, it is particularly in relation to the ethnographic practices of the museum that Joyce satirises these forces.

[7] Marcus Garvey, 'Africa for the Africans', in *Harlem Renaissance Reader*, pp. 17–25 (pp. 19–20).
[8] Hyde, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland', *The Revival of Irish Literature: Addresses by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, K.C.M.G., Dr. George Sigerson, and Dr. Douglas Hyde* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1894), p. 118.

II

Appearances of museums are sparse within Joyce's narratives: they are absent in *Dubliners*, *Exiles*, and *Stephen Hero*, referenced in passing by Doyle in *Portrait*, physically present but largely overlooked by the distracted Bloom in *Ulysses*, and finally given a more prominent treatment in the Museyroom episode of *Finnegans Wake*. I will examine how Joyce's critique of the National Museum and the political forces that determine its narrative is developed more fully in the *Wake* in order to demonstrate that his engagement with museums and curation is always closely tied to a consideration of their colonial implications.

The word 'museum' first occurs in the 'Lotus Eaters' episode of *Ulysses* in a paragraph of Bloom's interior monologue that establishes from the outset the colonial dimensions of curation within the text. The previous chapter discussed this paragraph (in which Bloom observes a notice for a '[s]ermon by the very reverend John Conmee S. J. on saint Peter Claver S. J. and the African Mission') in relation to Bloom's simultaneous dismissal of Conmee's missionary ambitions and Bloom's own subconscious adoption of the racist stereotypes that he seeks to critique ('blub lips, entranced, listening'). Before turning to this image of Conmee 'baptis[ing] blacks', Bloom's thoughts transpose the specific example of Claver's ministry to a generalised notion of conversion:

> Save China's millions. Wonder how they explain it to the heathen Chinee. Prefer an ounce of opium. Celestials. Rank heresy for them. Buddha their god lying on his side in the museum. Taking it easy with hand under his cheek. Josssticks burning. Not like Ecce Homo. Crown of thorns and cross.
>
> (*U* 5.322–30)

As with Bloom's later visit to the National Museum in 'Lestrygonians', his reflection here engages with both a critique and a repetition of colonial discourse. He scoffs at Conmee's attempt to explain Christianity 'to the heathen Chinee', but in doing so makes use of an outdated and primitivising expression. The most likely origin of the phrase in Bloom's mind derives from the poem of the

same name by Bret Harte, a satire of sinophobia, from 1870.[9] A more immediate source for Joyce, however, comes from his reading of Sydney Olivier's *White Capital and Coloured Labour* (1906),[10] in a passage in which Olivier considers modes of linguistic mirroring utilised by the colonised subject.

> A conquered race that speaks two languages will tell the truth in its own language, and will lie in that of its conquerors—very often from an honest desire to tell what it supposes to be the conqueror's truth, namely, what he desires, what is real for him through expressing his will. This phenomenon is familiar from the groves of Blarney to the haunts of the Heathen Chinee.[11]

The idea that speaking in the language of the conqueror is a 'lie' is evocative of Stephen's discomfort with English as an 'acquired speech' for the Irish in *Portrait* (even though, as a late-stage colonial subject, this is his only language). Similarly, the notion of the 'conquered race' employing a form of speech that adheres to what they imagine the conqueror 'desires' is reformulated in *Ulysses* through Mulligan's ethnographic staging for Haines in which, as the previous chapter considered, Joyce is keen to draw attention to Haines's gullibility regarding authenticity. The Sino-Irish comparison drawn by Olivier is not however one that Bloom himself endorses. While '[p]refer an ounce of opium' rejects the project of conversion it also attributes to the Chinese the common Orientalist stereotype of languor and idleness, and the history of opium addiction driven by British imperialism. The ease with which Bloom's mind moves from the notice, to Claver 'and the African Mission', to the Chinese, to the Buddha, to Christianity, and finally back to Africa demonstrates his tendency to conceive of the Other as somehow unified in its Otherness: a blanket application of typical Orientalist concepts of idleness, gullibility ('Lap it

[9] Bret Harte, 'Plain Language from Truthful James', *Overland Monthly*, September 1870, pp. 287–8. This was the original title of the poem, but it was reprinted as *The Heathen Chinee* (Chicago: Western New Company, 1870), with illustrations by Joseph Hill.
[10] See Ellmann, *The Consciousness of Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 122.
[11] Sydney Olivier, *White Capital and Coloured Labour* (London: Independent Labour Party, 1906), p. 28. Trevor L. Williams discusses this passage from Olivier in relation to imperialism in Joyce's works, but does not comment on the specific reiteration of this phrase in 'Lotus Eaters'. '"Brothers of the Great White Lodge": Joyce and the Critique of Imperialism', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 33 (Spring 1996), 377–397 (p. 382).

up like milk I suppose' [*U* 5.336]), and exoticism allow Chinese and Africans to become interchangeable in his thoughts.

It is through this Orientalist blurring that the reclining Buddha,[12] incorrectly identified as a god, is therefore presented through a lens that equates the statue with the Chinese, and the Chinese with Buddhism. In 'Penelope', remembering Bloom taking her to see the statue, Molly describes it as 'that Indian God' (*U* 18.1201), reflecting the distortion that generalisations and hearsay play in the novel, particularly regarding Asian cultures. As John Smurthwaite and others have observed, the actual statue was neither Chinese or Indian, but Burmese, and so the misidentification by both Blooms gestures towards a tendency to create narratives of the Other in which difference and cultural specificity are elided, one that Joyce also draws attention to in the ironic reclaiming of 'Gautama Buddha' (*U* 12.196) as an Irish hero by the nationalists in 'Cyclops'.[13] The process of casually homogenising the Other in the Blooms' imagination and their reliance on Orientalist language derive from what Edward Said describes as the way in which 'Orientalism produced not only a fair amount of exact positive knowledge about the Orient but also a kind of second-order knowledge—lurking in such place as the "Oriental" tale, the mythology of the mysterious East, notions of Asian inscrutability'.[14] This was most famously the case with the various translations of *One Thousand and One Nights*, phrases from which 'became staple references of popular culture and of popular literature during the nineteenth century' (many of which appear in *Ulysses*).[15] I suggest that in addition to these translations and their permeation into public consciousness, the Blooms' Orientalism also has a more recent source in their reading and appreciation of Rudyard Kipling.

While attempting to ingratiate himself with two phantom policemen in 'Circe', Bloom references Kipling's poem 'The Absentminded Beggar' by pleading that he fought in the 'absentminded war under general Gough', before parodying 'The White Man's Burden': 'I did all

[12] Bloom's belief that the Buddha's reclining position implies that he is '[t]aking it easy' is not unreasonable, but is inaccurate, as it instead signifies 'the state of death, *parinirvana*.' S. Krishnamoorthy Aithal, 'Allusions to the Buddha in *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 16 (Summer 1979), 510–12 (p. 511).
[13] John Smurthwaite, 'That Indian God', *James Joyce Broadsheet*, 61 (February 2002), p. 3.
[14] Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), p. 52.
[15] R. Brandon Kershner, '*Ulysses* and the Orient', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35 (Winter–Spring 1998), 273–296 (p. 276).

a white man could' (*U* 15.897–800). Molly similarly recalls the poem explicitly through her 'father being in the army and my singing the absentminded beggar' (*U* 18.377). As Smurthwaite notes, Bloom's interpretation of the reclining Buddha as lazy also echoes Kipling's 'Mandalay' where the speaker describes the Burmese subject of his affection, 'a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot: | Bloomin' idol made o' mud— | What they called the Great Gawd Budd—' (ll. 14–16).[16] His memory perhaps triggered by the embedding of his name in the poem, Bloom's conception of the reclining Buddha is then a subconscious partial recollection where 'idol' has morphed into 'idle'.

An evocation of Kipling also appears in 'Lestrygonians', the episode in which Bloom visits the National Museum. His visit serves the practical purpose of evading his wife's lover Blazes Boylan, but he expresses his anxiety at also being glimpsed by the museum's curator as he inspects the museums' statues.[17] Bloom's choice of 'Keeper' to describe the curator is indicative of the museum as a 'kept', controlled, and surveillant space. It is possible that in his fondness for Kipling, Bloom is also thinking of the 'Keeper of the Images', the curator of the Lahore Museum which provides the setting for the opening of *Kim* (1901). The first sentence of that novel introduces the title character 'astride the gun Zam-Zammah on her brick platform opposite the old Ajaib-Gher—the Wonder House, as the natives call the Lahore Museum.'[18] The novel is therefore framed from the outset by a phallic-militaristic symbol projecting from a site of curation that enacts the dual processes of collecting Oriental art and reflecting this art back to the colonised subject in order to inspire 'wonder'. The contrast between the entrancing nature of the constructed narrative and the supposed ignorance of its local patrons is indicated in a review of the museum from *Athenæum* in 1897: 'On the native holidays the place is crowded with people, who listen, open-mouthed, to the more learned among them who read out loud the admirable vernacular labels on the objects exhibited.[19] Both descriptions are mirrored in 'Lotus Eaters' through Bloom's image of the

[16] Rudyard Kipling, 'Manadalay', in *Departmental Ditties and Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads* (London: Macmillan, 1892; repr. New York: Doubleday, 1919), pp. 190–193 (p. 191).
[17] Though presumably avoiding the gazes of Boylan and the Keeper, in 'Scylla and Charybdis' it is revealed that he was seen by Buck Mulligan, identifying retrospectively the statue he was admiring: 'His pale Galilean eyes were upon her mesial groove. Venus Kallipyge.' (*U* 9.617–18)
[18] Kipling, *Kim* (London: Macmillan, 1901; repr. New York: Doubleday, 1959), p. 3.
[19] 'The Lahore Museum', *Athenæum*, 9 August 1879, p. 185.

impressionable and hypnotic effect of the Western missionary on 'heathen' subjects: 'The glasses would take their fancy, flashing […] entranced, listening' (*U* 5.334–6). Bloom's reiteration of Orientalist tropes and his dismissiveness of cultural Others is therefore evocative of Kipling's depiction of the Lahore Museum which unifies portrayals of the Orient as static and impressionable, denying its participation in the construction of its own ethnography. As Said writes, the Orient and the Oriental are constructed by Orientalist language into 'a known and ultimately an immobilized or unproductive quality', denying them '[t]he very possibility of development, transformation, human movement'.[20] Owned and organised by the British, the museums in Dublin and Lahore are positioned instead as the 'keepers' and authoritative voices on Oriental ethnography. As a colonial institution, the museum therefore exists as part of a network of ethnographic practices that deny, in Spivak's formulation, the ability of the subaltern 'to speak'.

Bloom's visit to the National Museum in 'Lestrygonians' encodes a related practice of authoring the Other, but Joyce figures this in gendered terms while using the episode to complicate the question of Bloom's lack of complicity with both nationalist and colonial discourses. Interested only in the Greek statues in the museum's rotunda, Bloom's thoughts are set forth in scopophilic language through which the beauty of the '[s]hapely goddesses, Venus, Juno: curves the world admires' (*U* 8.921–2) is positioned within an economy of pleasure that it derives for the viewer:

> Aids to digestion. They don't care what man looks. All to see. Never speaking. […] Lovely forms of women sculpted Junonian. Immortal lovely. And we stuffing food in one hole and out behind: food, chyle, blood, dung, earth, food: have to feed it like stoking an engine. They have no. Never looked. I'll look today. Keeper won't see. Bend down let something drop. See if she.
>
> (*U* 8.923–32)

By their nature the statues are of course static and passive in contrast to the active voyeurism of Bloom, but Joyce intensifies this distinction by having Bloom reflect on the endless cycle of flows that pass from mouth to anus to soil while 'They have no', with its ambiguous grammatical truncation, evokes by contrast a female body lacking an anus, a hermetic object through which the

[20] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 208.

flows (of visual information, speech, food, desire) cannot pass. Whereas elsewhere in the novel Joyce portrays Bloom as one whose own racial alterity encourages him to express both curiosity and solidarity with the Other, here the rendering of the female form into stone is accompanied by a second figurative freezing, a mode of objectification where the statues serve only to satisfy flows of male desire and to physically conceal Bloom from Boylan.

Bloom's inspection of the Greek goddess statues has its predecessor in Chapter V of *Portrait*, where Lynch informs Stephen that he 'wrote [his] name in pencil on the backside of the Venus Praxiteles in the Museum', linking the act of inscription to desire as a response to Stephen's assertion that '[t]he feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts.'[21] Disregarding this association between possession and the pornographic, Lynch and Bloom are both therefore engaged in processes of inscription, one literal, one figurative, one writing *on* the female body and one speaking *for* it, conceiving of it as exiled from the private sphere of male bodily flows that traverse 'Lestrygonians'.

In the 'Circe' episode, however, a space of various gendered dislocations (Bloom is famously pronounced as 'the new womanly man' [*U* 15.1798–9]), the statue comes to life and interrogates Bloom about his visit in 'Lestrygonians': '[THE NYMPH] Mortal! You found me in evil company, highkickers, coster picnicmakers, pugilists […] I was hidden in cheap pink paper that smelt of rock oil (*U* 15.3245–9)'. Bloom, we learn, originally saw his 'goddess' not in the museum but in *Photo Bits*, a softcore pornographic weekly. The nymph's listing of this 'evil company' then turns to include the items next to which she was framed in the magazine: 'ads for transparencies, truedup dice and bustpads […] Rubber goods. Neverrip brand as supplied to the aristocracy. Corsets for men' (*U* 15.3249–57), etc. As Joan Jastrebski notes, 'This litany of body-enhancing products contrasts the stony perfection of the nymph's form with the indignity of ill or damaged bodies, of imperfect forms which require absurd prostheses and protection from

[21] Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 205.

pregnancy, injury, and disease.'[22] The 'Corsets for men' also serves as a coda to the long preceding section of Bloom's sadomasochistic encounter with Bella/Bello Cohen in which Bloom is transformed into a woman, but also into a pig, 'she [the pronouns have been inverted] sinks on all fours, grunting, snuffling, rooting at his feet' (*U* 15.2852–3), a 'cockhorse' ridden by Bello (*U* 15.2944), and a slave (*U* 15.2892). In most of these transformations wrought by the Circe figure of Bella/Bello, Bloom is reduced to a subservient position, often physically stooping or grovelling at her/his feet.[23] Bloom's sexual fantasy of submission, notably in this section, but also hinted at in the reading material that the nymph indicates, therefore suggests a partial inversion of the objectification inherent in the relationship between Bloom and the statue in 'Lestrygonians'. After he '*Humbly kisses her long hair*', for instance, he admits that he was 'was glad […] almost to pray' (*U* 15.3367–8). Later, however, the nymph's recollection of the encounter largely substantiates Bloom's musings on the hermetic female body rather than inverting them: '(*loftily*) We immortals, as you saw today, have not such a place and no hair there either. We are stonecold and pure. We eat electric light' (*U* 15.3391–3). Despite speaking 'loftily' and treating Bloom as an inferior, the nymph remains set in stone, retaining her 'museumised' position, and her speech does little to encourage any reflection in Bloom, who responds only with a reiteration of his degradation and anal fetishes: 'O I have been a perfect pig. Enemas too I have administered. One third of a pint of quassia to which add a tablespoonful of rocksalt. Up the fundament' (*U* 15.3397–9). So while Joyce does not fully invert or dissolve the orientation of scopophilia or gendered power relations in the hallucinatory space of 'Circe', the coming-to-life of the statue and her method of 'talking back' provide a model for the kept, collected, or curated 'object' to assert a form of resistance to the official narrative of the museum, one which seeks to mask its own politicised nature and the colonial conditions that facilitated its processes of collection.[24]

---

[22] Joan Jastrebski, 'Pig Dialectics: Women's Bodies as Performed Dialectical Images in the Circe Episode of *Ulysses*', in *James Joyce and the Fabrication of an Irish Identity*, ed. by Michael Patrick Gillespie (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 151–175 (p. 172).

[23] Although it is perhaps significant that a gender reversal seems a necessary precursor in Joyce's text for the initiation of the sadomasochism, which serves only to reify the male-dominant, female-submissive stereotype.

[24] See for example, *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Philips (Oxford: Berg, 2006; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

What can we read into the ethnographic narrative that the National Museum and other institutions looked to project, and which Joyce seeks to write against in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*? In his influential study of nationalism in *Imagined Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson identifies the museum, along with the census and the map, as colonial institutions which 'profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion'. This was achieved not only by the construction of national museums in Western capitals, but also in the proliferation of new museums arising in colonial territories in South and South-East Asia in the late nineteenth-century as part of a trend of what Anderson calls a 'museumizing imagination'. Central to this imagination was an increased interest in archaeology and the reconstruction of ancient structures, the complexity of which were meant to depreciate the native population: 'the reconstructed monuments, juxtaposed with the surrounding rural poverty, said to the natives: Our very presence shows that you have always been, or have long become, incapable of either greatness of self-rule.' This formed part of a strategy that saw 'colonial regimes attaching themself to antiquity as much as conquest' and it is this relationship between antiquity and conquest that is central to the contestation of political forces in the National Museum of Ireland in 1904.[25]

As with the political framing of historical objects in Asia by colonial administrators, the discovery of the Broighter Hoard in Ireland in 1896 served as a symbolic representation of the increasing tensions between Irish nationalist and British colonial forces who would contest both the possession and political narrative of the artefacts therein. The museumising discourse that had emerged in colonial territories in Asia instigated the juxtaposition Anderson identifies between the technical mastery of ancient cultures and the shortcomings of the present-day native population. The Broighter Hoard, on the other hand, which 'threw considerable light on Ireland, its technology, beliefs and international contacts around the first century BC'[26] was interpreted as an opportunity for the nationalist cause by suggesting a genealogy linking the Irish with the artistic and technological creations of their predecessors. Situated within a system of international trade routes, such as those that become politically significant in 'Cyclops', these objects therefore problematise

[25] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 1983; repr. 1991), pp. 164, 178, 181.
[26] Patrick F. Wallace and Raghnall Ó Floinn (eds.), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland: Irish Antiquities* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002), p. 16. See Lancia, p. 89.

the colonial stereotype of ancient Ireland as insular and reclusive. As Kathleen Lancia has observed, however, even before the restoration of the Hoard to Dublin from the British Museum in 1903, it was not until the appointment of George Coffey as Keeper of Irish Antiquities two years later that 'the promotion of the antiquities collection to a more prominent position' would be made possible 'within the organizational structure of the museum'.[27]

The museum as it would have been on Bloomsday 1904 therefore exists at the boundary between a wholly British colonial museumising discourse and the resurgent interest in Irish artefacts that aligned with nationalist politics and the Celtic Revival.[28] Recalling the imposing Zam Zammah opposite the Lahore Museum in *Kim*, in the visual narrative of the museum rotunda, the statues Bloom admires were secondary to a trio of field guns that they encircled.[29] Joyce therefore constructs a parallel pair of absences in 'Lestrygonians': the museum itself is only briefly described within the overarching narrative of the novel while its Celtic artefacts and symbols of British conquest are likewise excluded from Bloom's own voyeuristic internal monologue.

III

In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce develops this conception of the museum space as one contested by nationalist and colonial discourses, but chooses to invert the method of narration-by-absence witnessed in 'Lestrygonians' by bringing this contestation to the fore. As opposed to Bloom's private encounter in *Ulysses*, in the *Wake* Joyce has the tourguide Kate introduce visitors to the Willingdone Museyroom: 'This the way to the museyroom. Mind your hats goan in! Now yiz are in the Willingdone Museyroom. This is a Prooshious gunn. […]' (*FW* 8.9–11). The 'Prooshious gunn', like the field guns in the National Museum, is placed centre-stage because of its role in the

[27] Kathleen Lancia, 'The Ethnographic Roots of Joyce's Modernism: Exhibiting Ireland's Primitives in the National Museum and the "Nestor" Episode', in *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive*, pp. 79–92 (p. 89).
[28] See Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival 1830-1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).
[29] Julia Panko, 'Curating the Colony: Museums in *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 51 (Winter–Spring 2014), 353–70 (p. 357).

Duke of Wellington's military and colonial campaigns in Europe and India: the late-arriving Prussian military helped to secure victory at the Battle of Waterloo and artillery regiments were crucial in several British victories in the Second Anglo-Maratha War in which Wellington was a major-general. Kate's later imperative, 'Saloos the crossgunn!' (*FW* 8.14), functions as an imperative to submit to European colonial might ('salute the Corsican', i.e. Napoleon/Lipoleum), but is also engaged in a dialogue with Bloom's narrative of exclusion in *Ulysses* where British guns (physically 'crossed' in the rotunda) and Celtic crosses are ignored in favour of an admiration of Greek statues.[30]

Prior to the publication of Vincent Cheng's *Joyce, Race, and Empire* in 1995, critical attention to the military references in the museum sequence focussed largely on Wellington's many European engagements encoded in the wordplay of the text (e.g. 'Belchum' for Waterloo, Belgium, 1815 [*FW* 9.1] and 'Tarra's widdars' for Torres Vedras, 1810 [*FW* 9.21]). Cheng demonstrates that the references to Indian battles specifically unite Irish and Indian colonial subjects through their mutual oppression by the hybrid 'Willingdone' (Wellington, William III, conqueror of Ireland, and a godlike figure — 'thy will be done').[31] 'A Gallawghurs argaumunt', for instance, brings together 'Gallagher', an Irish surname, with the battles of Gawilguhr and Argaum in Wellington's Maratha War and, I would suggest, the Scindia ruler of Gwalior, one of the five confederacies of the Maratha faction.

Later in the museum tour, Irish and Indian colonial subjects reappear, the latter flanked by the former: 'This is the hinndoo Shimar Shin between the dooley boy and the hinnessy' (*FW* 10.6–7). The image of collective resistance to an opposing triadic structure, 'the threefoiled hat of lipoleums' (*FW* 10.8), is concentrated itself in the word 'hinndoo' which combines 'Hindu' with Mr Hennessey and Mr Dooley, characters created by the Irish-American Finley Peter Dunne.[32] This merging of colonial subjects, and the evocation of 'shinner' and Sinn Féin in 'Shimar Shin', gestures to the active, revolutionary, and militaristic potential of the colonised against the coloniser, inverting the static image of the colonial subject that both museum narratives and

[30] For a photograph of the crossed field guns as they were c. 1890, see Panko, p. 369.
[31] Cheng, *Empire*, p. 282.
[32] Adaline Glasheen, *Third Census of 'Finnegans Wake'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 127.

Orientalist discourse sought to portray. The playful surface of the Wakean text, which focuses in this sequence particularly on the physical appearance and clothing of Wellington and Napoleon, therefore conceals a darker narrative of colonisation and exploitation. In this way the *Wake*, and the Museyroom sequence in particular, functions like the narrative space of a museum, obscuring the often bloody provenance of its collected objects and exhibiting them through a particular political lens, like the symbols of military strength witnessed in Lahore and Dublin.

The staging of these instances of intercultural solidarity and resistance in the space of the museum/Museyroom forms part of a wider network of references in the *Wake* to the imperial dimensions of anthropology. With a preface that he 'need not anthrapologise for any obintentional […] down-trodding of my foes' in I.vi, Shem reimagines the evolutionary ethnographer Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, author of *La mentalité primitive* (1922) and an admirer of *Ulysses*,[33] as 'Professor Levi-Brullo, F.D. of Sexe-Weiman-Eitelnaky' who has been engaging in 'experiments made by hinn' (*FW* 151.7–12), a resurfacing of the Celtic/Indian figure from the Museyroom. With the bizarre transformation of the German duchy Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach to 'sexy women I tell (?) naked', and the disturbance of conventional observer-observed, subject-object positions within the experiment, Shem's speech ridicules both armchair anthropologists such as James Frazer who seek to 'tell' or construct narratives of 'native' subjects that they believe cannot speak for themselves, and figures of the 'new anthropology' such as Lévy-Bruhl whose claim to greater scientific accuracy, like Malinowski's, served the purpose of narrativising and speaking *for* both women and colonial subjects.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) Michel de Certeau identifies a correspondence between the institutionalisation of cultural objects in the museum and the ways in which anthropology has reinforced primitivist and essentialising narratives of this cultural Other:

> The authority of ethnological or folklore studies permits some of the material or linguistic objects of these practices to be collected, labelled according to place of origin and theme, put in display cases, offered for inspection and interpretation, and thus that authority

[33] Ellmann, *James Joyce: New and Revised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 696. For an account of Lévy-Bruhl's presence in the *Wake*, see David Spurr, 'Myths of Anthropology: Eliot, Joyce, Lévy-Bruhl', *PMLA*, 109 (March 1994), 266–80 (pp. 274–7).

> conceals, as rural 'treasures' serving to edify or satisfy the curiosity of city folk, the legitimization of an order supposed by its conservators to be immemorial and 'natural.'[34]

This notion of 'authority conceal[ing]' is particularly relevant to the intersection of ethnography and the museum as they are addressed in Joyce's work. As with other scientific discourses such as racial science and eugenics that benefited colonialism by offering a supposedly empirical rationale for imperial practices, the museum provided a physical institution in which convenient ethnographic narratives could be displayed and offered as curiosities or wonders. The obscuring power of this authority, as de Certeau has identified, arises from its ability to present its narratives as natural and therefore seemingly without political bias. Similarly, as Susan Hegeman has noted, '[i]n the context of the museum display, the physical distance of the other is now echoed in the physical separation of the cases'. This physical separation and compartmentalising of museum objects works to contain their Otherness by sealing them off hermetically from one another, refusing in the process a proper confrontation with their richness, complexity, and ambiguity.

The *Wake*'s Museyroom provides a location where colonised subjects, framed as museum objects, come alive, merge with one another, and offer a hopeful vision of solidarity that resists the static, institutionalised nature of collecting that de Certeau has identified. The museum fails, therefore, in its attempt at fixity, at curating the Celt as one of Robert Knox's 'unaltered and unalterable' cultural subjects. In *Ulysses*, Joyce's pointed removal of Celtic and British artefacts from Bloom's narrative of the National Museum indicates a resistance to the 'museumising' discourses in which these objects were situated, but Bloom's observation of the statues, and later interaction with them, also offers a more general critique of ethnographic practices, and specifically the desire to inscribe meaning on minoritised bodies that are perceived to be voiceless. 'While Bloom's examination of the statue might mimic the fieldwork of a physical anthropologist in his emphasis on comparative anatomy,' Lancia notes, 'at the same time, he seems to violate the standard procedure of ethnographic encounter by peering too closely at the object of his study.'[35] This collapsing of the distance between observer and observed operates as a critique of

[34] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 26.
[35] Lancia, p. 85.

ethnography in Bloom's encounter with the statues and in Joyce's reimagining of the 'experiments' of Lévy-Bruhl, but it is also alive in the museum spaces of *Ulysses* and the *Wake*. To peer too closely is to interrogate the political context of the museum narrative, and Joyce therefore offers an invitation to perform this very act of interrogation on his own texts, to unearth, as Vincent Cheng and others have, the concealed history of oppression and colonisation behind the objects on display.

Chapter 5

Heritage Politics and the Question of Africa

> Her walk is like the replica
> Of some barbaric dance
> Wherein the soul of Africa
> Is winged with arrogance.[1]
>
> — Countee Cullen, 'A Song of Praise' (1925)

In an interview of Chinua Achebe conducted by Charles H. Rowell in 1989, the Nigerian novelist makes the argument that the purpose of writing is 'to give us a second handle on reality so that when it becomes necessary to do so, we can turn to art and find a way out.'[2] Achebe used an almost identical phrase in a 2000 interview by Emmanuel Chukuwudi Eze. Fiction, and the fictive elements of poetry and drama, offer the possibility of Achebe's 'second handle'. They remain in touch with the historian's sense of an objective past, and the scientific, political, and artistic visions of futurity. In a later essay in which Eze reflects on his interview, he admits that the employment of fiction in the way Achebe articulates is not unique to African or postcolonial writers. As examples of the 'multilevel experience of history in language' he points to 'the Irish experience as represented by W. B. Yeats' and 'the Anglo-American experience as can be seen in T. S. Eliot.'[3] Beyond this transnational specificity of Eliot, his position as a figurehead of high modernism speaks to an imperative to address the timeline of his literary-cultural heritage. I will later suggest that the comparison drawn between Eliot and Achebe by Eze speaks to the former's significance

[1] Cullen, *Color* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1925), p. 4.
[2] Charles H. Rowell, 'An Interview With Chinua Achebe', *Callaloo*, 13 (Winter 1990), 86–101 (p. 88).
[3] Emmanuel Chukuwudi Eze, 'Language and Time in Postcolonial Experience', *Research in African Literatures,* 39 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 24–47 (p. 26).

to poets of the Harlem Renaissance through their shared negotiation of the hybridity inherent in transcultural experience, and the emergence of Eliot as a specific focus towards which the anxieties of influence are addressed. Similarly, I take Eze's discussion of why such a 'second handle' is of particular relevance to African writers — that they are '[c]aught between a series of African artistic traditions in need of a modern retrieval, and the exciting but uncertain future of a new and untested form of a postcolonial existence' — as being equally significant to African American literature in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The ability to theorise the past, to write its story or history, is one which necessitates a break from that past, however partial. Both African and African American writers must grapple with their shared, though vastly dissimilar, common heritage of 'African artistic traditions'. Whereas these traditions are separated only temporally for the African writer via the intervention of colonial history, for the African American, the geographical displacement from the continent of Africa, occurring as it did so much earlier than the twentieth century, fractures, to borrow again from Eze, the 'intuitive certainty' of the relevance and position of this inheritance. It is the very interrogation of such an inheritance that serves as the locus of one of the most persistent questions posed by Renaissance texts: what is Africa to me?

Beyond the content of individual texts that make up a work such as *The New Negro*, the centrality of anthologising itself to the Renaissance (and the signalling of a conscious break from outdated historical counterparts such as the Old Negro) mark the movement as intensely conscious of its need to navigate a cultural timeline by making a distinct intervention that is both forward and backward looking. As Jeremy Braddock's genealogical overview of early modernist anthologies demonstrates, the anthologising process itself was often subject to the opposing imperatives of cultural and historical preservation, and forward-facing intervention (p. 174). In her introduction to George W. Cronyn's collection of Native American folk songs, *The Path on the Rainbow* (1918), Mary Austin justifies the translation and publication of 'the intimate thought of a whole people' by reference to its significance as literary inspiration for the American modernist writer. Evoking the notion of white saviourism, Austin believes this modern interpreter to be part of that 'people whose unavoidable destiny is to carry that thought to fulfilment and make of that medium a characteristic literary vehicle.' For Austin and Cronyn, the anthologising process is

intimately tied to an idea of literary opportunity for modernist writers who find themselves fortunate to be entangled in 'the relationship which seems about to develop between Indian verse and the ultimate literary destiny of America.'[4] While this same optimism permeates Alain Locke's introductory essay for *The New Negro* in terms of his encouragement to embrace African cultural heritage, the easy marriage of ethnological duty and literary inspiration that imbued *The Path on the Rainbow* became for both writers and anthologisers of the Harlem Renaissance a far more fraught issue. This is evident not only in the question of how historical and contemporary literary modes can be creatively synthesised or ushered into dialogue, but also in the problematics of the relationship between oral traditions and their crystallisations in physical texts.

In his 'Afro-American Fragment' (1930), Langston Hughes situates this question in relation to anxieties about the cultural and geographical *distance* of Africa:

> So long,
> So far away
> Is Africa.
> Not even memories alive
> Save those that history books create,
> Save those that songs
> Beat back into the blood—
> Beat out of blood with words sad-sung
> In strange un-Negro tongue—
> So long,
> So far away
> Is Africa.
>
> Subdued and time-lost
> Are the drums—and yet
> Through some vast mist of race
> There comes this song
> I do not understand,
> This song of atavistic land,
> Of bitter yearnings lost

[4] Mary Austin, 'Introduction', in *The Path on the Rainbow: An Anthology of Songs and Chants from the Indians of North America*, ed. by George W. Cronyn (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), pp. xv–xvi.

Without a place—
So long,
So far away
Is Africa's
Dark face.[5]

The book, as source, stands as an obvious and inadequate medium for 'memories alive', but the repetition of '[s]ave those', its meaning doubling to encompass ethnographic salvage, suggests that the oral tradition is equally problematic. Songs retain the potency to 'beat' cultural memory 'back into the blood', but in this double 'beating', in and out of the blood, with its suggestion of coercion and violence, there is a sense of something always being deferred, of something always lost. The omission of 'the' in the second of these lines creates the possibility that the second 'beat' is a fabrication, as if the memory of Africa is itself fashioned 'out of blood with words sad-sung', a process which for Hughes cannot escape the quality of a 'strange un-Negro tongue'. The inexpressible lacunae in such evocations of epistemic distance are, for Hughes, an unsolved problem. The complexities of heritage politics therefore result in oscillations within Hughes's own poetics. His famous response to the desired artistic direction of his white patron Charlotte Osgood Mason articulates perhaps most clearly his rejection of 'an imposed identification with Africa': 'I was only an American Negro—who had loved the surface of Africa and the rhythms of Africa—but I was not Africa. I was Chicago and Kansas City and Broadway and Harlem. And I was not what she wanted me to be.'[6] A defensive line is taken against any sense of a connection to Africa imposed from without, from his patrons and from history books, but also from songs '[b]eat back into the blood'. His 1926 essay 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain' however, warns of a potential reaction against this primitivist imposition that would take the form of an alternative heritage in cultural whiteness: 'this is the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America—this urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.'[7] This rejection of 'American standardization' brings together the sort of formal

[5] Hughes, 'Afro-American Fragment', p. 235.
[6] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, p. 325.
[7] Hughes, 'The Negro Artist', p. 91.

radicalism typical of *vers libre* and the poetry of Eliot with Hughes's rejection of the whiteness inherent in American culture, modernist or otherwise. These contrasting analyses by Hughes suggest the formulation of a heritage politics that oscillates between an affirmation of his American identity and a refusal to allow his own sense of what it is to be American to be defined by either racial or literary standardisation.

Although emerging out of a very different context of external impositions, Countee Cullen's 'Heritage', one of the centrepieces of *The New Negro*, had its famous question, 'What is Africa to me', ironically pre-empted by Locke's editorial and stylistic choices.[8] The decision to accompany the poem with one of Alfred C. Barnes's African masks seems to ignore the complexities of the poem by gesturing towards an answer: that heritage for the African American artist should unequivocally be the history of African art (even as this is mediated by its reformulation under Barnes). Locke also imposed structural implications on the text, as Braddock notes, moving 'Heritage' away from Cullen's other poems to the section entitled 'The Negro Digs Up His Past', 'where it formed a bridge between two transcriptions of African American folklore and Locke's essay on African art, "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts."' (p. 182). Braddock is right in arguing that 'Heritage' and other poems 'filling space in the tradition of magazine verse' did not bring into question their 'aesthetic validity'. But in 'affirm[ing] the anthology's general strategies', they nonetheless offer a more unequivocal attachment to an African past than Cullen's rhetorical strategies allow for. As Braddock's analysis of Cullen's letters to Locke show, the latter's appreciation of the poem saw him act in a position similar to that of Ezra Pound to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, 'persuading Cullen to withhold "Heritage" for consideration in the first annual literary contest sponsored by *Opportunity*', and personally revising the poem repeatedly until Cullen's eventual plea for him to cease in 1924: 'Please relinquish me from revising Heritage. Either take it as it is, or give it back to me.'[9] The specificities of the economic situation may therefore have affected Cullen's decision, as he would only have been awarded $40 for winning the *Opportunity* competition, in contrast to 'the $2,000 award from the *Dial* that had been silently

[8] Countee Cullen, 'Heritage', in *The New Negro*, pp. 250–3. For the alternative version, see Cullen, 'Heritage', in *Color*, pp. 36–41.
[9] Cullen, letter to Alain Locke, 28 November 1924, Alain Locke Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC.

guaranteed in advance to Eliot' (p. 186). Whether or not Cullen, like Eliot, viewed his editor as *il miglior fabbro*, agreeing with both his editorial choices and the poem's larger context within *The New Negro*, is a question whose answer is obscured by the relative economic precarity of the two poets.

The moment at which Cullen's question moves furthest from the rhetorical comes in the poem's second stanza in its *New Negro* variation: 'Africa? A book one thumbs | Listlessly, till slumber comes' (ll. 31–2). Africa as text, or Africa created out of the text as in Hughes's 'Fragment', will fall short as a meaningful model of artistic inspiration for the African American writer because it will necessarily lapse into a dreamlike idyllic construct, even if a return to or a knowledge of this place is deemed desirable, as in Phyllis Wheatley's lament in 'To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth': 'I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate | Was snatched from Afric's fancy'd happy seat'.[10] As with Hughes, this recognition and rejection of an idyllic Africa reinforces the liminal position of the African American poet that calls into question the very tenability of this term itself (it is perhaps for this reason that Hughes, Claude McKay and others opted for alternatives such as Afro-American and 'Aframerican'). Cullen's question, and similar ones posed by various writers of the Harlem Renaissance, locate the artist's frustration at being held in this position, at 'the crossroads where he cannot be American completely', as M. J. C. Echeruo notes, 'but can only refer in an ineffectual way to the Africa with which he cannot now sympathize sincerely.'[11] The 'unremembering' of this textual Africa that Cullen's speaker initiates roughly midway through the poem is not enacted through a sudden structural turn, nor is it simply an attempt to replace Africa-as-book with what Hughes described on his arrival to Senegal in 1923 as 'Africa! The real thing, to be touched and seen, not merely read about in a book'.[12] Instead, through Cullen's metaphorical shift to Christianity, it recasts its dismissal of the pagan, primitivised continent by setting it in opposition to the poet's own spiritual development:

> My conversion came high-priced;
> I belong to Jesus Christ,

[10] Phillis Wheatley, 'To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth', in *Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1995), p. 48.
[11] M. J. C. Echeruo, 'American Negro Poetry', *Phylon (1960–)*, 24 (1963), 62–68 (p. 66).
[12] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, p. 10.

Preacher of humility;
Heathen gods are naught to me.

So while 'Heritage' transforms rather than seeks to answer Cullen's initial question, the conclusion of the poem does at least steer the newly introduced Christian vocabulary towards it:

All day long and all night through,
One thing only must I do:
Quench my pride and cool my blood,
Lest I perish in the flood.

(ll. 117–20)

Cullen therefore marks an alliance between his own faith, as if tested by the Biblical flood, and his wariness of being caught up in a second flood of imagination that had demarcated the primitivist imagery of Africa in the poem's opening stanzas. These lines do appear in the *New Negro* version of the poem, but they are not placed in the final stanza, as would be the case for Cullen's revised (and frequently anthologised) version in *Color* (1925). The concluding line of these latter iterations gesture towards some form of resolution, or at least respite from doubt — '*They and I are civilized*' — whereas in *The New Negro*, despite maintaining the turn to Christian imagery, the speaker's admission — 'Lord, I fashion dark gods, too' — can only be addressed in an apologetic tone: 'Lord, forgive me if my need | Sometimes shapes a human creed'.

This *New Negro* version in particular marks a striking convergence with Hughes's 'Afro-American Fragment' in terms of enacting the ultimate unanswerability of 'what is Africa to me?' Despite this, both poets had written pointed critiques of the other's poetical attitude to this very problem. Hughes begins his 'Negro Artist' essay with a thinly veiled anecdote about Cullen:

> One of the most promising of the young Negro poets said to me once, 'I want to be a poet—not a Negro poet,' meaning, I believe, 'I want to write like a white poet'; meaning subconsciously, 'I would like to be a white poet'; meaning behind that, 'I would like to be white.'

In his foreword to the anthology *Caroling Dusk* the following year, Cullen suggests that 'Negro poets […] may have more to gain from the rich background of English and American poetry than

from any nebulous atavistic yearnings toward an African inheritance'.[13] It is either a bizarre coincidence that 'atavistic' and 'yearnings' appear in Hughes's poem, published three years later, or perhaps Hughes, who is mentioned elsewhere in the foreword, constructed it as an ironic response to Cullen, a possibility problematised by the apparent sincerity of its tone.

'Heritage' and 'Afro-American Fragment' invoke a doubling of drum beats, as both a medium that is able to cut through the 'vast mist of race' and a marker of cultural memory in the body:

> So I lie, who always hear,
> Though I cram against my ear
> Both my thumbs, and keep them there,
> Great drums beating through the air.
> So I lie, whose fount of pride,
> Dear distress, and joy allied,
> Is my somber flesh and skin,
> With the dark blood dammed within.
>
> ('Heritage', ll. 46–53)

A further doubling here points towards a form of anthropological coercion. The object of the first line, that which the speaker hears, is withheld until three lines later, with the image of the crammed ears being itself crammed as a subordinate clause into the sentence. This syntactic decision reinforces the permeating, inescapable vibration of the '[g]reat drums' which opens up the figurative possibility of 'I lie', by suggesting the futility of any attempt to drown out or avoid the question of 'what is Africa to me?'. Cullen then turns to the reason behind the lingering spectrality of this question: the speaker's 'fount of pride' is his 'flesh and skin | With the dark blood dammed within'. This dark blood is what ultimately, genealogically, ties the speaker to Africa, but, as it is hidden, it is brought into a subservient relation to the exteriority of the body, the signifiers of which cannot be concealed. Blood also marks this genealogical linkage in Hughes's poem, but he is keen to stress that any sense of a musical 'beat' from 'songs' and 'drums' is always necessarily tied up

[13] Cullen, 'Foreword', in *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets*, ed. by Cullen (New York: Harper, 1927), pp. vii–xii (p. ix).

with that word's verbal significations. Earlier poems by Hughes express a more enthusiastic attitude towards this relationship, as in 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers' (1921) — 'I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins' — and 'Danse Africaine' (1922) — 'the low beating of the tom-toms | Stirs your blood'.[14] While in 'Afro-American Fragment' the heartbeat/drumbeat parallelism may be sufficient to transcend or penetrate the 'mist of race', cultural memory is also necessarily embedded in various circuitries of coercion and violence, the beating into and out of the blood.

Both poems therefore enact the complexities inherent in any desire to step outside of the contingencies of history and heritage, and it is in this way that both engage with, but ultimately express a lack of confidence in, the sort of defiant sentiments with which Frantz Fanon concludes *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952): 'I am not a prisoner of history. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny. […] In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself. I am a part of Being to the degree that I go beyond it.'[15] For Hughes and Cullen, this process of going beyond is mediated and frustrated by Africa-as-spectre, which is paradoxically both constant *and* inconstant, always present and yet impossible to categorise, comprehend, and anchor to a specific set of cultural expectations. What emerges is a Humean gap between this Fanonian 'ought' — an escape from the shackling aspects of history — and the 'is', the real state of things, that both poets suggest is inescapable for the African American.

While Locke's stylistic designs in *The New Negro*, involving the accompaniment of both 'Heritage' and his own 'The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts' with images of Barnes's masks, point superficially to an affirmation of the centrality of Africa for the African American artist, the content of the essay itself, in addition to Locke's inclusion of Melville Herskovits's 'The Negro's Americanism', function in an incongruous manner. Framed as a self-consciously ethnographic text in which its author expresses surprise at the modernity of black life — 'it occurred to me that what I was seeing was a community just like any other American community' — 'The Negro's Americanism' characterises Harlem as having fallen into the exact mould that Hughes warns against in 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain': 'May it not then be true that the Negro has

[14] Hughes, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. by Arnold Rampersad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), pp. 23, 28.
[15] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 179.

become acculturated to the prevailing white culture and has developed the patterns of culture typical of American life?'[16] The disappointment audible in Herskovits's tone at the lack of a perceived racial difference in Harlem was not unique in Locke's anthology. Another contribution by a white writer, Barnes's 'Negro Art and America', appearing directly after Locke's opening essay, provides an essentialist account of African American artistry as deriving 'from a primitive nature upon which a white man's education has never been harnessed.' In a correlative to Mason's desire for African Americans to reconnect with the land of their ancestors, Barnes had in mind a model of heritage wherein 'the psychological complexion of the Negro' was 'inherited […] from his primitive ancestors and which he maintains to this day.' Beyond the problematic nature of this essentialist rhetoric, the African American is established as a foil to the white man and a model of artistic potential:

> The white man in the mass cannot compete with the Negro in spiritual endowment. Many centuries of civilization have attenuated his original gifts and have made his mind dominate his spirit. He has wandered too far from the elementary human needs and their easy means of natural satisfaction.[17]

Barnes therefore sought to preserve, as Barbara Foley writes, the 'view of Negro primitivism as the needed antidote to white overcivilization'. The difference integral to this dichotomy meant that for Barnes 'recognizing "difference" involved not a call for equality but a notion of complementarity that implied the need to continue those patterns of segregation that could help sustain what was unique—and so beneficial to the nation at large—in the Negro's particularity.'[18] Read in the context of Barnes's essay, Herskovits's failure to locate 'the "peculiar" community of which I had heard so much' therefore serves as a moment of ethnographic realism in contrast to Barnes's idealisation of difference, but also as an indication of the failure of the ethnographic process to identify the real cultural differences between black Harlemites and their white counterparts.

---

[16] Melville Herskovits, 'The Negro's Americanism', in *The New Negro*, pp. 353–61 (pp. 353–4).
[17] Alfred C. Barnes, 'Negro Art and America', in *The New Negro*, pp. 19–28 (pp. 19, 20).
[18] Barbara Foley, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 230.

While the heritage politics of Hughes's and Cullen's poetry has led to frequent thematic comparisons with Eliot, the long but largely unpublished career of Helene Johnson involved a sustained and often direct engagement with the Anglo-American poet, including pastiches of and allusions to *The Waste Land*, 'Preludes', and 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.[19] Appearing in *Opportunity* in 1926, Johnson's 'Fulfillment' conjures a cityscape reminiscent of the opening stanzas of 'Prufrock' through their shared animation of the weather observed by the speaker:

> To hear the rain drool, dimpling, down the drain
> And splash with a wet giggle in the street,
> To ramble in the twilight after supper,
> And to count the pretty faces that you meet.
>
> To ride to town on trolleys, crowded, teeming
> With joy and hurry and laughter and push and sweat —
> Squeezed next a patent-leathered Negro dreaming
> Of a wrinkled river and a minnow net.[20]
> (ll. 5–12)

The echo of 'prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet' and the 'yellow smoke' that '[l]ingered upon the pools that stand in drains' from 'Prufrock' are specific enough to read 'Fulfillment' in dialogue with Eliot's poem, first published eleven years earlier in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*.[21] Emily Rutter has also drawn parallels between the poem and 'Preludes' (1917), arguing that '[i]n sharp contrast to Eliot's depersonalized portraits of the masses of "muddy feet" [...] Johnson celebrates the "wet giggle" of the rain-covered streets and "the pretty faces" in the trolley crowds that allow her speaker to feel a part of an urban community that derives pleasure from the "joy and

[19] See for example, David K. Kirby's 'Countee Cullen's "Heritage": A Black "Waste Land"', *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 36 (1971), 14–20.
[20] Helene Johnson, 'Fulfillment', *Opportunity*, June 1926, p. 194. Johnson did not see a collection of her poems published during her lifetime, but they have subsequently been collected in *This Waiting for Love: Helene Johnson, Poet of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Verner D. Mitchell, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).
[21] Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', *Poetry*, 6 (1915), 130–5.

hurry" of city life.'[22] Similarly, the lingering and sleeping of Eliot's anthropomorphised fog and smoke that displaces the narrative of the speaker in the third stanza of 'Prufrock' is transformed in Johnson's poem into a site of sensory delight in the midst of which the speaker finds herself.

Eliot's image of '[t]he grimy scraps | Of withered leaves about your feet | And newspapers from vacant lots' (ll. 6–8) becomes in Johnson's poem a moment of excited possibility:

> To buy a paper from a breathless boy,
> And read of kings and queens in foreign lands,
> Hyperbole of romance and adventure,
> All for a penny the color of my hand.
> (ll. 13–16)

While approximating the roughness and dirtiness of the physical surface of Eliot's cityscapes, Johnson intimates a 'breathless' sense of community integration and interaction. Her poetry acknowledges the black Harlemite's desire for bucolic escape while suggesting that the city, despite its mess and noise, can serve as a more genuine space of creative stimulation. The textual intrigue 'of kings and queens in foreign lands' forms part of a series of romanticised images in her verse against which the vibrancy of the city is positioned. This dichotomy is laid out explicitly and tersely in poems such as 'Futility' (1926):

> It is silly—
> This waiting for love
> In a parlor.
> When love is singing up and down the alley
> Without a collar.[23]

Whereas in 'Fulfillment' both the poem's speaker and the 'patent-leathered Negro dreaming | Of a wrinkled river and a minnow net' capture a yearning for a world beyond present urban reality, the sexually liberated 'alley | Without a collar' of 'Futility' suggests that to experience the

[22] Emily R. Ritter, '"Belch the pity! / Straddle the city!": Helene Johnson's Late Poetry and the Rhetoric of Empowerment', *African American Review*, 47 (2014), 495–509 (p. 497).
[23] Johnson, 'Futility', *Opportunity*, August 1926, p. 259.

'romance and adventure' sought for in the earlier poem, one need not look beyond the city itself. As Nina Miller has observed, however, there is a gendered aspect that complicates this epiphany. A common dilemma that she identifies across women's poetry in Harlem Renaissance journals is one in which

> a young woman negotiates between the security of domesticity (concretely rendered as the apartment) and the excitement of urban working-class pleasure (viewed or heard through the apartment window); in a larger sense, she must choose between the bourgeois feminine imperative to be 'exalted' and full participation in the cultural phenomenon of the Harlem Renaissance, whose topos is 'the street' in all its seamy romance.[24]

The masculine coding of this participation will be explored more fully in relation to Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem* in Chapter 9, but this rhymed association that Johnson creates between 'parlor' and 'collar' echoes across the Renaissance both in terms of the perceived '[h]yperbole' and potential inauthenticity of second-hand escapism found in books, and also in terms of a more general scrutiny of the merits of urban existence.

Three years before Langston Hughes articulated his anxieties concerning that veil between himself and the 'atavistic land' of Africa, Johnson, in 'Magalu', offers up an African narrative that readily embraces the discourse of primitivism. The first half of the poem employs the highly exoticised and stereotypical African jungle imagery also found in Cullen's 'Heritage' ('Magalu' was published in Cullen's anthology, *Caroling Dark*), before the speaker meets Magalu,

> dark as a tree at night,
> Eager-lipped, listening to a man with a white collar
> And a small black book with a cross on it.
> Oh Magalu, come! Take my hand and I will read you poetry,
> Chromatic words,
> Seraphic symphonies,
> Fill up your throat with laughter and your heart with song.
> Do not let him lure you from your laughing waters,

[24] Nina Miller, *Making Love Modern: The Intimate Public Worlds of New York's Literary Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 159.

Lulling lakes, lissome winds.
Would you sell the colors of your sunset and the fragrance
Of your flowers, and the passionate wonder of your forest
For a creed that will not let you dance?[25]

The image Johnson conjures is not dissimilar to the vision that enters Bloom's mind in *Ulysses* where, in an equally fictitious Africa, Conmee is 'going out in bluey specs with the sweat rolling off him to baptise blacks'. Bloom's derogatory idea of the simplistic, mesmerised native discussed in the previous chapter, 'sitting round in a ring with blub lips, entranced, listening', is echoed here by the '[e]ager-lipped' Magalu who seems equally enthralled by this missionary authority. Or at least this is what the speaker of the poem looks to prevent, pulling them (their gender is not specified) away from the 'white collar' and 'small black book' of the missionary to the '[c]hromatic words' and '[s]eraphic symphonies' of poetry that the speaker believes might allow them to dance freely.

In 'A Missionary Brings a Young Native to America', published in Wallace Thurman's short-lived journal *Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life*, Johnson engages with a similar anti-religious rhetoric. The 'young native' is coerced into 'mumbl[ing] Latin litanies' by the missionary and is positioned submissively in relation to him, like the subjects of Bloom's vision:

A belt
Of alien tenets choked the songs that surged
Within her when alone each night she knelt
At prayer.[26]

As in 'Magalu', the welling up of song is 'choked' by this authority figure, with Johnson's word choice echoing the restrictive collars of 'Magalu' and 'Futility'. However, this poem also voices the dilemma outlined by Miller that the supposedly liberatory space of the city is also a frightening

[25] Johnson, 'Magalu', in *Caroling Dusk*, pp. 223–4. As Verner Mitchell has noted, the poem was titled 'Magula' when it first appeared in *Palms* (October 1926), but somehow became 'Magalu' upon subsequent republications in *Caroling Dusk* and the 1949 anthology *The Poetry of the Negro* (p. 13).
[26] Johnson, 'A Missionary Brings a Young Native to America', *Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life*, 1 (1928), 40.

one, and is therefore frequently as unobtainable, and as fantastical, as the narratives of 'kings and queens in foreign lands':

> All day she heard the mad stampede of feet
> Push by her in a thick unbroken haste.
> A thousand unknown terrors of the street
> Caught at her timid heart, and she could taste
> The city of grit upon her tongue.

The 'choking' of the songs the subject experiences, which echoes the association between 'throat' and laughter' in 'Magalu', is therefore not only derived from the impositions of the missionary, but also from the 'unknown terrors' of the city itself which, in the enforced relocation from 'native' lands to America, feels like 'grit upon her tongue.' The dynamics of race, gender, missionary practice, and geographical displacement all therefore work to mar access to the 'love […] singing up and down the alley | Without a collar' of 'Futility'. For Johnson, then, neither the imported romance of literature nor the excitement of urban life are entirely suitable modes of escapism for the African American woman.

Despite this sense of being, to borrow McKay's phrase, 'shut against'[27] *both* the pleasures of urban modernity and the primitivist Eden exemplified by the 'laughing waters, | Lulling lakes, lissome winds', the desire for participation persists, and in these poems Johnson establishes a tension between this desire and forms of textuality: the 'paper' in 'Fulfillment', the 'black book with a cross on it' in 'Magalu', and the dichotomy in 'Missionary' separating the amorphous 'songs that surged' from the 'Latin litanies'. The inheritance of Eliot that Johnson engages with is therefore one that writes back against both Eliot's anti-urbanism and prioritisation of the text. In the first instance, Eliot believed, as Emily Ritter suggests, that 'alienation and cultural degradation stems, at least in part, from this aversion to democratization and the threat to traditional sociocultural hierarchies that the city represents—the very transformations that portend a hopeful future for African Americans like Johnson and Hughes.'[28] While this characterisation is helpful,

[27] McKay, 'The White House', in *Poems*, pp. 148–9 (p. 148).
[28] Ritter, p. 498.

Johnson's poetry does not merely function oppositionally to Eliot's vision, but instead communicates different forms of 'alienation and cultural degradation' that the city imposes on African American women specifically. In the second instance, Johnson's scrutiny of forms of text and textualisation aligns her poetry with the sceptical attitude to the collapsing of cultural history and the book in the opening line of Cullen's 'Heritage', and the suspicion of the narrative distortion enacted by 'history books' in Hughes's 'Afro-American Fragment'.

Hughes and Johnson seem instead to prioritise the persistence of the 'song' while acknowledging the forces that work against the reception of this song by the contemporary African American — the 'vast mist of race' in 'Fragment' or the forms of religious authority in 'Magalu'. Eliot, on the other hand, while not necessarily disengaged from or uninterested in this form of oral literature, famously uses 'Prufrock' to express the sense of alienation from it: 'I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each. | I do not think that they will sing to me.'[29] Against these 'bitter yearnings' for the oral text, then, its physical counterparts, whether newspapers, history books, or anthologies, function as objects of suspicion in the poetry of Hughes, Cullen, and Johnson that engage with the politics of heritage. However, Johnson offers her most cynical approach to cultural sentimentality in 'Bottled', a poem that first appeared in *Vanity Fair* in 1927. Here the 'text' in question is not literature per se, but the museum artefact and the meanings ascribed to it:

> Upstairs on the third floor
> Of the 135th Street library
> In Harlem, I saw a little
> Bottle of sand, brown sand
> Just like the kids make pies
> Out of down at the beach.
> But the label said: 'This
> Sand was taken from the Sahara desert.'
> Imagine that! The Sahara desert!
> Some bozo's been all the way to Africa to get some sand.[30]
>
> (ll. 1–10)

[29] Eliot, 'Prufrock', p. 135.
[30] Johnson, 'Bottled', *Vanity Fair*, May 1927, p. 76.

In responding to the label, the speaker initially seems to be affirming the kind of dreamy escapism detailed in 'Fulfillment' — 'Imagine that! The Sahara Desert!' — before the stanza's final line, metrically bloated and colloquial, reveals her disdain towards the anthropological pretension of the bottle of sand. It is significant then that 'Bottled' was first anthologised in *Caroling Dusk*, with Johnson's tone mirroring Cullen's disdain towards 'atavistic yearnings toward an African inheritance', even while traces of this yearning are simultaneously present in 'Magalu' which Cullen also included.

In the second stanza of 'Bottled', the sentimental leniency that Johnson had allowed the 'patent-leathered Negro' of 'Fulfillment' undergoes a cynical inversion:

> And yesterday on Seventh Avenue
> I saw a darky dressed fit to kill
> In yellow gloves and swallow tail coat
> And swirling a cane. And everyone
> Was laughing at him. Me too,
> At first, till I saw his face
> When he stopped to hear a
> Organ grinder grind out some jazz.
> Boy! You should a seen that darky's face!
> It just shone. Gee, he was happy!
> And he began to dance. No
> Charleston or Black Bottom for *him*.
>
> (ll. 11–22)

This cynicism, however, fades in response to the simple happiness of this 'darky dressed fit to kill' who, despite his attire, offers an authentic complement to the bottled sand in the library through his dance. This dance denies any white onlookers the familiar cultural touchstones of the 'Charleston or Black Bottom', which, Katherine R. Lynes writes, 'by this period had been made popular for white audiences (who usually danced them exuberantly) by black performers.'[31] In the third and final stanza of the poem, it is the process of viewing this man that transports the speaker

[31] Katherine R. Lynes, '"A real honest-to-cripe jungle": Contested Authenticities in Helene Johnson's "Bottled"', *Modernism/modernity,* 14 (2007), 517–525 (p. 520).

to an Africa of the mind, but one couched in the same colloquial, ironic style directed towards the first stanza's 'bozo': 'I could see him dancin' in a jungle, | A real honest-to-cripe jungle' (ll. 33–4). As Johnson's lines lengthen and loosen in the conjuring of this primitivist fantasy, the reader is left wondering whether this man represents a genuine alternative Africanity, before finally the speaker realises that a parallel attempt at ethnographic 'bottling' is also at work here: 'That's what they done to this shine, ain't it? Bottled him.' Despite his '[t]rick shoes, trick coat, trick cane, trick everything', the poem therefore returns to the hopeful sincerity of the middle stanza, albeit in an equivocal and unspecified manner, reminiscent of the uncertain dashes of Hughes's 'Fragment': 'But inside — | Gee, that poor shine!' (ll. 50–1). Jeff Westover has described the dashes in Hughes's poem as 'the terrible, taunting unknown, the fierce x that bars his transatlantic past and its culture from himself'.[32] Despite the more defiant tone struck in 'Bottled', where the cultural dressing of 'tricks' is exposed as false, Johnson similarly concludes by acknowledging this 'taunting unknown' with a dash, suggesting that the interiority of the 'shine' — his 'inside' — can only be defined in the negative, resistant to the primitivist imagery and the stereotypes of the white gaze that structure the poem, but also to any form of authentic representation.

[32] Jeff Westover, 'Africa/America: Fragmentation and Diaspora in the Work of Langston Hughes', *Callaloo*, 25 (Autumn 2004), 1206–1223 (p. 1209).

Chapter 6

Hurston I: Playing with Ethnographic Authenticity

I

In Helene Johnson's 'Bottled', the paralleling of the 'Bottle of sand' (whose only interesting quality is its purported origin in the Sahara desert) with the 'Trick clothes' of the 'darky dressed fit to kill' merge the anxieties of Cullen's 'What is Africa to me?' with the question of ethnographic (in)authenticity. Although the speaker of Johnson's poem concludes that '[t]hat's what they done to this shine, ain't it? Bottled him' and takes pity on him, the man's 'trick' attire can also be viewed as an ironic response to the ethnographic pretensions of the Saharan sand itself. The poem suggests that attentiveness to these aspects of ethnographic practice is a more pressing issue for the black writer, as any minority existence offers itself up to the possibility of study or curiosity by the very fact of its difference, or in the case of Johnson's protagonist, may inspire a form of 'dressing' from the dominant white culture, in which the subject loses autonomy by being associated with a collection of primitivist tropes, or conversely, by being stripped entirely of any signifier of difference.

The playful, ironic approach to ethnography in 'Bottled' anticipates one aspect of the negotiations undertaken by Zora Neale Hurston in relation to the practicalities and politics of that discipline, and also the question(ing) of ethnographic authenticity that is the subject of critique in Johnson's poem. To address these negotiations I will explore Hurston's two published ethnographies, *Mules and Men* (1935) and *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica* (1938) and the fieldwork processes that generated these texts and informed her collection of folklore and song for the Federal Writers' Project (1938–9).

This categorisation by genre, however, is complex at the outset. The stylistic ambiguities of *Tell My Horse*, 'simultaneously a travelogue, a piece of journalism and political analysis, a conventional ethnography, part legend and folklore with art criticism and commentary thrown in', have led to it being largely overlooked in Hurston criticism.[1] Biographer Robert Hemenway suggested that it was 'Hurston's poorest book, chiefly because of its form. She was a novelist and a folklorist, not a political analyst or traveloguist.'[2] Writing against this trend, Amy Fass Emery argues that '[t]he generic instability of *Tell My Horse* – the refusal to fix material in a coherent recognizable genre – is in fact characteristic of Hurston's narrative style, and for her experimental bent she has been seen as a precursor to contemporary experimental ethnography.'[3] Through an examination of Part I of *Tell My Horse*, which details Hurston's time in Jamaica, I will argue that, while Emery has rightly characterised Hurston's style, its inconsistencies mark a problematic intervention by Hurston into Jamaican gender and racial politics.

Tell My Horse was the text written as a result of a $2,000 Guggenheim Fellowship to carry out 'a study of magic practices among Negroes in the West Indies', which Hurston conducted between April and September 1936.[4] The title derives from the Haitian Creole phrase Hurston translated, 'parlay cheval ou', spoken by Haitians believed to have been 'mounted' by 'that boisterous god, Guedé' who instigates a transgressive freeing of the tongue: 'You can see him in the market women, in the domestic servant who now and then appears before her employer "mounted" by this god who takes occasion to say many stinging things to the boss.'[5] As Valerie Boyd suggests, 'Hurston's use of this title signalled her intent to speak bluntly in her book, to

[1] Deborah Gordon, 'The Politics of Ethnographic Authority: Race and Writing in the Ethnography of Margaret Mead and Zora Neale Hurston', in *Modernist Anthropology*, pp. 146–62 (p. 154).
[2] Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977; repr. 1980) pp. 248–9.
[3] Amy Fass Emery, 'The Zombie In/As the Text: Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell My Horse*', *African American Review*, 39 (Fall 2005), 327–366 (p. 327).
[4] Guggenheim Foundation, 'Zora Neale Hurston', <https://www.gf.org/fellows/zora-neale-hurston/> [Accessed 16 July 2023].
[5] Hurston, *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*, in *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings*, ed. by Cheryl A. Wall (New York: Library of America, 1995), pp. 269–555 (p. 494). Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.

reveal things about Haiti and Jamaica that required courage to say.'[6] Unlike the decidedly autoethnographic *Mules* which is based on trips she took to her hometown of Eatonville, Florida and New Orleans, in *Tell My Horse* Hurston is keen to reiterate her outsider position and the Otherness of the Caribbean through juxtapositions with the United States. When describing the spiritist tradition of Pocomania[7] in the text's opening paragraph, she invites the reader 'to peep in on it a while' (p. 277). In isolation there is nothing particularly voyeuristic about this invitation, but it adumbrates a definite observer/observed distinction that will emerge in relation to an instance of 'peeping' into an intimate ritual in Chapter 2, 'Curry Goat'.

Chapter 1 is broken into three sections: Hurston's recollection of her participation in a feast, her discussion about gender and love with an unnamed young man, and her recounting of the process adopted by 'specialists who prepare young girls for love' (p. 290). In the first, Hurston recalls several of the guests by name, 'Dr. Leslie, Claude Bell, Rupert Meikle' (p. 284), but from among the unnamed masses she singles out only two groups: 'two or three Hindoos were preparing the food'; 'there were about thirty guests in all including some very pretty half-Chinese girls' (p. 285). While Hurston's portrait is reflective of Jamaican multiculturalism, these two groups are also associated with domesticity and superficial attraction.[8] Neither are mentioned again. The abandonment of ethnographic interest into these half-Chinese girls is, for Vermonja Romona Alston, particularly telling, as the throwaway description offers only 'an ethnographic mystery. That is, Hurston makes no attempt to reveal their ethnic other halves. Instead, their presence provides evidence of racial hybridity and a challenge to Hurston's discourse of mulatto inauthenticity comically narrated in [Chapter I] "The Rooster's Nest."'[9] This comical but insistent depiction of a desperate struggle by Jamaicans for proximity to whiteness in the text's opening

[6] Valerie Boyd, *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston* (New York: Scribner, 2004), p. 320.
[7] 'Pocomania, n.': 'In Jamaica: a religious rite or set of rituals combining aspects of both African and Christian belief including revivalism, ancestor-worship, and spirit possession.' *OED Online*, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5304957329> [Accessed 18 September 2023].
[8] See Patrick Bryan, 'The Creolization of the Chinese Community in Jamaica', in *Ethnic Minorities in Caribbean Society*, ed. by Rohda Reddock (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1996), pp. 173–272.
[9] Vermonja Romona Alston, 'Race-Crossings at the Crossroads of African American Travel in the Caribbean' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Arizona, 2004), p. 170.

chapter therefore has its authenticity brought into question by Hurston's shift in focus whereby Asian Jamaicans are made out as contributing only to the diverse, carnivalesque scenery of the feast.

In the second section, Hurston's interlocutor stages his chauvinist reading of gender around an opposition between African Americans and Jamaicans. The former, who see themselves as 'wisdom-wise western women' are, he believes, 'destroyed by their brains', whereas the latter are able to understand 'the function of love in the scheme of life' (p. 288). When Hurston asks why 'Jamaicans had been blessed beyond all others on this side of the big waters […] he replied that there were oriental influences in Jamaica that had been at work for generations, so that Jamaica was prepared to teach continental America something about love' (p. 289). Hurston writes sarcastically about this exchange — 'he talked and I listened most respectfully' — but nevertheless seeks to reposition their theoretical discussions about love within a more strictly ethnographic discourse:

> that I might study the matter at close range. It was arranged for me to spend two weeks with one of the practitioners and learn what I could in that time. There are several of these advisors scattered about that section of Jamaica, but people not inside the circle know nothing about what is going on.
>
> (p. 290)

Despite reacting with scepticism to the Oriental influences that the man had identified with Jamaica and its sexual politics, Hurston portrays the 'preparation' scene for young women about to be married in similar terms. In the highly eroticised scene, the breasts of the young woman 'are massaged ever so lightly with the very tips of the fingers dipped in khus khus' and, after swooning from over-stimulation, '[s]he is revived by a mere sip of rum in which a single leaf of ganga has been steeped. Ganga is that "wisdom weed" which has been brought from the banks of the sacred Ganges to Jamaica.' Both 'khus khus' and 'ganga' derive etymologically from Hindi, and many early accounts of cannabis in Jamaica connect the herb to India and the immigrant coolie

population.[10] Throughout the three sections of 'Curry Goat', Jamaicans (and Jamaican women in particular) are therefore tied to Asian culture and specifically to exotic and erotic Orientalist stereotypes. Even while Hurston challenges and exposes the absurdity of the misogynist positionings of her male interlocutor, her own writing in this chapter reifies the American/ Caribbean dichotomy that he had proclaimed, between Orientalised Jamaicans, regarded as inherently knowledgeable about love and sex, and materialist, masculinised American women. Hurston's stylistic choices compound this with a second irony. 'Traditional' ethnographic style is totally absent in the feast and debate sections, and while this does allow her to challenge the masculinist perspectives that she finds disagreeable, it also leaves the final, women-only initiation scene, where she retreats for the most part to the position of the scientific ethnographer, noticeably *unchallenged* and uninterpreted, presented merely as Orientalised homoerotic fantasy.

The claims made by Gordon, Alston, Hemenway, and others about the detrimental effect of Hurston's inconsistent stylistic choices in *Tell My Horse* should however be read in relation to the practical difficulties of collecting fieldwork that she experienced in both the United States and the Caribbean. She had to employ creative strategies to experience the stories, songs, and cultural ceremonies described in her ethnographies, but was simultaneously alive to the various ways in which those she spoke to would exaggerate, invent, and at times invert the anthropological gaze or stage cultural productions as a form of 'feather-bed resistance.'[11] Hurston reflects on this ethnographic staging during the recollection of her stay with the Jamaican Maroons in the third chapter of *Tell My Horse*, 'Hunting the Wild Hog'. Henry Augustus Rowe, colonel of the Maroon settlement of Accompong, tells her

> how some one else had spent three weeks to study their dances and how much money they had spent in doing this. […] He offered to stage a dance for me also. I thanked him, but declined. I did not tell him that I was too old a hand at collecting to fall for staged-dance affairs. If I do not see a dance or a ceremony in its natural setting and sequence, I do not

[10] A *Gleaner* news article of 7 April 1879, for example, describes 'a coolie […] drunk with ganja […] placing his hands under the wheels of [a] train.' An article of 5 November 1928 notes that the herb 'was first found in the coolie gardens' and even suggests the propensity of those 'drunk on ganja' to commit murder and rape.

[11] Hurston, *Mules and Men*, in *Folklore*, pp. 1–267 (p. 10).

> bother. Self-experience has taught me that those staged affairs are never the same as the real thing.
>
> (p. 294)

Hurston is keen to reiterate her awareness of the differences between staged and authentic cultural practices in order to assert her anthropological credentials. As I will later consider, Hurston demonstrates a similar awareness of staged ethnography in *Mules and Men*, but at the same time her self-positioning within the narrative as a shrewd observer in this interaction with Rowe 'flies in the face of Hurston's use of performance to aid in the collection of materials for *Mules*'.[12] A similar incongruity emerges when considering that in the previous chapter she suggests that the curry goat feast was partially a staged affair in itself: 'They did something for me there that has never been done for another woman. They gave me a curry goat feed'. The gendered specificity of this statement is partially derived from the fact that the feed 'is something utterly masculine in every detail' (p. 284), and so Hurston foregrounds her position as an actor, so to speak, in this theatricalised production that was usually only available to men. Crucially, this also speaks to Hurston's rivalries with fellow women anthropologists, two of which I will consider more closely, and the insistence on her ability to succeed in the collection process in a country whose misogyny she is clear to contrast with the United States.[13] Hurston-as-persona within *Tell My Horse* undergoes a form of doubling: she is simultaneously a privileged informer invited in and a defiant outsider able to critically evaluate Caribbean attitudes to gender.

Beth Harrison reads this moment in the text in relation to a later address to the reader in the second person as an attempt at intimacy which nevertheless 'inadvertently reveal[s] her anxiety about the role she has assumed'[14]: 'You have to see those native Jamaica bands to hear them. […] As I said before no woman appears with the players, though there is a woman's part in the dancing'

---

[12] Eve E. Dunbar, *Black Regions of the Imagination: African American Writers between the Nation and the World* (Philadelphia, Temple University press, 2013), p. 52.

[13] This is evoked in the final chapter of the Jamaica section, 'Women in the Caribbean', in terms of both the labour expected of women and, in a particularly moving anecdote, the societal ostracisation that befalls a woman tricked into sex by an engaged man.

[14] Beth Harrison, 'Zora Neale Hurston and Mary Austin: A Case Study in Ethnography, Literary Modernism, and Contemporary Ethnic Fiction', *Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 21 (Summer 1996), 89–106 (p. 92).

(p. 286). This quotation from 'Curry Goat' is strikingly similar to one made by Janie to Phoeby at the close of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Hurston's *magnum opus* written during the same Caribbean trip: 'you got tuh *go* there tuh *know* there'.[15] In the production of her ethnographies, Hurston would abide by her protagonist's advice, but during her research in Jamaica and Haiti she would come to realise that being on location and obtaining access to the communities she was studying were not in themselves sufficient. When conducting fieldwork in the American South she had to partially disguise her difference from those southerners she encountered to gain their trust.

II

A wide-ranging 1977 interview of Hurston's colleague Mary Elizabeth Barnicle reveals the various forms of disguise these anthropologists would resort to in order to achieve their fieldwork goals, with interviewer Gene Moore encouraging a then deteriorating Barnicle to recount her use of blackface:

> Moore: […] and then you went to Florida, Georgia and the Bahamas, and that was your first real field trip wasn't it, and that's when you decided to blacken your face, and how long did you do that for?
>
> Barnicle: I didn't put very much on my face […] they would think that I looked rather white…so many white negroes…and that way I got away with it.
>
> […]
>
> Moore: How did you know one person was particular [*sic*] good that held a lot of material?
>
> Barnicle: Zora…got the material…what I got wasn't anything like what she had.[16]

[15] Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in *The Prentice Hall Anthology of African American Literature*, ed. by Rochelle Smith and Sharon L. Jones (Hoboken: Prentice Hall, 2000), pp. 301–403 (p. 403).
[16] Mary Elizabeth Barnicle and Tillman Cadle, interview conducted by Gene Moore, (AFC 1979/077), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. The transcriptions are my own.

While Barnicle's use of blackface might have been persuasive to some,[17] Hurston's origins in and greater familiarity with southern US culture seems to have been a primary cause of the disparity between the material both writers were able to collect, and the resentful tone of this interview. As Hurston makes clear, however, her own blackness and southern origins in no way eradicate these issues. As she wrote to Ruth Benedict in 1929: 'My task is harder than I had anticipated. You see there are Negroes with "Race Consciousness" and "Race pride" drilled into them and they resent any thing that looks like harking back to slavery.'[18] This caution by the anthropological subject is reminiscent of the resistance of Michael in Synge's *The Aran Islands* to posing for a photograph in his homespuns and desiring to wear his modern Galway clothing: the resistance is not an example of ethnographic inauthenticity *per se* (the homespuns were worn by the majority of the islanders), but instead exemplifies a reluctance to be associated with a primitive history that one desires to move beyond.

Hurston's ethnographic practice, like Synge's, therefore appears to be imbricated in a mutual relationship of suspicion. In other words, her awareness of the resistance of the ethnographic subject to examination, by problematising her methods of collection, is reflected in her own dismissal of those ethnographic practices she deems inauthentic. This is most evident in the rivalry that developed between Hurston and fellow African American Katherine Dunham concerning their overlapping work in Haiti and Jamaica. Dunham is the 'some one' that Hurston refers to disparagingly in the Accompong section of *Tell My Horse*, and her decision to emphasise the expenses of her predecessor are tied to the resentment she felt at having her Julius Rosenwald Fund of $3,000 for graduate studies at Columbia reduced to just $700 in 1935, the same year that Dunham was given money from the fund to conduct research in the Caribbean.[19]

---

[17] In addition to resorting to blackface, other aspects of Barnicle's 'methodology' caused a rupture between the pair. In Eatonville she 'wanted to photograph a child eating watermelon, a ridiculously stereotypical image that Hurston simply could not abide.' Boyd, p. 277.

[18] Hurston, letter to Ruth Benedict, Spring 1929, in *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, ed. by Carla Kaplan (New York: Anchor, 2003), p. 140.

[19] When Hurston's mentor Franz Boas queried this sudden and drastic reduction, Rosenwald president Edwin Embree replied: 'The young woman, while unquestionably brilliant, has a capacity for keeping her plans and her friends and sponsors—in tumult'. Boyd suggests that Embree might also have been reacting to an article about Hurston in *The New York World-Telegram* entitled 'Author Plans to Upbraid Own Race',

This would manifest itself directly on Hurston's part with disparaging references to Dunham's credentials in letters home, and on Dunham's part, through what Sascha Morrell has termed 'strategic silences—a different kind of symbolic violence': 'In *Island Possessed* [1969], published nearly ten years after Hurston's death, Dunham effectively erases Hurston from the record of Caribbean research, making no mention of the latter's work in Haiti or Jamaica.'[20] The central irony of this rivalry is its relationship to both Hurston and Dunham's varying modes of deference to their white male patrons and anthropological tutors, Franz 'Papa' Boas foremost among them. Dunham's exclusion of Hurston — 'They were white and male these writers. Of my kind I was a first'[21] — and Hurston's letters, which include descriptions of Dunham as a 'petty dancer' who had 'infinitely less preparation than I have',[22] while acknowledging the whiteness and maleness of professional anthropology, offer up a gendered contestation instead of an attempt to challenge this hegemony. Barnicle's 1977 interview seems to hint towards a similar pattern. While repeatedly insisting to the interviewer that Hurston was 'miserable' and 'abominable', Barnicle offers only two concrete examples: Hurston's mercenary attitude, and Barnicle's sense of the disruptive nature of her flirtatious behaviour with their colleague Alan Lomax:

> Moore: How did she treat other people?
>
> Barnicle: Well she…the people she could get stuff out of, why she was very nice to them. […] I got very disappointed about the trip on account of the way she behaved. And then

which claimed she 'had just about decided to pass the proffered Julius Rosenwald scholarship in anthropology at Columbia and start in writing a book that would give her own people "an awful going over," particularly the ones who talk about the tragedy of being Negroes.' Later in 1935, after conducting fieldwork in the Bahamas with Barnicle and Alan Lomax, Hurston was able to offer a playful retort to Embree in a letter that emphasised her successes while evoking the false deference to the interlocutor in *Tell My Horse*: 'I want to express my appreciation for all that I was able to do under your grant. You would understand that I would not be able to do anything important towards a doctorate with a single semester of work. […] I wrote the first draft of my next novel which has already been accepted by my publishers.' See Boyd, pp. 270, 276.

[20] Sascha Morrell, '"There is No Female Word for Busha in These Parts": Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham and Women's Experience in 1930s Haiti and Jamaica', *Australian Humanities Review*, 64 (May 2019), 158–176 (p. 172).

[21] Katherine Dunham, *Island Possessed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 4.

[22] Hurston, *Letters*, p. 385.

> you see when Alan came along, she took him right over, she tossed me out of the business altogether.

While Barnicle was not alone in her sense of Hurston as 'difficult' to work with,[23] her position should be considered in the context of Barnicle's acknowledgment of Hurston as a more effective collector and the general bitterness of tone that seems directed more at Barnicle's sense of exclusion from Hurston and Lomax's flirtatious chemistry than at Hurston's character itself. As to Barnicle taking issue with Hurston constantly 'do[ing] anything to get ahead', this is better supported by evidence from Hurston's own correspondence, which included frequent (almost ironically exaggerated) deference to potential patrons and funding bodies. As Morrell has noted in terms of the Hurston-Dunham rivalry, this attitude was largely a construct of the fact that both women 'were vying for the attention of a small number of sympathetic mentors (largely white men) in competing for the same funding opportunities'.[24] Even in those moments at which economic pressures might have persuaded Hurston to act conservatively, she demonstrated grander ideological goals beyond her next paycheque, as in her 1934 application for a Guggenheim fellowship: 'I hope eventually to bring over a faculty from Africa and set up a school of Negro music in America […]. No Negro can remain a Negro composer long under white tutelage. The better he is taught, the less there is left of his nativity.'[25] By echoing Alain Locke's view in 'The New Negro' that 'tutelage, even of the most interested and well-intentioned sort, must give place to new relationships', Hurston articulates the imperative to escape white tutelage and patronage and the simultaneous difficulty of doing so.

---

[23] See for instance Fannie Hurst's bittersweet reminiscence of Hurston working as her secretary: 'But after more and more of the same her gay unpredictability got out of hand. "Zora," I exploded one morning after she yawningly announced she was not in the mood to take dictation but felt like driving into the countryside, "consider yourself fired. You are my idea of the world's worst secretary. As a matter of fact, I think I should be your secretary. But you are welcome to live on here until you are settled elsewhere."' 'Zora Hurston: A Personality Sketch', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 35 (July 1960), 17–22 (p. 18). However, for a criticism of this sketch, including the way in which 'the temporal framework is distorted', see Monique Rooney, 'My you: Fannie Hurst, Zora Neale Hurston and Literary Patronage', *Working Papers on the Web*, 5 (2003) <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/race/rooneym.htm#33> [Accessed 6 July 2023].

[24] Morrell, p. 170.

[25] Quoted in Boyd, p. 251.

In addition to negotiating the rivalries with Dunham and Barnicle that informed Hurston's engagement with the issue of ethnographic authenticity, she also had to find creative ways to attain her material. Not an easy task when considering that the obstacle of 'Race consciousness' that Hurston had mentioned to Benedict was entwined with what she would describe in the introduction to *Mules and Men* as a particular scepticism towards the outsider-ethnographer among African Americans in the South:

> And the Negro, in spite of his open-faced laughter, his seeming acquiescence, is particularly evasive. You see we are a polite people and we do not say to our questioner, 'Get out of here!' We smile and tell him or her something that satisfies the white person because, knowing so little about us, he doesn't know what he is missing. The Indian resists curiosity by a stony silence. The Negro offers a feather-bed resistance. That is, we let the probe enter, but it never comes out. It gets smothered under a lot of laughter and pleasantries.
>
> (p. 10)

Hurston's protean positioning of herself in this passage demonstrates both the difficulties and the ludic potentiality of autoethnography. The detached tone of the first sentence, facing the ethnographic subject, lulls the predominantly white, northern readership into a sense of community with the writer, before the introduction of 'you' and Hurston's transference of herself to the 'we' of this subject calls into question the credibility of the folktales that she is about to relay. As Barbara Johnson notes, '[f]rom that point on it is impossible to tell whether Hurston the narrator is *describing* a strategy or *employing* one.'[26] This interweaving of methodological description and cultural text would become integral to Hurston's collection techniques in her later fieldwork for the Federal Writers' Project. Embedding herself in 'the jook houses […] and in the lumber camps' of her native Florida in 1939, Hurston described to anthropologist Herbert Halpert a methodology for song and lyric collection in which 'observation' mingles with and is subsumed by 'participation':

> Halpert: You said you learned it in a crowd. How do you learn most of your songs?

[26] Barbara Johnson, 'Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (Autumn 1985), 278–289 (p. 286).

> Hurston: I learn them. I just get in the crowd with the people if they singing and I listen as best I can and I start to joining in with a phrase or two and then finally I get so I can sing a verse and then I keep on until I learn all the songs, all the verses, and then I sing them back to the people until they tell me that I can sing them just like them and then I take part and I try it out on different people who already know the song until they are quite satisfied that I know it and then I carry it in my memory.[27]

By memorising lyrics and later committing them to paper or sound recordings, Hurston is brilliantly able to work towards the goal of cultural salvage through a methodology which begins in the oral domain before being committed to paper, employing 'the coupling of the graphematic *and* the phonic' which Alexander Weheliye regards as 'the prime achievement of black cultural production in the New World'.[28] Daphne A. Brooks takes Weheliye's notion further, arguing that 'Zora's angular voice interrupts the phonographic projects of the literary "race men" (Du Bois and Ellison) who sit at the forefront of Weheliye's cogent study' and that '[t]he "phono" in her project does more than "intermingle" with the graph. Rather it amplifies, worries, and speaks back to discursive ethnographic endeavors that elide the audibility, visibility, and eccentricities of black female cultural agents.'[29] These fieldwork recordings are therefore a synthesis of the resistance to elision that Brooks identifies and a recognition of the importance of legitimation by local authorities in which Hurston's unique recording method, which she repeats until her ethnographic subjects 'are quite satisfied', demonstrates a commitment to authenticity and accuracy.

Another creative formulation employed by Hurston, which she describes favourably in a letter to Langston Hughes, involves a dismantling of the sense of ethnographic hierarchy by embedding ethnography in cultural exchange:

---

[27] Stetson Kennedy, Herbert Halpert, Zora Neale Hurston, 'Halimuhfack', *Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections, 1937–1942*, Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/flwpa000014> [Accessed 9 November 2022].

[28] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 38.

[29] Daphne A. Brooks, '"Sister, Can You Line It Out?": Zora Neale Hurston and the Sound of Angular Black Womanhood', *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, 55 (2010), 617–27 (p. 623).

> In every town I hold 1 or 2 story-telling contests, and at each I begin by telling them who you are and all, then I read poems from 'Fine Clothes [to the Jew]'. Boy! they eat it up. Two or three of them are too subtle and they dont get it. […] You are being quoted in R.R. camps, phosphate mines, Turpentine stills etc. […] they are making it so much a part of themselves they go to improvising on it. […] They sing the poems right off, and July 1, two men came over with guitars and sang the whole book. […] One man was giving the words out-lining them out as the preacher does a hymn and the others would take it up and sing. It was glorious![30]

Turning storytelling into a form of play allows Hurston to make the exchange of cultural material a reciprocal affair and the enthusiastic reception to, and adaptation of, Hughes's verse suggests that this methodology is more than just a form of fieldwork trickery. While such a technique may not completely undermine the African American's 'feather-bed resistance' to ethnographic scrutiny, it is successful enough for Hurston to be able to engage in a fruitful exchange of cultural texts while maintaining the form of trickster power achieved through the playful methodology described in the introduction to *Mules and Men*. As with the fieldwork technique described to Halpert, Hurston positions herself 'as a mediator between oral and textual cultural production', but while she would normally do this, Jason Frydman writes, for the white 'literari in New York' in order to 'reproduce[] the oral traditions of Eatonville and the African diaspora for literate audiences', here Hurston transcends the limitations of this mediator role by fostering an oral/written synthesis that draws on the tradition of preaching to catalyse innovative reworkings of Hughes's poetry.[31]

Hurston's creative approaches to ethnography therefore serve a double function: in assisting with the collection of material itself, and in re-shaping that material into hybrid texts that consciously deviate from the expected form and norms of the ethnographic monograph. During the collection of material that would inform *Tell My Horse*, she wrote from Haiti to her patron Henry Allen Moe in 1937: 'I cant do so well here because now the material is engulfing me. I am

[30] Hurston, *Letters*, pp. 122–3.
[31] Jason Frydman, 'Zora Neale Hurston, Biographical Criticism, and African Diasporic Vernacular Culture', *Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 24 (Winter 2009), 99–118 (pp. 114–15). See also Frydman, *Sounding the Break: African American and Caribbean Routes of World Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), pp. 41–60.

embarrassed with too much. It confuses plans. And since if I spent 20 years I'd never get it all, I might as well stop with two books—one for anthro. and one for the way I want to write it.'[32] In addition to the surface meaning here in which these 'two books' are envisaged as providing structure and control for her work, this doubling also speaks to the ethnographic/fictive hybridity that she wanted her studies of the Caribbean and the American South to embody.

Contextualising Hurston's *Their Eyes* in *The Signifying Monkey* (1988), Henry Louis Gates, Jr. offers the example of abolitionist Thomas Hamilton in drawing attention to the long history of African American writers insisting on the importance of centring their own voices in the production of anti-slavery literature: 'these millions, in order to assert and maintain their rank as men among men, must speak for themselves; no outside tongue, however gifted with eloquence, can tell their story.'[33] Gates argues that this attitude of Hamilton, one shared by Frances E. W. Harper, 'expressed concern for a new content or "signifier," a content that was at once black, self-contained, and humanly general', and that it was the attempt at constructing a literature that fulfilled these criteria that occupied 'the center of black aesthetic theory roughly between the publication of Paul Laurence Dunbar's *Lyrics of Lowly Life* in 1895' and Hurston's *Their Eyes*.[34] While Hurston's fiction includes some of the most impressive manifestations of this elusive signifier, her ethnographic work offers a more complex problematic: remaining distrustful of the 'outside tongue' of white ethnographers such as Margaret Mead and Barnicle, the practical difficulties of her collection and the creative lengths she had to go to overcome these demonstrate that this 'outsideness' did not only exist in relation to a black/white axis, but also within and between black communities, where Hurston had to make efforts to conceal the traces of her life in the North and her background in academic anthropology. As the example of Hurston's use of Hughes's poetry demonstrates, Gates's identification of *Their Eyes* as the prime fictional equivalent of 'what Sterling A. Brown's representation of the black voice mediated between for black poetic diction' is also applicable to the investment in hybrid forms and methodologies of ethnography.

---

[32] Hurston, *Letters*, p. 404.
[33] Thomas Hamilton, 'Apology', *The Anglo-African Magazine*, January 1859, p. 1.
[34] Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 173.

In his discussion of the ways in which Hurston was able to reimagine this position as oral/textual 'mediator', Frydman concludes by briefly alluding to the fact that the traditional inhabitant of this position, the preacher, has since Du Bois 'been associated with practices emanating out of West Africa' but also

> derive[s] from the 'out-lining' techniques of Puritan clerics. Not one to shy away from overdetermined transculturations, Hurston revisits these rhetorical practices in her historical novel *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939), in which the Afro-Semitic Moses must parlay his mastery of the Midianite book of magic into the courtly language of the Pharaonic court and the vernacular language of the Israelite folk.

The following chapter will turn to this novel to investigate how Hurston fictionalises aspects of her sense of occupying the role of mediator through her protagonist, and how the doubling of registers, pharaonic and vernacular, that Frydman identifies form part of a complex heteroglot story which allows Hurston to interrogate the power dynamics of 'the voice'.

Chapter 7

Hurston II: Gender, Heteroglossia, and the Nation in *Moses, Man of the Mountain*

African American adaptations of Exodus have frequently involved attempts to evoke the possibility of Moses as a figure relevant to contemporary discussions of emancipation. These fictionalised Mosaic iterations can be read as responses to the failure of such a figure to emerge in a historical context. Francis Harper expressed this futility in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, asking whether it was 'a little strange Andrew Johnson, after having promised the colored people that he would be their Moses, should turn around, and instead of helping them to freedom, should clasp hands with the Rebels and traitors of the country.'[35] While Harper's own fictional rendering, *Moses: A Story of the Nile* (1869), does not involve a radical rewriting which decentres Hebrew men from positions of power, she does however seek to redress the reduction of the status of women within the Exodus narrative. It is fitting that in this process Jochebed's significance emerges through her connection to nation-building and cultural preservation:

Moses.

> Gracious lady, thou remembrest well
> The Hebrew nurse to whom thou gavest thy foundling.
> That woman was my mother; from her lips I
> Learned the grand traditions of our race that float,
> With all their weird and solemn beauty, around
> Our wrecked and blighted fortunes. How oft!

[35] Frances Harper, 'National Salvation: A Lecture Delivered Last Evening at National Hall, by Mrs. F. E. W. Harper, with Some Account of the Lecturer', *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph*, 1 February 1867.

> With kindling eye and glowing cheek, forgetful
> Of the present pain, she would lead us through
> The distant past: the past, hallowed by deeds
> Of holy faith and lofty sacrifice.[36]

Harper's spatial metaphor positions Jochebed as a precursor to her son's leadership, guiding her fellow Hebrews not across the Sinai but 'through | The distant past'. As Robert J. Patterson notes, Harper 'inaugurates the discussion upon which Hurston and subsequent feminist revisions of the narrative build', as both writers are engaged in constructing dialogues between the liberatory nature of the Exodus narrative and its patriarchal assumptions, and in the process, establishing a critique of black male leadership.[37]

It is through these dialogues that the relationship between gender, liberation, and the idea of the nation takes centre stage in Hurston's 1939 novel *Moses, Man of the Mountain*. While Hurston, like Harper before her, offers a creative expansion of Exodus rather than a complete rewriting, the novel shares with the earlier text a feminist engagement with the patriarchal and authoritarian politics of 'the voice'. Moses, in vehemently rejecting the authority of Pharaoh's voice, does not substitute in its place the vibrant heteroglossia of Hurston's Afro-Hebrew community, but instead reterritorialises its power for his own leadership practices. Before turning to this later novel it is worth briefly examining how Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* reveals a similarly sceptical attitude to 'the voice' as something isolated from deeds and a genuine representation of the community. In Chapter 4 of the novel, Jody 'Joe' Starks, second husband of the protagonist Janie,

> heard all about 'em makin' a town all outa colored folks, he knowed dat was de place he wanted to be. He had always wanted to be a big voice, but de white folks had all de sayso

[36] Harper, *Moses: A Story of the Nile*, in *Women's Work: An Anthology of African-American Women's Historical Writings from Antebellum America to the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp and Kathryn Lofton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 33–49 (p. 38).
[37] Robert J. Patterson, 'A Triple-Twined Re-appropriation: Womanist Theology and Gendered-Racial Protest in the Writings of Jarena Lee, Frances E. W. Harper, And Harriet Jacobs', *Religion & Literature,* 45 (2013), 55–82 (p. 68).

> where he come from and everywhere else, exceptin' dis place dat colored folks was buildin' theirselves. Dat was right too. De man dat built things oughta boss it.
>
> (p. 316)

While this desire to wrest control of the 'big voice' from the 'white folks' communicates a subversive attitude to the existing racial hierarchy, Joe's interest in this town built 'all outa colored folks' is spurred on by his assumptions about assuming a position of preacherly authority within it. To escape the white folks' 'sayso' is motivated by a need to assert his big voice within a new black patriarchal community: 'De *man* dat built things oughta boss it.' In Chapter 7 Janie, after enduring constant disparagement from Joe, famously snaps, and in doing so interrogates the hollowness of Joe's appropriation of the voice and its chauvinist implications:

> Then too, Janie took the middle of the floor to talk right into Jody's face, and that was something that hadn't been done before.
>
> 'Stop mixin' up mah doings wid mah looks, Jody. When you git through tellin' me how tuh cut uh plug uh tobacco, then you kin tell me whether mah behind is on straight or not.'
>
> 'Wha—whut's dat you say, Janie? You must be out yo' head.'
>
> 'Naw, Ah ain't outa mah head neither.'
>
> 'You must be. Talkin' any such language as dat.'
>
> […]
>
> 'Naw, Ah ain't no young gal no mo' but den Ah ain't no old woman neither. Ah reckon Ah looks mah age too. But Ah'm uh woman every inch of me, and Ah know it. Dat's uh whole lot more'n you kin say. You big-bellies round here and put out a lot of brag, but 'tain't nothin' to it but yo' big voice. Humph! Talkin' 'bout me lookin' old! When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life.'
>
> (pp. 343–4)

This exchange involves a surfacing of a recurring anxiety of the autobiographical Hurston who consistently lied about her age, but Janie is determined to look beyond this and assert her womanhood in contrast to the hollow 'brag' of the men which has 'nothin' to it but yo' big voice'. A focus on external appearances, then, is as shallow as the intentions behind these brags, against which Janie wants to emphasise more material contributions to the community: 'Stop mixin' up

mah doings wid mah looks, Jody.' Stunned by what he regards as the emasculating force of his wife's speech,

> Joe Starks realized all the meanings and his vanity bled like a flood. Janie had robbed him of his illusion of irresistible maleness that all men cherish, which was terrible. The thing that Saul's daughter had done to David. But Janie had done worse, she had cast down his empty armor before men and they had laughed, would keep on laughing.

The Old Testament reference is particularly fitting as it forms part of a continuity with *Moses* in that Hurston is able to take that most foundational of texts and demonstrate how its patriarchal dynamics are equal parts problematic and comically ironic both in the original Biblical context and in that in which Hurston's novels are situated. In the reference, from II Samuel 6, women 'talking back' to male authority in the sense popularised by bell hooks is already wonderfully present, and in a surprisingly sarcastic tone:

> 20 […] And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself! 21 And David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord. 22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maidservants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour. 23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

Like Joe, David is incensed but not silenced by the verbal play of his wife Michal, instead justifying his behaviour through the evocation of a higher patriarchal authority. As Catherine Gunther Kodat has observed,

> The author of 2 Samuel clearly indicates who is in the right with a one-sentence pronouncement on the fate of Michal that takes the issue of power out of the realm of the verbal and into the world of the flesh. And though the now-feminized Jody is the one who

> suffers in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston's use of the Old Testament reference hints that women choose to exercise their verbal power at considerable physical cost.[38]

By concluding the chapter with this suggestion of barrenness, an anxiety crucial to the Old Testament, the writer of II Samuel articulates a strategy of male resistance to women's attempts to exert power through verbal expressions that are regarded as subversive. It is in this gendered contestation of the voice that Hurston finds herself engaged in both *Their Eyes* and *Moses*, and a critique of these novels which emphasises Hurston's hesitancy to commit to a triumphant narration of female empowerment through 'talking back' runs the risk of not being sufficiently sensitive to the precarious context in which this defiance exists, namely the community in which Janie in *Their Eyes* finds herself.

It is not surprising therefore that both before and after her confrontation with Joe in Chapter 7 she has to balance the desire to speak her mind against the felt obligation to exist in harmony with this community. Following her outburst, a superficial air of calm descends over the couple, but as with the bitter conclusion of II Samuel 6, 'the stillness was the sleep of swords. So new thoughts had to be thought and new words said. She didn't want to live like that' (p. 344). Before Chapter 7, her strategy is to try to encourage in Joe proper *communal* engagement in opposition to his fantasy of exerting authority through the 'big voice'. As Ryan Simmons notes, echoing the attention Kodat plays to the potential cost of female expression, '[Janie] recognizes that both she and Joe are harmed by the distance Joe keeps between himself and the community, and by the distance he keeps between himself and her, making it impossible for them to be " 'natural wid one 'nother' " [p. 326]. She also seems to recognize that, without Joe, she is vulnerable to the whims of an uncaring and often dangerous world.'[39] Hurston's suspicion of the relationship between patriarchy and narrative (both in the oral context of 'the voice' and the written context of Biblical tradition) therefore produces a complex and often dangerous position from which women are able

[38] Catherine Gunther Kodat, 'Biting the Hand That Writes You: Southern African-American Folk Narrative and the Place of Women in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*', in *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Texts*, ed. by Anne Goodwyn Jones and Susan V. Donaldson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), pp. 319–343 (p. 331).

[39] Ryan Simmons, '"The Hierarchy Itself": Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and the Sacrifice of Narrative Authority', *African American Review*, 36 (Summer 2002), 181–93 (p. 186).

to assert themselves. As with Frances Harper, the attempt to produce an adaptation of Exodus that affirms the relevance of its message of liberation for African American readers while recognising the marginalisation of women within contemporary liberation movements proves exceptionally difficult, but it is to this task that Hurston turns in *Moses*, a novel whose ambiguous gender politics should be read in the context of the practical difficulties of verbal resistance experienced by Janie in *Their Eyes*.

As Mark Christian Thompson, Deborah E. McDowell and others have observed,[40] the date of *Moses*'s publication is fitting given its examination of and critique of the assumptions of authoritarianism and the limits of 'nation'. The novel's poignancy derives in part from the contemporary awareness of Nazi eugenicist discourse which had been directly influenced by earlier American texts on the subject.[41] McDowell cites Alfred Wiggam's 1924 work *The Fruit of the Family Tree* which contains the sort of proposition that structures the internal dynamics of Hurston's hybrid Hebraic culture: 'a mixed population with differing racial inheritances, different minds and blood make for the stability or instability of a nation.' While Wiggam asks rhetorically, 'Have not all past civilizations gone to pieces when they mixed their breeds?', Hurston instead explores the possibility that the contradictions and instabilities of nations derive not from ethnic heterogeneity but from the difficulty of recognising the validity of difference itself in a group marked by its heteroglossia.[42]

While Hurston's Hebrews are doubly heteroglot owing to her creation of an Afro-Hebrew hybridity and the sheer polyphony of voices, tones, and speech styles within the novel, the figures within the Exodus movement who assume leadership positions do not champion the sort of horizontal communalism that this might suggest. This is most evident in Moses's shifting attitudes toward the relationship between voice and authority as the novel progresses. It is useful to compare a crucial conversation between Moses and Joshua in Chapter 40 that details this shift in terms of the movement from liberation to nation-building with earlier episodes in which the Hebrew voice

[40] Mark Christian Thompson, 'National Socialism and Blood-Sacrifice in Zora Neale Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain'*, *African American Review*, 38 (2004), 395–415; Deborah E. McDowell, 'Foreword: Lines of Descent/Dissenting Lines', in Hurston, *Moses*, pp. vii–xxii.
[41] See Edwin Black, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race*
[42] Albert Wiggam, *The Fruit of the Family Tree* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1924), p. 285.

has not yet been centralised, but is instead characterised by a woman-centric heteroglossia. Chapter 40 begins in a conspicuously flat style, with a reterritorialisation of empire in the hands of the Hebrews: 'Israel met nations and fought and conquered and moved on towards Canaan. Moses lifted his rod and made a way out of no way when it was needed and they moved on'.[43] The wielding of the rod forms part of a continuous paralleling in the novel between a masculinist style of leadership and phallic signifiers, a pattern which ironically emerges early on as something typically Egyptian against which the Hebrews define themselves.

The military and expansionist endeavours of Israel are crucially recorded immediately by Moses in his journal: 'The wanderings of Israel were there set down by his hand.' It seems to be no coincidence that Hurston pairs this 'setting in stone' of the historical narrative with the act of imperialism itself. This pairing inverts the earlier association of the rumour of Moses as 'the Hebrew in the palace' in which women both participate in and take authorial control of the narrative: Moses's mother 'Jochebed became a figure of importance—the mother of our Prince in the palace', and his sister Miriam steers the development of the oral literature of Moses from its inception as myth to its legitimation as cultural history: 'Miriam told her story again and again to more believing ears. It grew with being handled until it was a history of the Hebrew in the palace, no less.' With Miriam in this position of textual control, even as the myth is concretised in terms of cultural memory it is also allowed to retain the possibility of adaptation and as such 'the legends grew like grass' (p. 35). By placing women at the heart of this oral tradition Hurston establishes a tension (and an uneasy alliance) between femininity, orality, and polyphony on the one hand, and masculinity, writing, and the subjugation of disparate communities to 'one voice', on the other.

The emergence of these rumours points in Malinowskian fashion to the centrality of myth, and the willingness of a community to believe in that myth, in the construction of group or national consciousness. Pharaoh's palace is no longer solely the domain of Pharaoh himself: the authority that his vision of a unified, authorial voice offered is undermined both through the subversion of ethnic homogeneity in the figure of the Jewish Moses, and through the displacement of a hierarchical national literature (one dictated from above and set in stone) by a heteroglot oral

[43] Hurston, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1939; repr. New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 277. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.

history that 'grew with being handled'. While at the beginning of the novel Hurston demonstrates the invasion of the Hebrew home in terms of both sexual politics and cultural hegemony ('Pharaoh had entered the bedrooms of Egypt' [p. 1]), it is the oral history of Moses that makes possible an inversion of the dominant influence of Egyptian culture on the Hebrews.

By Chapter 40 however, Moses has begun to appropriate aspects of written and 'monumental' history that had earlier characterised the Egyptian and pharaonic association between 'monuments and memories' (p. 22) in which the Hebrews' lack of a physically encoded culture was justification for its dismissal within the context of competing archival politics. Despite the shift from the oral to the written in this emergent national consciousness, Moses's discussion with Joshua reveals a more complex engagement with the politics of the voice and its relationship to the nation:

> You can't have a state of individuals. Everybody just can't be allowed to do as they please. I love liberty and I love freedom so I started off giving everybody a loose rein. But I soon found out that it wouldn't do. A great state is a well-blended mash of something of all of the people and all of none of the people. […] How can a nation speak with one voice if they are not one?
>
> (pp. 278–9)

This crucial passage can be interpreted as a lament for the inevitable homogeneity that begins to emerge in the post-revolutionary moment, with the sacrifice of heteroglossia to the 'one voice' justified by Moses as a prerequisite for nationhood. While this approach seems to cohere with the earlier treatment of the voice in *Their Eyes*, it might also function as Hurston's recognition of the necessity of *realpolitik* and centralised authority in the transition from liberation to nationhood. Delia Konzett seems to affirm this latter view, arguing that '[w]hile Hurston is far from harmonizing social contradictions in Moses, she creates a space of communal renewal, a vision of a nation united that paradoxically arises from unforeseen continuities amidst discontinuity.'[44] Konzett suggests that in this passage Moses is not simply abandoning the heteroglot reality of his people, but is instead seeking to unite them into a nation that speaks with one voice. Similarly,

[44] Delia Konzett, *Ethnic Modernisms: Anzia Yezierska, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Rhys, and the Aesthetics of Dislocation* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 111.

Rinaldo Walcott views this passage as an indication of Moses's 'desire to create a community that exceeds an epidermal schema' and Hurston's recognition that, despite the marginalisation of certain voices (particularly those of women) in Moses's discussion with Joshua, he is nevertheless attentive to the reality of 'the ambivalence of nationhood in a manner that suggests both a oneness and a desire for multiplicity that remains part of the question of how to understand the ethical relations of community.'[45]

It is as if Hurston's novel is evaluating the validity of Mikhail Bakhtin's praise of heteroglossia and suggestion that the novel (and the historical novel more specifically) is its most suitable medium:

> There takes place within the novel an ideological translation of another's language, and an overcoming of its otherness – an otherness that is only contingent, external, illusory. Characteristic for the historical novel is a positively weighted modernizing, an erasing of temporal boundaries, the recognition of an eternal present in the past.[46]

Moses seems then to offer an affirmation of this Bakhtinian principle on the most general level of the relationship between the novel (including its author and readership) and its historical context, but simultaneously a failure of 'overcoming […] otherness' on the intratextual level in the figure of Moses himself. In the first instance, the project of a 'positively weighted modernising' seems to be exactly Hurston's intention, a demonstration that despite the temporal gap between the Hebrew and African American slave narratives, their differences are essentially contingent. The modernising process is also one which likely emerges out of what James Weldon Johnson sees as the constant awareness of a 'double audience' for the African American writer. Hurston's hybrid culture not only illuminates the poignancy of this ancient slave narrative through comparison with a more recent group consciousness, but inversely it serves to reinforce for the white reader the changing face of slavery and its aftermath in the American context through a comparison with the familiar Exodus story. The favouring of stylistic and cultural hybridity in both *Moses* and

[45] Rinaldo Walcott, 'Queer Texts and Performativity: Zora, Rap, and Community', in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. by William F. Pinar (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998), p. 139.
[46] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 259–422 (pp. 365–6).

Hurston's ethnographic work is what gives them the vital quality that Bakhtin affectionately evokes, and which Franz Boas argues in his preface to *Mules and Men* allows her to 'penetrate' black culture for 'the White observer' who normally finds the 'true inner life' of the black subject inaccessible.[47]

Conversely, the politics of the intratextual heteroglossia, the way in which Hurston's characters situate themselves in relation to 'the voice', captures the sense of a striving towards 'ideological transition' that is ultimately never fully achieved. The sincerity of Moses's suggestion that 'a well-blended mash' must come together to 'speak with one voice' is called into question during an encounter with Hebrew slaves in Chapter 9. Moses is disappointed that after he has killed an Egyptian overseer, 'a Hebrew foreman had been appointed to take the dead man's place. But things were going little better than before' (p. 68). Approximating the discourse of strike politics, this new foreman explains to Moses his own frustration that the rebellious spirit of the slaves has not abated: 'Some of them want to knock off work early to hold a protest meeting, and the others agree with me that it just wouldn't do. It would look very bad to my over-boss that just as soon as a Hebrew got to be foreman, the men left work whenever they got ready to hold meetings'. Moses's response posits a gradualist framework wherein there will be 'Hebrew foremen first and keeping on up the line until you have Hebrew state officials' (p. 69). Although this incident takes place before Moses's affiliation with the larger liberation movement, his commitment to the overall system of pharaonic hegemony serves as a harbinger of his later appeal to centralised authority. Moses then tells the slaves, 'You must be united among yourselves and you must obey your foreman. […] Now you get back to work, all of you, and do what your foreman tells you.' The slaves' response — 'I don't intend to let no Hebrew boss me around' — is subversive not only because of its defiant tone, but also because it emphasises the naivety and hypocrisy of Moses's position: the ironic suggestion that the Hebrews be united without properly unionising, that they develop a consciousness of the oppressed nature of their class and yet remain subservient. Through this early incident, Hurston establishes the impossibility of Moses's desire to help the Hebrews while refusing to acknowledge the possibility of more meaningful structural change, but this contradiction is situated within the context of the politics of the voice, with Moses's pretensions

[47] Franz Boas, 'Foreword', in *Folklore*, p. ix.

to authority comically undermined by the juxtaposition between his self-confident tone and the contradictory nature of his commands. Employing free indirect speech, Hurston breaks off from this conversation to convey Moses's frustration that it is *he* who is misunderstood: 'Moses shrunk up inside like darkness at dawn. Such misunderstanding of motives! Such a will to see evil where only good was meant' (p. 70). With this self-pitying tone it is clear that Hurston desires to position Moses's later reinscription of hierarchical phallogocentrism as emerging from his consistent failure to recognise both the validity of the Hebrews' 'polyphony of fully valid voices' and the internal contradictions of his own speech.[48]

Moses, Man of the Mountain therefore celebrates the democratic potential of heteroglossia while demonstrating its vulnerability to hierarchisation under both Pharaoh and Moses himself. Through doubling and echoing between the two halves of the novel, Hurston is able to demonstrate that despite Moses's personal journey and his genuine conversion to the cause of liberation, his philosophy of authority does not remain immune from the autocratic conceptions of the voice that he had identified in Pharaoh. A common criticism of the novel is that Hurston does not fully embrace this critical position towards either the mosaic narrative or the role of women within it, such that, in Hemenway's words, she is 'unable to find a consistent tone'.[49] Commenting on 'the dismay of feminist critics' at the ambivalent gender politics of the novel, and the fact that misogynistic elements do not only appear in the speech of male characters, but are also 'borne out in the selfish actions and petty social concerns of Miriam and Zipporah', Konzett maintains that

> this inconsistency should not come as a surprise. From its very inception, Hurston's work is marked by insurmountable tensions between conservative and progressive versions of communal life, with each work balancing the claims of these respective ideologies in different, new, and unexpected forms.[50]

[48] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 6. For an interpretation of the distinction between heteroglossia and polyphony, see Anna Kathryn Grau, 'Hearing Voices: Heteroglossia, Homoglossia, and the Old French Motet', *Musica Disciplina*, 58 (2013), 73–100 (pp. 76–8).
[49] Hemenway, p. 260.
[50] Konzett, p. 112.

Like Frances Harper before her, there is a sense that in choosing to adapt the Exodus story, Hurston must deal with what Patterson has called 'the crippling power of the exodus *event* in African American cultural-political thought'.[51] While neither Harper nor Hurston have produced texts that mark a consistent ideological departure from the inherent importance of male leadership and group hierarchy in the source text, *Moses* does not simply disengage from the issue of the marginalisation of women's voices, but rather articulates Moses's erroneous belief that the sacrifice of these voices is regrettable but necessary in the formation of a new Hebrew nation.

The previous chapter detailed Hurston's subversive interventions into the gendered politics of the vernacular tradition, and specifically the intrusion of what Daphne Brooks terms her 'angular womanhood' into not only the male-dominant world of ethnographic fieldwork but also subsequent critical evaluations of ethnographers that have focussed on African American men such as Du Bois and Ralph Ellison. While this image of Hurston as a disruptive figure in terms of both the gendered and racialised norms of ethnography as a discipline is significant, it is complicated, as feminist evaluations of Hurston often are, by the specificities of both her ethnographies and novels. As I have suggested, what emerges in *Tell My Horse*, for instance, is the creation of a space of resistance to both male authority and overconfidence in the importance of male speech, but while Hurston inserts herself into that space and utilises the kinds of linguistic playfulness that she will also assign to Janie in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, ultimately the potential of these acts is diminished by Hurston's adoption of an eroticised and exoticised ethnographic gaze as she witnesses the marital 'preparation' scene. A similar paradox is at work in *Moses*, where the novel simultaneously disparages the pretensions of male authority within a radical movement but counterbalances this with a focus on petty squabbles between female characters, evoking the gendered articulation of her rivalry with Katherine Dunham. Among Hurston's works then, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, while participating in the relationship between gender and verbalisation in a similar way to *Moses*, offers perhaps the most effective rebuttal to this critique, one which contextualises the hesitancy of women's outspokenness through the contingencies of its

[51] Patterson, *Exodus Politics: Civil Rights and Leadership in African American Literature and Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), p. 21.

consequences. Behind Hurston's 'feather-bed resistance' to her male interlocutor in *Tell My Horse* — 'he talked and I listened most respectfully' — we might therefore hear her protagonist's strange unity of defiance and compliance: 'Janie took the easy way away from a fuss. She didn't change her mind but she agreed with her mouth' (p. 335).

Chapter 8

McKay I: Class, Race, and Autoethnography in *Constab Ballads*

In his introduction to the *Complete Poems* of Claude McKay, William J. Maxwell, citing Arthur Schopenhauer's insistence on the liberatory potential of art, argues that the Jamaican's 'early achievement as a poet allowed him to break free from an ethically wrenching, badly chosen first career as a constable outside Kingston.'[1] Although it was this career, situating McKay as it did at the boundary between his fellow colonial subjects and the British Empire he served, that provided the direct experiential material for his 1912 poetry collection *Constab Ballads*, it is the 'ethically wrenching' nature of the constable profession that informs many of the dilemmas at the heart of McKay's early verse. It is perhaps fitting that in his attempt to give voice to the specific bind in which the constable found himself McKay chose for his collection a radical stylistic hybridity, a 'synthetic vernacular' to borrow Matthew Hart's term, through his blending of traditional English verse forms and Jamaican patois.[2] The collection involves a constantly shifting gaze which transfers the observing perspective from an unnamed frame narrator to the working-class black Jamaicans that serve as the primary subject of his narration. The absence of an omniscient, external ethnographic observer allows for a partial democratisation of narrative control even as this is mediated through the semi-colonial figure of the 'constab'.

Speaking through this figure, McKay offers a survey of contemporary Kingston that makes use of what Paul Peppis calls 'antiethnographic autoethnography', a style which illuminates the constab's sense of alienation in his role as participant-observer while situating the text alongside the emergence of modernist anthropology and against the primitivism typical of Victorian

[1] William J. Maxwell, 'Introduction', in McKay, *Poems*, p. xiv.
[2] Matthew Hart, *Nations of Nothing But Poetry: Modernism, Transnationalism, and Synthetic Vernacular Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 7.

'armchair' anthropology. While Peppis rightly argues that the constab belongs to 'a community of vital subaltern subjects inhabiting not the temporal preserve of primitivism that modern ethnographers like [A. C.] Haddon pursue but the dynamic and disorienting, polyglot and synthetic conditions of colonial modernity', the ethnographic nature of the text situates it more closely to, and in many ways anticipates, the participant-observer methodology of Malinowski's anthropology.[3]

Through one such subaltern subject, the speaker of 'The Apple-Woman's Complaint', McKay demonstrates the ability of dialect to encapsulate this disorienting imbrication of folk voices and colonial politics. While walking along the street she observes,

> Policeman's yawnin' on his beat;
> An' is de wud him chiefta'n say—
> Me mus'n' car' me apple-tray.
>
> (p. 114, ll. 2–4)

The 'wud', with its connotations of (narrative) authority, is that of the 'chiefta'n' to whom the constab must acquiesce, and yet to a reader unfamiliar with patois the preceding 'him' may be taken literally, as opposed to 'his', casting the constab himself in this advanced administrative position and dismantling the notion of a rigid hierarchy through displacing control of the 'wud'. McKay's combination of traditional verse structures with this shifting heteroglot patois therefore situates the constab away from the 'preserve of primitivism' that the evolutionist mode of ethnography had employed as a lens through which to interpret the racial and cultural Other as, to borrow Robert Knox's phrase, 'unaltered and unalterable'.

The publication of McKay's poetry was framed from the outset as if it were itself an anthropological specimen. Walter Jekyll, an English curator of Jamaican folklore and friend of McKay's, edited *Constab Ballads* and the collection *Songs of Jamaica*, published earlier in 1912. Jekyll's preface to *Songs* launches immediately into a discourse on the qualities of the 'negro variant' of English, in the 'soft tones' of which 'we have an expression of the languorous sweetness

[3] Paul Peppis, *Sciences of Modernism: Ethnography, Sexology, and Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 71.

of the South'. The remainder of the preface serves as an introduction to patois pronunciation with McKay himself only mentioned in a final short paragraph in which Jekyll asserts the poet's authenticity through his standing as 'a Jamaican peasant of pure black blood.' Jekyll also insisted on 'seed[ing] the surface of McKay's poems with hundreds of footnotes translating Jamaican terms and turns for a non-Jamaican audience', a choice which frames the editor as one engaged in the processes of both cultural translation and ethnographic salvage (pp. 283–5).

Although remaining as editor for *Ballads*, Jekyll opted for a quieter and less extensive list of endnotes to accompany the latter collection and had McKay write the preface himself. Here, reflecting on his experience as a constable, McKay states that he was ill-suited to the role because he was 'so constituted that imagination outruns discretion'. As Keguro Macharia notes, '[t]his confession of waywardness speaks as much to McKay's formal strategies as it does to his actions.'[4] These formal strategies, in other words, enact the physical containment of imaginative energy within the rigid structures of verse form. The preface continues with a paragraph which at first seems to rehearse essentialist stereotypes of the unsuitability of the black worker to discipline, but which works to appropriate those stereotypes as a form of resistance against imperial power:

> Moreover, I am, by temperament, unadaptive; by which I mean that it is not in me to conform cheerfully to uncongenial usages. We blacks are all somewhat impatient of discipline, and to the natural impatience of my race there was added, in my particular case, a peculiar sensitiveness which made certain forms of discipline irksome, and a fierce hatred of injustice.
>
> (p. 296)

As with the destabilising combination of form and dialect in the poems, McKay's inversion of phrases that might be expected of Victorian ethnography such as 'natural impatience of my race' lend the preface an ironic tone and establish McKay's challenge to racial essentialism. This variation from the expected characteristics of the racial subject is motivated by a genuine 'sympathy with wrongdoers', which, combined with the mounting critique of colonial administration and law through 'discipline' and 'injustice', achieves a quietly subversive tone that

[4] Keguro Macharia, *Frottage: Frictions of Intimacy across the Black Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), p. 139.

can be overlooked on an initial reading. These very sympathies, however, and the constab's requirement to enforce an imperial code of law on his own people may also result, McKay suggests, in a neutralisation of political energies as the constab prioritises his attempt to 'make peace' (p. 295).

In 'The Heart of a Constab', McKay articulates most clearly the aporias latent in the constable's competing allegiances to colonial power and to the colonised folk. Through the confessional mode of the poem he is able to present the damaging social and economic consequences of these pressures, but in such a way as to suggest that the constab's position derives from his conscious decision to participate in the forms of colonial control that he also resents. The stanza which most explicitly states the speaker's desire to revoke this participation and return to 'me own kith an' kin' (l. 11) is ironically the moment at which his vacillating intentions and lingering attraction to power are playfully exposed:

> But I'll leave it, my people, an' come back to you,
> I'll flee from de grief an' turmoil;
> I'll leave it, though flow'rs here should line my path yet,
> An' come back to you an' de soil.
> (p. 165, ll. 25–9)

The promise of return, which encodes the stereotyped images of primitive belonging as rooted in both the 'de soil' and the folk, unravels when we consider the speaker's limp pastoral imagery — the 'flow'rs' of colonial convenience — that keep him rooted in his current occupation. This penultimate quatrain echoes the trite and self-pitying opening lines of the poem, ''Tis hatred without an' 'tis hatred within, | An' I am so weary an' sad', demonstrating the constab's reluctance to move beyond complaint to a form of definitive action. For the constab to underscore his intended flight from grief, turmoil, and terrible strife is to transfer responsibility to the larger colonial structures that he has nevertheless chosen to participate in. Although this poem marks any future return of the constab to his people as a return of convenience, the discourse of economic precarity that pervades the collection evokes sympathy for his reluctant choice of work. Through this dialectical relationship between accusatory and sympathetic treatments of the constab, McKay is

able to draw attention to his compromised position and how the resulting alienation and the sense of distance from his community facilitates his ethnographic perspective.

Reflecting on his work in 'A Negro Writer to His Critics' (1932), McKay characterises his early poetry in terms of this distanced, ethnographic perspective: 'I had recaptured the spirit of the Jamaican peasants in verse, rendering their primitive joys, their loves and hates, their work and play, their dialect.'[5] McKay's use of 'primitive' here (a word that is conspicuously frequent in his novels) does not convey the same uncritical employment typical of nineteenth-century fiction and anthropological writing alike, and yet this passage does evoke the later register of Malinowskian ethnography through both its functionalist separation of societal elements (crucially rendered in the third rather than the first person) and its elevation of writing as cultural salvage ('I had *recaptured* […]'). McKay as poet therefore shares with the constab persona both an anxiety about his go-between position and a sense of distance from the Jamaican peasantry, a demographic that Jekyll, in his earlier preface, ironically used to market the authenticity of McKay's verse.

McKay uses the essay to articulate a justification of the technique of ethnographic distance by pointing to its consistent usage throughout his oeuvre: 'what I did in prose for Harlem was very similar to what I had done for Jamaica in verse'. Although directed towards those African American critics who would later 'damn[] [him] as a hog rooting in Harlem, a buzzard hovering over the Black Belt scouting for carcasses and altogether a filthy beast', his identification of a continuity of ethnographic style in his writing also serves as a retrospective justification of his poetic treatment of Jamaica. His emigration to Europe and America did not equate to an abandonment of his native country or its people as merely a transient subject for his earliest published work. Instead, as John Lowney argues, he chose to 'assert[] his own literary cosmopolitanism' as a counter to 'the narrow provincialism of his African American critics'.[6]

That McKay's literary trajectory did not merely reflect a flight from the rigid colonial structures and limited opportunities of Jamaica to the metropolitan opportunities of Harlem is evident in the critique of black exceptionalism and Talented Tenth philosophy throughout his career. Indeed, as Wayne F. Cooper notes, accusations that the 'rebellious and vituperative'

[5] McKay, 'A Negro Writer to His Critics', in *Passion*, pp. 132-39 (p. 135).
[6] John Lowney, 'Haiti and Black Transnationalism: Remapping the Migrant Geography of *Home to Harlem*', *African American Review*, 34 (Autumn 2000), 413–429 (p. 415).

McKay had conjured in his writing an overly licentious and thuggish vision of black Harlemites from 'not a few middle-class Negroes' is demonstrative of both the consistency of his ethnographic perspective and his commitment to disconcerting the middle-class conservatism of many of his American readers.[7] The criminals that permeate the working-class worlds in McKay's renderings of Kingston and Harlem are not cast as villains, but rather as people engaged in forms of labour necessitated, respectively, by colonialism and the postcolonial colour-line. As a former member of the Jamaican constabulary and as a Harlem writer, McKay himself experienced the liminal subject positions, embodied by the constab and the Haitian intellectual Ray of *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo*, that move between systems of power and powerlessness.

This liminality is also reflected in McKay's chosen form for his Jamaican poetry. In his *History of the Voice* (1984), Kamau Brathwaite expresses a common observation about the 1912 dialect collections: choosing traditional (although highly varied) English verse forms meant that McKay, Brathwaite believes, 'allowed himself to be imprisoned in the pentameter; he didn't let his language find its own parameters'.[8] Although both Peppis and Michael North in *The Dialect of Modernism* (1994) take issue with this suggestion of the limiting effect of McKay's form and adherence to iambic metre, Brathwaite qualifies his opinion on McKay's 'parameters' by 'rais[ing] the question of *critical relativity*: could McKay, in the Jamaica of 1912, have done it any differently […]?' What Brathwaite is asking seems to be whether McKay, a black Jamaican poet seeking publication in London and producing poetry that foregrounds its innovative formal/patois hybridity, could have overcome the conservative critical responses that were directed towards dialect verse and later to the hedonic narratives of his Harlem fiction. However, the significance of *Constab Ballads* does not primarily spring from the *accommodationist* nature of this frequently cited juxtaposition between form and (dialect) content. Instead, the tensions inherent in this seemingly incongruous positioning allow McKay to dramatise the cultural conflicts of the constable figure whose allegiances gravitate in opposing directions to the folk and to the colonial service.

[7] Cooper, 'Claude McKay and The New Negro of the 1920's', *Phylon*, 25 (1964), 297–306 (p. 304).
[8] Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984), p. 20 n. 11.

Throughout *Ballads*, in a movement that begins in the opposition between imagination and discipline in the preface, McKay therefore pursues a structure wherein the constab strains against parallel restrictions of form and labour. In 'Pay-Day', one of the collection's longest poems, he employs a rhythmic, catalectic trochaic tetrameter (the collection's most popular verse form, despite Brathwaite's focus on pentameter and its misidentification by Peppis as iambic) that continues in a consistent manner as it narrates the neutralisation of any rebellious feelings among the working-class figures — 'de slimber ball-pan man,' 'de little ice-cream lad,' 'our washerwoman Sue' — through the promise of a marginal economic opportunity presented by the police themselves:

> All deh chat how pólice bad;
> Each one sayin' police vile,
> Yet deir faces all betray
> Dat for dem dere's no rag time
> Laka policeman pay-day.
>
> (p. 112, ll. 60–4)

The resigned tone is emphasised by the final line of the stanza where conformity to the trochaic beat remains possible, but where the suggestion of an opening anapest is introduced, dulling its force. The following stanza typifies McKay's reflection of regimented police work in the organisation of the meter:

> Inside in de ord'ly room
> Things are movin' very fine;
> Constab standin' in a row
> Hea' de jinglin' o' de coin;
> Constab wid a solemn face,
> Constab only full o' fun,
> Marchin' in de ord'ly room
> As dem name call one by one.
>
> (ll. 65–72)

Trite expressions such as 'movin' very fine' and 'one by one' comment on the function (and functionality) of the inherited verse form which succeeds in efficiency while muting creativity and also giving the impression of cramped conditions within both line and room through the contraction of 'ord'ly'. The 'jinglin' o' de coin', however, draws attention to the constables' economic precarity while also participating in the constantly shifting ethnographic perspective of the narrative voice as it moves from 'outside de barrack gate' (l. 2) to '[i]nside in de ord'ly room'. McKay's narrator therefore adopts simultaneously the position of the Malinowskian 'privileged informant' and an ethnographic guide who appeals to the direct sense perception of the reader, a methodology that James Clifford writes was typical of the 'preference for the (methodological) observations of the ethnographer over the (interested) interpretations of indigenous authorities' in the wake of Malinowski's work.[9] As the ethnographic gaze narrows in on the 'colourless white face' (l. 10) which is considered as if it were a specimen, a '[f]ine type of an alien race' (l. 12), McKay crucially unites, and sarcastically inverts, two elements of typical Victorian ethnography: a focus on the physical impressiveness of the body of the colonised subject and a tendency towards homogenising that which appears culturally 'alien'.

McKay's playful treatment of ethnographic conventions is complicated, however, by the revelation that this figure is '[o]ur good frien' de Syrian' (l. 15). The (re)introduced Syrian first emerged before his published collections in 'Peasants' Ways o' Thinkin' ' (January 1912). In this jovial monologue that poses 'pressin' queshtons o' de day' (l. 4), the speaker voices the kind of xenophobic rhetoric that right-wing populism has consistently attempted to stir up among the working class:

> We might no lub de Chinaman,
> An' also de East Indian;
> But of strangers de wus-wus one
> A dat who dem call Syrian,
>
> Wha sell him goods to Kingston poor,
> Tekin' it quite up to dem door,
> At double too de price or more

[9] Clifford, p. 41.

Dey'd get it in a city store

(p. 10, ll. 57–64)

As with the synecdochical treatment of the 'white face' to represent the 'type of an alien race' in 'Pay-Day', here the Syrian is again defined by assumptions concerning his economic activity, which in turn is a vague cultural signifier for the Middle Eastern (and predominantly Lebanese) Jamaican community.

The poem also serves as a painfully ironic reminder that the resentment directed towards Middle Eastern immigrants largely stemmed from a deteriorating economic position caused by the mass emigration of Jamaican labourers to the USA and Panama in search of work, an emigration that the speaker encourages:

'We hea' a callin' from Colon,
We hea' a callin' from Limon,
Let's quit de t'ankless toil an' fret
Fe where a better pay we'll get.'

(p. 11, ll. 81–4)

As Katheryne Lindberg observes, McKay therefore sets a 'rather surprisingly informed "Quashie/Cudjoe" voice' which 'discourses on economic imperialism in the shadow of the [Panama] Canal' (the locus of the Jamaican labour force's exodus) against a xenophobic diatribe which misdirects revolutionary energy away from strike action and British imperialism and towards the Syrian.[10] The British attempts to manage the labour shortage in Jamaica also fed directly into this distrust of immigrants. As Winston James notes, '[b]etween 1870 and 1910 custom and excise duties—regressive *per se* (they are exacted regardless of income) but made doubly so by the higher rate imposed on items consumed by the masses—accounted for between 70 and 80 percent of government revenue.' As government revenue was generated in this way as opposed to being proportional to income, poor Jamaicans were at a distinct disadvantage. Adding to this was the fact that much of this revenue was spent in the early 1900s 'to help defray the cost

[10] Katheryne V. Lindberg, 'Rebels to the Right/Revolution to the Left: Ezra Pound and Claude McKay in "The Syndicalist Year" of 1912', *Paideuma*, 29 (2000), 11-77 (p. 49).

of importing […] thousands of Indian and Chinese indentured laborers' (those demographics which amount to little more than an exotic milieu in Hurston's *Tell My Horse*), a process that exacerbated concurrently local impoverishment and the resentment of foreigners.[11]

A revolutionary interest in labour and its relationship to race and class therefore occupies McKay's writing from the outset. His early newspaper poems in the *Daily Gleaner*, for instance, frequently employed a voice whose criticism of labour conditions, while seemingly incompatible with the general conservatism of the paper, harmonised with the central position of stories covering the strike action and agitation of the early 1910s. The same edition of the paper in which 'Peasants' was published re-ran a report by the finance minister E. A. H. Haggart who expressed his concerns that the docks bordering the Panama Canal 'will cover an economic area, and I fear that any real hopes of coaling or provisioning in Jamaica will be very much nullified by the facilities […] with practically no loss of time, and without extra expense.'[12] McKay's poem therefore raises the threat of Syrian/middleman extortion as a spectre that has distracted poor Jamaicans from the larger colonial machinations that were relocating trade to Panama, and with it the Jamaican labour force. While conceding that 'ober deh de law is bad' (l. 85) and the 'freedom here we'll maybe miss' (l. 89), the speaker voices his support for this emigration because any radical reversal of the racial and class hierarchies at home is unimaginable, and he resorts to a reinscription of the local hegemony:

> We may n't be rich like buccra [white] folk;
> For us de white, for dem de yolk,
> Da's de way dat the egg divide,
> An we content wi' de outside.
>
> (p. 12, ll. 113–16)

In his *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (2005), economist Thomas Sowell discusses the significance of middleman professions among Middle Eastern immigrant populations in the Caribbean and the Americas, arguing that despite the latter perception of these groups as bourgeois

[11] Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 23.
[12] *Daily Gleaner*, 27 January 1912, p. 3.

and overly-influential in economic affairs, 'in different ages and in various countries, the middleman minority has arrived on the scene as destitute immigrants, owning virtually nothing and barely able to speak a few words of the language of the country.'[13] Although, as Clark S. Knowlton notes in relation to the situation in Brazil, 'Syrian and Lebanese pedlars accumulated capital, often by severely depressing their living standards,' the early sacrifices of many of these groups meant that they were moving towards a more comfortable middle-class existence by early- to mid-century.[14] As a result, these peoples were often the subject of suspicion by local populations across the Caribbean. In Derek Walcott's 1979 poem 'The Schooner *Flight*', for instance, the speaker Shabine expresses his resentment towards 'the big house, big car, big-time bohbohl' of 'that minister-monster who smuggled the booze, | that half-Syrian saurian,' playing into the antisemitic canard of the lizard-like agent who wields governmental power.[15] A *Gleaner* article from the same year of *Constab Ballads*'s publication which portrays the agricultural activity of a 'Syrian' as being at 'the detriment of native Jamaicans' is typical of contemporary responses to concerns about immigrant workers, and it is within this context that McKay's Syrian is constructed: an economic competitor who is seen as being complicit in the mass emigration of the labour force to Central America.[16]

The speaker's attitude in 'Peasants' touches upon this manifestation of xenophobia that was directed towards immigrant groups in Jamaica whose labour was characterised as that of the moneylender or the pedlar of wares under false pretences. Rather than interpret this stereotypical presentation of Middle Eastern people, with its accusations of 'rootless cosmopolitanism' and price-fixing, as an indication of McKay's own xenophobic tendencies, it seems more persuasive that, as a monologue clearly framed as issuing from the collective voice of the peasantry, McKay is caricaturing the same provincialism that he would later identify in his African American critics. By framing the ethnographic observations in his verse through intermediaries such as the peasant and the constab (as Walcott would later do with the persona of Shabine), McKay is able to

[13] Thomas Sowell, *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005), p. 72.
[14] Clark S. Knowlton, 'The Social and Spatial Mobility of the Syrian and Lebanese Community in São Paulo, Brazil', in *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, ed. by Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992), pp. 285–313 (p. 300).
[15] Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems: 1948–1984* (London: Faber, 1992), pp. 346, 348.
[16] *Daily Gleaner*, 25 November 1912, p. 4.

construct moments of autoethnography within each text which seem to draw more attention to the social structures in which the speakers themselves are imbricated, than to the subjects of their often reductive and essentialised narratives.

In 'The Problem of Speech Genres', Bakhtin draws attention to the restrictive nature of 'form' at the intersection of its linguistic and physical dimensions:

> The least favorable conditions for reflecting individuality in language obtain in speech genres that require a standard form, for example, […] military commands […]. Here one can reflect only the most superficial, almost biological aspects of individuality (mainly in the oral manifestation of these standard types of utterances).[17]

McKay imposes on his text the restrictions of the 'standard form' that Bakhtin identifies to create on the page a complex of physical, lineated barriers against which the energies of the dialect expression clash. McKay's colonial critique therefore merges this linguistic dissonance with the subjugating effects of the repetitive, regimented 'drill' labour dictated from above by the anti-individualist language of military commands. As Michel Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punish*, '[d]iscipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience).'[18] The practice of drill, in other words, obscures its own process of political subjugation by offering an alternative promise of masculine agency in which energies are cathected into acts purposely designed to enhance obedience and efficiency.

The use of verse form to articulate a containment of political energy, most notably through the evocation of 'de formalities' of drill-rhythm in 'Pay-Day', is a strategy McKay pursues throughout his later poetic career. In the sonnet 'America' (1921), he personifies the nation as a devouring mother, 'exploiting and nourishing the entrapped immigrant' who 'stand[s] within her walls with not a shred | Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer' (p. 153, ll. 9–10).[19] The signifier

[17] Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern W. McGee, ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), pp. 60–102 (p. 63).
[18] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 138.
[19] Felipe Smith, *American Body Politics: Race, Gender, and Black Literary Renaissance* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 336.

naturally extends to the barriers of the sonnet form itself, and the speaker stands proudly before (and in) both, 'as a rebel fronts a king in state' (l. 8). The adoption of the sonnet form allows McKay to establish tension between a revolutionary spirit and a realist regard for the overarching structures of race and literary heritage within which, and against which, resistance can be generated. Rather than this tension producing resentment, the closing lines of the sonnet, while showing the speaker '[d]arkly gaz[ing] into the days ahead' (l. 11), anticipate a collapse of the 'might and granite wonders' (l. 12) of American imperialism. Like 'the decay | Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare' of the Ozymandias statue in Percy Shelley's poem,[20] America too will find itself '[l]ike priceless treasures sinking in the sand' (l. 14). James Keller also notes that McKay's conclusion draws on Shakespeare's Sonnet 55, 'Not marble nor the gilded monuments', in which the speaker cautions that all 'gilded monuments' will become 'besmeared with sluttish time.'[21] While Shakespeare employs this narrative of decay as a foil to the permanence of his own 'powerful rhyme', McKay avoids any such idealist conception of verse, even as he vows to find a voice within the sonnet form despite his position as 'an alien guest'.[22]

The predominance of walls, barriers, and boundaries within McKay's verse thus manages to unite the mode of metapoetic commentary in Shakespeare's sonnets with a constantly displaced and displacing ethnographic gaze that moves between inside and outside, between epic scope and personal detail. Although the binaries implied by these borders are not totalising, and reveal their own permeability and instability, McKay remains doubtful of the extent to which racial and class hierarchies can be restructured. If there is potential for change, he believes, it will be rooted in the black proletariat and their vision of a post-imperial future, and not in the progress of a black elite. Instances of such progress are marked as exceptions which do not challenge the hierarchies in themselves, even as poems such as 'The White House' (1922) reveal his private bitterness at institutional exclusion: 'Your door is shut against my tightened face, | And I am sharp as steel with discontent' (p. 148, ll. 1–2). In the 1945 sonnet 'The Negro's Friend', McKay's turn away from communism in the latter years of his life seems curiously incongruous with his steely anti-

[20] Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias', *Examiner*, 11 January 1818, p. 24.
[21] James Keller, '"A Chafing Savage, Down the Decent Street": The Politics of Compromise in Claude McKay's Protest Sonnets', *African American Review*, 28 (Autumn 1994), 447–456 (p. 453).
[22] McKay, 'The City's Love', *Poems*, p. 158.

revisionist promotion of 'the classic road' of radicalism in contrast to the hollow sloganising of 'No Segregation!':

> There is no radical the Negro's friend
> Who points some other than the classic road
> For him to follow, fighting to the end,
> Thinking to ease him of one half his load.
> What waste of time to cry: 'No Segregation!'
> When it exists in stark reality,
> Both North and South, throughout this total nation,
> The state decreed by white authority.
>
> (p. 167, ll. 1–8)

The irony inherent in this example of virtue-signalling is underlined by the fact that it conflates a normative statement with a false descriptive one: to say 'No Segregation' is to articulate a desire for a certain vision of the future without accompanying this with any practical drive towards its realisation. A similar ironic doubling is at play in 'total nation' which offers up a suggestion of a unified America before undercutting it with the bleak inscription of the situation in reality: 'The state decreed by white authority.' 'The state' here refers both to extant segregation and to the nation itself, an appeal by McKay that the fight against racial prejudice should not be limited to the US South, but should instead reckon with what Charles S. Johnson termed the 'phantom freedom in the North' where the structural power of 'white authority' is just as deeply ingrained.[23] McKay's poem suggests, in other words, that small victories afforded the African American bourgeoisie in which one is 'ease[d] of one half his load' should not function as a distraction from this larger problem: the double subjugation of the black working class.

[23] Charles S. Johnson, 'The Negro Renaissance and its Significance', in *Remembering the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Cary. D Wintz (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 226–233 (p. 230).

Chapter 9

McKay II: Labour, Community, and Primitivism in *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo*

McKay's ethnographic posturing in poems such as 'Peasants' Ways o' Thinkin' ' and throughout *Constab Ballads* demonstrates an adaptation of the Yeatsian strategy of appropriating essentialist language as part of an attempt to resist outsider ethnographic rhetoric, as Yeats had done in response to the Celticism of Matthew Arnold. Unlike Yeats, however, McKay is more conscious of his treatment and recycling of this language, involving it in his representation of 'polyglot and synthetic conditions of colonial modernity.' Yeats continuously maintained an insistence on the relationship between peasant, poet, and aristocrat as a means of inscribing himself as part of a primitive, rural culture that he knows he is alien to. The constab, on the other hand, experiences similar tensions but requires no recourse to an artificially constructed bridge to authentic 'native' experience. He may be temporally and geographically isolated from the Jamaican 'peasant', but McKay's collection offers a refutation of this romanticised category as its action centres on the busy, confrontational, and disunified metropolitan centre of Kingston.

In many ways McKay's constab anticipates the figure of the New Negro as it emerged in the Harlem Renaissance, and particularly in the formulation offered by Alain Locke in his introductory essay:

> [The Old Negro] has been a stock figure perpetuated as an historical fiction partly in innocent sentimentalism, partly in deliberate reactionism. The Negro himself has contributed his share to this through a sort of protective social mimicry forced upon him by the adverse circumstances of dependence.[1]

[1] Locke, 'The New Negro', p. 3.

Locke's cautious approach, examined in the introduction, derives from his belief that external interpretations of the New Negro will cast him as a stock figure as opposed to a historically accurate social group emerging in New York in the early twentieth century. However, Locke's reference to a 'deliberate reactionism' is a reminder of the complicated position of the mimic man figure who struggles to define himself against the colonial or Eurocentric vision of acceptable characteristics, and simultaneously against the primitivised stereotype that this group has created of the colonial Other. The perpetuation of this figure as conceived of by Locke, operating as it does through both sentimentalism and reactionism, is similarly traced in Yeats's earlier project of reappropriating the image of the Celt, despite sentimentalism and reactionism being exactly what prevents the latter from escaping Arnoldian stereotypes such as the Celt's inherent poetic sensibility and connection to the soil.

In *Home to Harlem*, McKay adopts (and critiques) many of the primitivist tropes familiar both to the aristocratic-primitive formulations of Yeats and Synge and to those Harlem Renaissance writers who elevated an Edenic vision of a shared cultural past, particularly one rooted in a fictionalised Africa, but also in the revolutionary example of Haiti. The black artistic vibrancy of Harlem that had attracted McKay to the area was mediated by his poignant comprehension of the specifically American manifestations of racism and minority experience that his Jamaican upbringing had obscured from him. As Heather Hathaway has noted, in New York, as with many other Caribbean expatriates, 'McKay's aesthetic and personal philosophies began to change and develop':

> Whereas the social criticism of his Jamaican poetry revolved almost exclusively around class oppression, the focus of McKay's American verse shifted to address the barbarities of racism. […] [H]e expressed the rage felt by black newcomers, in particular, who came to America hoping to be welcomed into its melting pot, but who found themselves ostracized on the basis of skin color alone.[2]

[2] Heather Hathaway, *Caribbean Waves: Relocating Claude McKay and Paule Marshall* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 41–2.

The novel follows Jake Brown, a World War I veteran recently returned from France (the locus of the action of McKay's subsequent novel, *Banjo*), his search for work, his meandering through the nightlife of New York City, and his intimate friendship with the Haitian Ray, a pseudo-biographical incarnation of McKay himself. The itinerant dynamics of the novel, underlined by the restlessness of the two protagonists, serves as a corrective to Jake's sense of the inherent inertial nature of New York's racial politics: 'Good old New York! The same old wench of a city. […] But the ofay faces are different fro those ovah across the pond. Sure they is. Stiffer. Tighter' (p. 25). McKay, however, problematises the notion of a form of acceptance of African Americans by white Europeans being opposed to the unrelenting reality of racism 'back home'. After being called 'darky' by an English sailor in Chapter I, Jake thinks

> how strange it was to hear the Englishman say 'darky' without being offended. Back home he would have been spoiling for a fight. There he would rather hear 'nigger' than 'darky,' for he knew that when a Yankee said 'nigger' he meant hatred for Negroes, whereas when he said 'darky' he meant friendly contempt. He preferred white folks' hatred to their friendly contempt. To feel their hatred made him strong and aggressive, while their friendly contempt made him ridiculously angry, even against his own will.
>
> (p. 5)

Beneath the surface of this marginally more civil attitude Jake perceives an insidious form of 'friendly contempt' whose mediated nature frustrates him by preventing the expression of anger that he is used to. While Jake's European experience may have offered a vista onto a new and 'milder' form of racist ideology, McKay's novel, as John Lowney argues, 'foregrounds how national identity is subjected to a transnational logic of racial and class hierarchy.'[3] The first sentences of the novel implicate Jake's complicity with this mode of thought: 'All that Jake knew about the freighter on which he stoked was that it stank between sea and sky. He was working with a dirty Arab crew.' The anti-Arab sentiments that McKay threads through the *Harlem*'s first pages are themselves a convenient tool for the white sailors on the freighter, whose racial hierarchies serve to divide the black and Arab workers: 'One of the sailors flattered Jake. "You're the same

[3] Lowney, *Jazz Internationalism: Literary Afro-Modernism and the Cultural Politics of Black Music* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2017), p. 43.

like us chaps. You ain't like them dirty jabbering coolies"' (pp. 2–3). Able to see through the 'friendly contempt' and the divisive flattery of his white shipmates, Jake is nevertheless unable to transform his awareness into a form of solidarity with the Arabs. A similar dynamic plays out in *Banjo*, where disputes about race and politics between black workers in the docks of Marseilles spill over into personal attacks that resort to racialised language and the denigration of African men, such as the Senegalese Dengel, through primitivist descriptions of the continent. These conflicts are counterbalanced, however, by the very same 'transnational logic of racial and class hierarchy' turned instead towards a form of diverse black solidarity: 'Senegalese, Sudanese, Somalese, Nigerians, West Indians, Americans, blacks from everywhere, crowded together, talking strange dialects, but, brought together, understanding one another by the language of wine' (p. 202). By having Jake return to Harlem while the eponymous protagonist of *Banjo* chooses instead to remain in France, McKay is able to emphasise the pervasiveness of this logic while at the same time articulating the different ways in which forms of black solidarity and brotherhood operated either side of the Atlantic.

In *Harlem* and *Banjo*, the restless pace of McKay's narratives brilliantly conveys the libidinal vitality inherent in the melting pots of New York and Marseilles. However, in the former particularly, the destabilisations of this new urban modernity compel the characters Jake and Ray to question the complex network of relationships between the black proletariat and colonial, European, and African models of cultural heritage. When the protagonists relocate to Pittsburgh in Chapter XI, McKay establishes a contrast between their dirty, noisy living conditions (with the 'music' of 'snoring cooks' and an infestation of bedbugs) and Ray's attempt to meditate on the pastoral memories of his Haitian youth (p. 151). Their dissatisfaction prompts them to engage in the drinking, bar-hopping, and gambling that permeate the novel's wandering narrative movement. Although this initially works to relieve Jake's restlessness, who 'fell asleep as soon as his head touched the dirty pillow', Ray cannot shake the 'unwavering angel of wakefulness' (p. 152). As a result, his meditation is a willed escape in which he must 'fl[i]ng himself, across void and water, back home', believing that '[h]ome thoughts, if you can make them soft and sweet and misty-beautiful enough, can sometimes snare sleep.' The exuberant and fertile images that Ray conjures of 'the flowering things he loved, red and white and pink hibiscus, mimosas, rhododendrons, a

thousand glowing creepers, climbing and spilling their vivid petals everywhere […]' is interrupt by the 'masticating noises' of their roommates and consequently '[s]leep remained cold and distant' (pp. 152–3). McKay draws attention to the bitterness Ray experiences as a result of the incongruous relationship between his idealist tendencies and his racial consciousness:

> These men claimed kinship with him. They were black like him. Man and nature had put them in the same race. He ought to love them and feel them (if they felt anything). He ought to if he had a shred of social morality in him. They were all chain-ganged together and he was counted as one link. Yet he loathed every soul in that great barrack-room, except Jake. Race. . . . Why should he have and love a race?

For Ray, the unifying weight of race is that of the oppressive structure of the chain gang rather than one which generates intra-communal solidarity. It is too simplistic to frame this attitude as wholly classist, as it is with the proletarian Jake that he desires communion.

In a revealing moment at the end of the novel, McKay-as-narrator descends to adumbrate the homosocial machinations that might give rise to the kinds of partially-coded homoerotic encounters that Ray desires: 'We will leave our women companions and choice wines at the table to snatch a moment of exclusive sex solidarity over a thimble of gin at the bar' (p. 324). Labour in the novel is of course almost exclusively homosocial and yet, as Ingunn Eriksen has observed, 'life as a soldier, a sailor, and a worker on a train […] are all insufficient as scenes for male empowerment and bonding because they are all dominated by the suppressive white superiors.'[4] It is therefore in the heady, intoxicated space of the bar that Ray locates a suitable solidarity, drawing attention to '[t]he conflictual representation of sexuality' that Paul Gilroy argues 'has vied with the discourse of racial emancipation to constitute the inner core of black expressive culture' across the Black Atlantic.[5] In *Banjo*, Ray largely maintains this sceptical attitude to externally imposed racial homogeneity: 'It was no superior condescension, no feeling of race solidarity or Back-to-Africa demonstration—no patriotic effort whatsoever—that made Ray love the

[4] Ingunn Eriksen, 'The Manly Love of Comrades: Male Romantic Friendship and Masculinity in "Tennessee's Partner," *The Shadow of a Dream*, and *Home to Harlem*' (unpublished candidata philologiæ thesis, University of Oslo, 2005), p. 74.
[5] Gilroy, p. 83.

environment of the common black drifters.' By this point in the latter novel, however, Ray finds that he is able to 'have and love a race', the contradictions that he had identified in that dichotomy having been resolved by his participation in 'the rough-and-tumble laboring life' that helped to foster an allegiance with the wandering figure of 'the vagabond black that he himself was' (p. 202).

In Chapter XIII of *Harlem*, Ray avoids the possibility of a heterosexual encounter in a bar through a mental escape similar to the one attempted in Pittsburgh. His observations adopt a detached, Malinowskian tone as he deflects attention away from the women at his table to their externalities, before moving to the pacifying recollection of 'home thoughts':

> Such a striking exotic appearance the rouge gave these brown girls. Rouge that is so cheap in its general use had here an uncommon quality. Rare as the red flower of the hibiscus would be in a florist's window on Fifth Avenue. […] The round face of the first girl, the carnal sympathy of her full, tinted mouth, touched Ray. But something was between them (p.196)

As his thoughts move from the 'exotic' woman to her makeup and finally to his native hibiscus, Ray employs an aestheticised discourse of primitivism as a distancing technique to mitigate the overwhelmingly 'carnal' nature of the *hetero*erotic tension of the scene. Rather than a total repression of the desires which his primitivist language is used to moderate and reify, Ray instead directs them outwards to the gnomic, closeted 'something [that] was between them.' As McKay populates this lacuna with Ray's vision of '[l]ove in the deep heart of the jungle' and 'the marshaling of spears or the sacred frenzy of a phallic celebration' (p. 197), he establishes an ironic contrast between the 'primitive' sexuality that Ray identifies with the women in the bar and the stereotyped primitivist imagery of his private queer fantasy. Therefore, while Ray publicly expresses a rejection of the primitive African sought after by white patrons such as Charlotte Osgood Mason, and although, like Langston Hughes, he may 'not feel the rhythms of the primitive', he nevertheless conjures a counterpart to these rhythms through a private, aestheticised, and alternative vision of sexuality.[6]

[6] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, p. 325.

Ray's tendency to 'fl[i]ng himself, across void and water, back home' offers an idealised portrayal of Haiti as a revolutionary model for the American New Negro. However, his desire to locate this model in the Caribbean as opposed to a conception of a shared African heritage is significant. His cocaine-fuelled, homoerotic visions of 'gleaming black-skinned boys', 'new pagan delights,' and 'orgies of Orient-blue carnival' (p. 158) in *Harlem* may participate in exaggeratedly stereotypical Orientalist and primitivist imagery, but this African example does not extend for Ray to the political arena where, in *Banjo*, he expresses his disdain for solidarity movements built around Garveyist 'Back-to-Africa demonstration'.

Jake produces his own interpretations of the political significance of the Caribbean after learning through Ray of the 'dramatic and picturesque' nature of 'Black Hayti's independence' (p. 131). Jake is able to find a personal resonance in this narrative, conceiving of it as 'a romance of *his* race' (emphasis added), which, as Lowney argues, 'suggests a common ground for cross-cultural dialogue among African American and Caribbean critics of American imperialism.'[7] When at the close of Chapter XII Jake asserts, 'I hope all we niggers will pull together like civilization folks' (p. 187), he expresses his faith that the dialogue Lowney identifies may confer viability to an international black proletarian solidarity, even as this is inflected by language that engages in the primitivist binary between civilised and savage. Both Jake and the Ray of *Banjo*, then, believe that an effective anti-imperial and anti-racist movement must be led by the colonised proletariat, as opposed to the vanguardism implicit in Du Bois's Talented Tenth. As J. A. Rose-Brown argues, perhaps too critically, the Ray of *Harlem* 'has no desire to uplift his race; his posture points back to Du Bois's desire to see educated, middle class men uplifting the American masses.' Consequently, '*Home to Harlem* questions whether or not middle-class Blacks want to, or can, function as representative figures.'[8]

In the later novel, Ray has managed to incorporate into his philosophy elements of Jake's optimistic conception of transnational community within the diaspora while expressing his rejection of the reified binary between 'we niggers' and 'civilization folks'. As Robert Philipson writes, *Banjo* 'provides an early and accurate analysis of the false consciousness of the *évolué* later

[7] Lowney, 'Black Transnationalism', p. 426.
[8] J. A. Rose-Brown, *Critical Nostalgia and Caribbean Migration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 35.

so masterfully dissected by Franz Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blanques* (1952).'[9] Ray recognises this *évolué* mentality in his younger self, the same self that in Chapter XV of *Harlem* 'had been startled by James Joyce in *The Little Review*' and that had failed to answer the question, 'What would he ever do with the words he had acquired?' (p. 227). The phrasing seems to consciously echo Stephen Dedalus's anxiety about the relationship between language and the colonial divide that I alluded to in Chapters 3 and 4:

> —The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master,* on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.[10]

The language that Stephen and Ray have acquired is experienced as a contingent, guest-presence within the colonised subject. For McKay's protagonist, this tendency to measure oneself against markers of white cultural value is transformed by his vagabond lifestyle among the black proletariat of Marseilles. Echoing his critique of the false consciousness that informs black aspiration directed towards institutionally white spaces in 'The White House', McKay has the newly confident Ray distance himself from the *évolué* as he reflects:

> At college in America and among the Negro intelligentsia he had never experienced any of the simple, natural warmth of a people believing in themselves, such as he had felt among the rugged poor and socially backward blacks of his island home. The colored intelligentsia lived its life 'to have the white neighbors think well of us,' so that it could move more peaceably into nice 'white' streets. Only when he got down among the black and brown working boys and girls of the country did he find something of that raw unconscious and the-devil-with-them pride in being Negro that was his own natural birthright.
>
> (p. 320)

[9] Robert Philipson, 'The Harlem Renaissance as Postcolonial Phenomenon', *African American Review*, 40 (Spring 2006), pp. 145–160 (p. 155).
[10] Joyce, *Portrait*, p. 189.

McKay therefore traces an evolution of racial and communal consciousness that begins in resentment — 'He used to feel condescendingly sorry for those poor African natives […] Now he was just one of them and he hated himself for being one of them' (p. 155) — and concludes with an embrace of these 'natives': 'The Africans gave him a positive feeling of wholesome contact with racial roots. They made him feel that he was not merely an unfortunate accident of birth, but that he belonged definitely to a race weighed, tested, and poised in the universal scheme'.

Throughout this evolution, however, Ray demonstrates a reluctance to depart from the primitivist conception of Africa and the notion of reified cultural hierarchies that he had subscribed to in *Harlem*. With regards to the Caribbean, his embrace of 'the simple, natural warmth of a people believing in themselves' cannot be separated out from descriptors such as 'rugged poor' and 'socially backward'. As for Africa, McKay's language interweaves the Western primitivist trope of the Other as an amalgam of purity and childlike innocence with Ray's sense of genuine racial solidarity. A similar process is at work in the Celtic Revival's process of reclaiming Arnoldian conceptions of the Celt without fully interrogating their imperial origins. As Vincent Cheng notes in relation to the Revival, and in words that seem equally suitable for Ray, '[t]his quest for authenticity […] frequently takes the familiar form of a national nostalgia for origins, a yearning for a premodern and uncontaminated past that somehow authorizes and defines the authenticity and essence of the cultural present.'[11] While avoiding the discourse of Frazerian anthropology with its conception of the primitive as a stage on an evolutionary ladder towards Western civilisation, the development of Ray's consciousness has necessitated a form of modernist participant-observation in which authenticity is only possible if he is 'down among the black and brown working boys and girls of the country'. The progress of his racial consciousness therefore involves treading delicately between, on the one hand, the self-imposed slumming and proletarian fetishisation that anticipates George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and much of Synge's writing, and on the other, a sense of racial belonging reforged by his belief in the revolutionary potential of the black working (and 'vagabonding') classes.

[11] Cheng, *Inauthentic: The Anxiety Over Culture and Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), p. 173.

One of the most important political debates staged by McKay in *Banjo* is interspersed through various conversations between several characters about the efficacy of Garveyism and its ideological orientation. The questions raised in this scene and the bitterness directed towards the perceived failures of Garvey frequently occupied McKay, and their fictional rehearsal in *Banjo* echoes a letter from his brother, Uriah Theodore ('U. Theo') McKay, in the year of that novel's publication. U. Theo was a member of the UNIA and organised a meeting of the association 'that Garvey chaired and spoke at on New Year's Day, 1928' in Kingston, after his exile from the United States.[12] As Winston James has noted, U. Theo's positive impression of Garvey deteriorated over the course of the year and in this letter he expresses the mixture of uncertainty, frustration, and hope that will similarly circulate between the characters in *Banjo*:

> He was the little, sniffling, dodging-the-issue, mean-hearted, littleminded fellow and his bigness was eclipsed by his semi-truths. I think he has gone down immensely. I am not a Garveyite and never will be but I must confess to a secret desire that the man may eventually show himself to be somebody.[13]

In Chapter VII of *Banjo*, 'Meeting Up', a black French barkeeper who 'had returned from America inspired by two strangely juxtaposed ideals: the Marcus Garvey Back-to-Africa movement and the grandeur of American progress' connects Garvey's efforts to the sense of potential he sees for black Americans: 'Negroes in America have a chance to do things. That's what Marcus Garvey was trying to drive into their heads, but they wouldn't support him' (p. 76). For Banjo it is Garvey's hubris that led to his demise, 'he thought like you, that he was Moses or Napoleon or Frederick Douglass, but he was nothing but a fool, big-mouf nigger', whereas for the barkeeper Banjo has 'no respect for those who're trying to do something to lift the race higher.' Leaving the bar, Banjo is frustrated at Ray's lack of input — 'Why didn't you say some'n', Ray? — and proceeds to portray the barkeeper through the use of aggressive primitivist language far exceeding that used by Ray in the remainder of the novel: 'I guess you got more brains in you' finger nail than in

[12] James, *McKay*, p. 45.
[13] Uriah Theodore McKay, letter to Claude McKay, 2 August 1929, Claude McKay Papers, James Weldon Johnson Collection of Negro Literature and Art, American Literature Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

twenty nigger haids like his'n jest rising up outa the bush of Africa. […] A really and truly down-there Bungo-Congo' (p. 77). This heated exchange between Banjo and the barkeeper grows beyond a merely ideological evaluation, and instead incorporates *ad hominem* attacks on Garvey and contested ideas of blackness and black leadership. Both the barkeeper and Banjo lament the downfall of Garvey through his imprisonment, but whereas Banjo sees Garvey as having 'had a whiteman's chance and he done nigger it away', the barkeeper, who chooses not to offer a direct counter to Banjo's point, notes that anti-Garvey sentiment was not a uniquely American phenomenon, and that Garvey's international renown was less an indication of hubris and more evidence of the threat that anti-racist movements posed to authorities in America, Europe, and Africa: 'the French and the British were keeping the *Negro World*, Garvey's newspaper, out of Africa. It was because Garvey was getting too big that they got him.'

This moment in the exchange is particularly relevant to McKay, whose own writings for *Negro World*, alongside reference to his (in)famous 'If We Must Die', had been quoted in the 1919 report of an investigation by the US Department of Justice into 'Persons Advising Anarchy, Sedition, and the Forcible Overthrow of the Government'. These writings, which survive only as quoted in the Department's report, articulate McKay's ardent support for Bolshevism and his insistence on the revolutionary template that recent events in Russia might provide for African Americans:

> Every Negro who lays claim to leadership should make a study of Bolshevism and explain its meaning to the colored masses. It is the greatest and most scientific idea afloat in the world to-day that can easily be put into practice by the proletariat to better its material and spiritual life. Bolshevism […] has made Russia safe for the Jew. It has liberated the Slav peasant from priest and bureaucrat who can no longer egg him on to murder Jews to bolster up their rotten institutions. It might make these United States safe for the Negro. […] If the Russian idea should take hold of the white masses of the western world […] then the black toilers would automatically be free. Will their leaders educate them now to make good use of their advantages eventually?[14]

[14] McKay, *Negro World*, 20 September 1919, quoted in 'Exhibit No. 10. Radicalism and Sedition Among the Negroes as Reflected in Their Publications,' in A. Mitchell Palmer, *Letter from the Attorney General Transmitting in Response to a Senate Resolution October 17, 1919, a Report on the Activities of the Bureau*

By incorporating an explicit reference to *Negro World* into the debate concerning Garveyism in *Banjo*, McKay is neither simply reiterating nor denouncing his previous unequivocal endorsement of Bolshevism. Instead, he is able to invoke a multivocal assessment of how the disappointments of Garveyism ran parallel to his increasing awareness of the shortcomings of the Bolshevik project and his own youthful utopianist vision. Goosey, the second character to mention *Negro World* in the following chapter, 'The Flute-boy', describes his frustration at British attempts to prevent the UNIA publication from reaching Africa, even while his own attitude to Garvey is ambivalent: 'I am no Back-to-Africa business. That's a big-fool idea. But I'm a race man' (p. 92). What Goosey's position therefore shares even with those of the polarised Banjo and the barkeeper is a sense of the potentiality of Garveyism in relation to its actual achievements. It is this frustrated potentiality that seems therefore to plague McKay who has not yet abandoned his socialist orientation. The naive conclusion that the Russian Revolution would 'automatically' lead to the liberation of the black proletariat that he himself had suggested in 1919 is no longer tenable. In its place a more nuanced, but also therefore a far more fractious and factional debate about the relationship between race, class, and political pragmatism is called for.

of Investigation of the Department of Justice Against Persons Advising Anarchy, Sedition, and the Forcible Overthrow of the Government (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), pp. 163–64.

Chapter 10

McKay III: The *Realpolitik* of *Amiable with Big Teeth*

Twelve years later, in his final novel *Amiable with Big Teeth* (1941), McKay maintains this decentralised attitude to the varying political viewpoints on the topic of the interrelation of race and international politics. In Chapter 2 a debate emerges concerning 'the question of admitting white persons to the newly formed committee' of the Hands of Ethiopia. While '[a] majority of the professional persons thought that there should be a white representative', 'the masses of the people had vociferously opposed the inclusion of a white', helped to this conclusion by William Headley, an 'outstanding agitator of the Garvey Pan-African movement'. McKay's own position retains a sense of ambiguity, although he seems more closely aligned with the latter position, that of 'the masses', as it is one of the novel's main antagonists, the white Newton Castle, who objects to this position, deeming it 'purely black chauvinism and isolationism'.

While even in his earlier career McKay had never sought to elide the complexities in the convergence of socialist movements and race, his almost colourblind enthusiasm for Bolshevism in the late 1910s gives way by the time of *Amiable* to a more measured apprehension of the political reality of the pro-Ethiopian movement in the United States. Castle's position is therefore counterbalanced by Pablo Peixota who points out that '[t]he common people feel that Ethiopia was betrayed by the white nations' and Dorsey Flagg, the character who perhaps most closely represents McKay himself, who seeks to unravel the hypocrisies of Castle's militant Stalinism with regards to the occupation of Ethiopia by pointing out that 'Russia is selling more goods to Italy than any other nation'.[1] For this retort Flagg is branded by Castle as a Trotskyite. McKay

[1] McKay, *Amiable with Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair Between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*, ed. by Jean-Christophe Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards (New York: Penguin, 2017), pp. 18–19.

may have thought himself more ideologically similar to Trotsky in the wake of the Stalinist purges of the 1930s, but he does not abandon the democratised, *conversational* approach to politics that he had employed in *Banjo*. Instead, by drawing attention to the potentially utopian and unrealisable nature of Trotskyism, *Amiable* foregrounds the importance of *realpolitik* in mediating between ideological positions, while also demonstrating how opposing approaches to political pragmatism conflict and generate polarisation, as in the divide between the 'race-first' Garveyite approach and Castle's unrelenting Stalinism.

In their introduction to *Amiable*, Jean-Christophe Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards allude to the notion of archival politics as a bridge between the history of the text itself (only discovered by Cloutier in 2009) and the centrality of a similar theme in the narrative, in which stolen, hidden, and forged documents drive many of the tensions between different groups supporting (or feigning to support) Ethiopia against its invasion by fascist Italy. With its focus on the African American response to this Ethiopian struggle, *Amiable* follows both *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo*, with their central character the Haitian Ray, in demonstrating the cultural significance of black republics to the African American imagination. Indeed, the first mention of Ethiopia in McKay's fiction is in *Harlem*, during the first conversation between Ray and Jake: 'Listening rapt, without a word of interruption', Jake is made to unlearn the primitivist discourse of Africa that he has inherited as Ray articulates 'that Africa was not jungle as he dreamed of it, nor slavery the peculiar rôle of black folk.' Ray's speech concludes in an anthropological register:

> 'All the ancient countries have been yielding up the buried secrets of their civilizations,' the waiter said. 'I wonder what Abyssinia will yield in her time? Next to the romance of Hayti, because it is my native country, I should love to write the romance of Abyssinia… Ethiopia.'
>
> (p. 136)

Ray's choice of 'Abyssinia' sits awkwardly in relation to McKay's handling of that word in *Amiable*. In Chapter 11, 'The Emperor's Statement', a forged document purportedly from Haile Selassie himself describes Ethiopia as a 'Negro' state and uses 'Abyssinian', which Pablo Peixota, knowing it 'was also objectionable and never used', sees as evidence of external meddling in the article's publication. It is later revealed that the forgery was perpetrated by the novel's antagonist,

the white communist Maxim Tasan, a figure who McKay takes pains to emphasise is lacking in proper cultural understanding of Ethiopia and accordingly in need of Lij Tekla Alamaya to make his forgeries and illusions seem legitimate. While it is certainly possible that McKay's choice of 'Abyssinia' for Ray was incidental, given that *Home to Harlem* was written over a decade earlier, the context in which Ray employs it is also significant. He demonstrates an anthropological *desire* in terms of a cultural 'yielding up' (and in doing so anticipates the character of Professor Koazhy in *Amiable*), but any suggestion of anthropological fidelity is mediated by the fantastic nature of the narrative he wishes to create, 'the romance of Abyssinia', just as Ray's stories of Haiti have produced for Jake the intoxicating possibility of '[a] romance of his race, just down there by Panama' (p. 134).

Neelam Srivastava argues that by making Ethiopia and Haiti, which, in addition to Liberia, were 'the only three black nations in the world that were independent and sovereign in 1935' central to his fiction, McKay was aligned with both the specific political designs of Garvey's Back-to-Africa Movement and also a more general yearning for narratives focussing on these 'nodal site[s] for imagining and recording black resistance' that 'matter immensely in this recuperation and remembrance of a black political history that has been forgotten by or excluded from white-authored accounts of the Caribbean and Africa.' Cloutier and Srivastava identify a 'valorization of Ethiopian culture as predating that of white societies' in both *Amiable* and many works of George Schuyler from the 1930s, most notably 'Revolt in Ethiopia: A Tale of Black Insurrection Against White Imperialism'. While Srivastava admits that McKay and Schuyler engage in 'the appropriation of a past, and an ancient and glorious one at that', it is an engagement done 'for the African American community, whose minoritarian status in America was profoundly linked to this perceived lack of a history beyond slavery.'[2] Cloutier argues in his introduction that *Amiable*'s 'caustic, even overtly polemical, depiction of the complex Harlem political landscape in the mid-1930s' places it in opposition to Schuyler's work which 'is usually in the service of vindicationist Pan-African fantasy'. We can therefore read in the trajectory of McKay's writing a move away from the conflicted Ray of *Harlem*, who both seeks to demystify *and* re-mystify Africa and

[2] Neelam Srivastava, *Italian Colonialism and Resistances to Empire, 1930–1970* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 103–4.

Ethiopia for Jake to a more assured position in *Amiable* in which the 'overtly' polemical tone is employed almost as a critique of the idealised facets of the Back-to-Africa Movement.

While this transformation is evident, I suggest that McKay is unwilling to entirely divorce himself from these earlier fantastical conceptions even in the *realpolitik*-informed narrative of *Amiable*. Cloutier may be right in asserting that Koazhy 'is portrayed wholly positively' by McKay, but even if this were the case, Koazhy's own interventions in the novel belie his assumed position as the character who, through his attentive study of African history, is best placed to forge a meaningful link between black Harlemites and the anti-colonial struggle in Ethiopia.[3]

The parade that McKay's novel begins with features Koazhy as the focus of admiration from the enchanted crowd, 'a full-sized ebon-hued man, bedecked in a uniform so rare, so gorgeous, it made the people prance and shout with joy'. Although McKay will later position Koazhy as the intellectual heart of the novel, his appeal in this early sequence rests in the pomp of his uniform and his militaristic posturing, as when he 'unsheathed his sword and brandished it at heaven' such that '[t]he mass roared in frenzy' (p. 4). Koazhy's dress therefore marks his creation of a hybrid persona. This incorporates firstly the military uniforms favoured by Marcus Garvey and the demonstrations of his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Given the novel's anti-fascist narrative, it is perhaps ironic that even before the writing of this novel, C. L. R. James had suggested that 'all the things that Hitler was to do so well later, Marcus Garvey was doing in 1920 and 1921. He organized storm troopers, who marched, uniformed, in his parades, and kept order and gave colour to his meetings.'[4] Secondly, Koazhy offers a fictionalised vision of the Ethiopian primitive that he later points out is metonymic for 'the great warriors of Ethiopia' (p. 9). To quote Leigh Raiford in her description of UNIA marches, the spectacle of this combination 'invoked both the modernity of the nation-state and the splendor of an imagined African past'.[5] The real Ethiopian envoy, Lij Tekla Alamaya, is both impressed and jealous of Koazhy's appearance. His own modest, westernised attire does not draw the attention he had hoped for, despite his standing as genuinely Ethiopian, and while he 'won a fine ovation' this is soon

[3] Jean-Christophe Cloutier, *Shadow Archives: The Lifecycles of African American Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), p. 133.
[4] C. L. R. James, *A History of Negro Revolt* (New York: Haskell House, 1938), p. 69.
[5] Leigh Raiford, 'Marcus Garvey in Stereograph', *Small Axe*, 17 (March 2013), 263–80 (p. 272).

replaced by shouts of 'Let's hear Professor Koazhy' (p 8). Alamaya's speech is technical and militaristic, discussing the Ethiopian army's need for 'artillery and machine guns, warplanes and armoured trucks' (p. 7), etc. He therefore embodies one half of the hybridity achieved by Koazhy, but lacking the latter's flair in being able to unite a semi-mythical past with a martial present, Alamaya's appeals to both realism and *realpolitik* are inferior in the mind of the crowd and, consequently, it is Koazhy's strategy that is more effective in terms of generating donations for the war effort. Alamaya and Koazhy therefore contest the site of what Ethiopianism should mean to the assembled African American crowd, with the former's promise that '[t]hings that are strange and incomprehensible to you, I shall endeavour to make clear' (p. 8) generating tension when considered in relation to Koazhy's deliberate and explicit cultural forgery.

It is precisely Koazhy's attempts to bridge certain cultural divides — between America and Africa, between past and present — that earns him not only the mild suspicion of Alamaya and Dorsey Flagg, but also condemnation by the novel's communist antagonists, Maxim Tasan and Newton Castle. Koazhy's own speech to the assembled crowd addresses the anxieties prevalent in Harlem Renaissance writing about the place of Africa in the African American imagination, as discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to Langton Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Helene Johnson. In contrast to the often questioning, unresolved tone adopted by these poets, Koazhy's didacticism and the underlying practical motivation of his speech leads him to address this issue with confidence:

> 'Learn about the past as it relates to you and use it to do something about the present. […] What you all should know is also what the Ethiopians should know about themselves. Then they will fight better and you will help more.' Professor Koazhy unsheathed the sword and held it up and said: 'A sword in the hands of an ignorant man is a dangerous weapon that may destroy him. Knowledge is available. Get it. Learn, learn, and learn more.'
>
> (p. 10)

Perhaps McKay is dramatising here, through Koazhy, the importance of a personal ethnographic consciousness for African Americans that links together the Fanonian 'plunge into the chasm of the past' with a proper understanding of how this historical consciousness might shape political energies in the present. Srivastava suggests, regarding this passage, that McKay was drawing

attention to the novel form as 'the most apt way to disseminate the message about the importance of writing and researching one's own history', and therefore used *Amiable* to convey 'the need to build racial solidarity through an imagined community constructed textually.'[6] However, despite the emphasis that Koazhy places on 'bridging' in this speech, he fails to identify specific ways in which a deeper understanding of African history will be of benefit either to contemporary African Americans or Ethiopians.

McKay's concern for specific forces co-opting the activist energies of the pro-Ethiopia movement for their own ends was already an issue established by contemporary coverage of events, before the writing of *Amiable*. 'Harlem Ponders Ethiopia's Fate', a *New York Times* article from July 1935, draws attention to the persuasiveness and sophistry of those involved in this redirection of revolutionary energy: the 'small, highly articulate and aggressive minority' mentioned foreshadows the magnetic appeal of Koahzy's speech in the novel's opening chapter. As Jeannette Eileen Jones summarises, '[t]he reporter expressed skepticism about the success of an upcoming parade, where class consciousness would unite Italian American and African Americans to march in solidarity from Little Italy to Harlem to protest Italian aggression.' While Jones reads this article as indicative of 'American fears of so-called radicalized Negroes', it also reflects genuine tensions between Italian and African Americans in New York in the wake of the occupation of Ethiopia, an issue that McKay uses as an important plot point in the novel.[7]

Again in the context of forged documents and impersonations, the communist-infiltrated White Friends of Ethiopia stages an anti-Italian march in Chapter 13 to the horror of Newton Castle who wonders why his own organisation had not instead 'insisted that it be anti-Fascist[.] The Aframericans should not be encouraged to manifest animus against the Italian people […]' (p. 138). This hoax, orchestrated by Koazhy and the real Sufi Abdul Hamid in order to defame the Friends, serves only to disrupt any possibility of the idealised Italian-African American solidarity imagined in the *NYT* article and demonstrates how infighting between different pro-Ethiopia groups that were split along racial and ideological lines took precedence over the fundraising efforts that ostensibly shaped the priorities of all parties involved. In this contestation of

[6] Srivastava, p. 122.
[7] Jeannette Eileen Jones, *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884–1936* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), p. 213.

realpolitik, then, Koazhy's earlier ability to effect change through his use of forgery finds its petty double in this drive towards ideological subterfuge.

It seems as if McKay intended the novel's communist antagonists, Tasan and Castle, to exist as villainous foils to the *realpolitik* of Koazhy. They exhibit their own strange hybridity: their dogged ideological commitment to Stalinism is disparaged both by the author and the majority of his characters, and yet, in their lengthy discussion in Chapter 12 McKay reveals that they are happy to totally abandon principle in their own scheming against rival groups: 'We Marxists can do anything. We have exterminated kings and princes to gain our ends and we have resurrected and honored them when it suited our purpose' (p. 128). Even Tasan's mention of Stalin's rise to power is framed in terms of both opportunism and illusion: 'Comrade Stalin was marked for the leadership of the Bolsheviks and the World Proletariat when he robbed a bourgeois bank. His physical courage and daring set him high above Trotsky and his apocalyptic logic' (p. 130). The Trotskyite leanings of rivals such as Dorsey Flagg are therefore also brought into this contestation of *realpolitik*: to their mind, the cult of personality surrounding Stalin is far less idealistic than Trotsky's 'apocalyptic logic' of permanent revolution following the Russian Civil War. Stalin, along with Koazhy and Tasan, are cast as figures whose very ruthless pragmatism informs their ability to achieve change through the tactics of forgery.

Cloutier has drawn attention to McKay's transposition of the primary agent of deceit from the real African American 'former baseball star turned public-relations man Chappy Gardner' to the white agent Tasan, a move in keeping with McKay's turn against communism in his later career.[8] While Cloutier frames this move as a one which successfully 'alleviates Aframerican guilt by planting the public deception onto guilty white (Red) hands', it also paradoxically elevates the likes of Tasan, despite *and* owing to his ruthless scheming, as far more capable of achieving changes in the attitudes of regular Harlemites, a power that McKay had earlier admitted to in *Harlem: Negro Metropolis*: 'Communists can stage some of the most spectacular affairs and could bring obscure Negroes into the spotlight to speak in splendid halls before huge audiences.'[9] McKay portrays the likes of Pablo Peixota as seeking to unite certain communist and capitalist

[8] Cloutier, p. 129.
[9] McKay, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1940; repr. New York: Harvest, 1968), p. 221.

interpretations of progress for African Americans, namely self-reliance and community organising: 'They belonged to the old school of self-made men, but they were modern in the ideas of their group striving as a unit to overcome some of its disadvantages' (p. 136). Despite his apparent praise of this hybrid model of racial uplift and his condemnation of the white Tasan desiring African Americans to 'surrender the right to think and act as a group to their "white friends"', Tasan's *realpolitik* is ultimately far more effective than the liberal hybridity of Peixota and Flagg that McKay endorses.

The 'love affair' of the novel's subtitle is therefore framed by McKay as a seduction, that of the 'poor black sheep of Harlem' by Tasan and the Comintern, and yet, as Vaughn Rasberry has noted, '[t]he Communist "love affair" with the African diaspora perplexes because there is relatively little, politically speaking, to be gained from it. […] Tasan so confounds Peixota because the latter can understand neither his motives nor his objectives.' By leaving the reason behind Tasan's motives unanswered, the novel 'pos[es] a seldom-asked question that it cannot resolve' and as such 'the narrative destabilizes its own anticommunist critique'.[10] The central irony of the novel, and the reason it ultimately falls short as a polemical text, is that McKay's attempt at a critique could equally be directed towards Koazhy, who occupies the seducer role alongside Tasan. Both men employ forgery and illusion in the service of *realpolitik*, but despite Koazhy's early successes in accruing donations for the Ethiopian cause, these strategies ultimately coalesce around an ideological struggle between the two at the expense of any practical benefit for the 'poor black sheep' either side of the Atlantic.

[10] Vaughn Rasberry, 'The Devil Wears Pravda', *Public Books*, 9 January 2018 <https://www.publicbooks.org/devil-wears-pravda/> [Accessed 5 June 2021].

Conclusion

> The painful realization of (nearly) lost continuity with archaic time leads us to form attachments to it that are affective, metaphysical, and archival. By comparison, our ties to the future are primarily organic, ethical, pragmatic, and scientific. In contrast to the past, we have no new poetics of the future.[1]
>
> — Chrostowska, 'Nostalgia'

> I accumulate the past, constantly making out of it and casting into it the present, without giving it a chance to exhaust its own duration. [2]
>
> — Emil Cioran, *The Fall into Time* (1964)

In the introduction to this thesis I suggested that an important spatial metaphor for conceptualising Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, with specific reference to Locke and Yeats, was the employment of a *perpendicular* mode of thinking. This mode involves the intersection of a 'horizontal', universalist axis with 'vertical' forms of historical consciousness that constitute what I have called a double temporal vision, an awareness of the situatedness of the literary text as necessarily both forward and backward looking. The vertical axis constitutes an attempt to forge the uncreated conscience of race, not in the smithy of the soul (as for Joyce's Stephen in *Portrait*), but through a panoptic gaze that synthesises historical consciousness with a forward glance that asks how that history might shape the literary text.

I have explored the difficulties experienced in such attempts at 'forging', and questions over whether these are even desirable. In concluding, I draw on a hopeful framing of the double

[1] Chrostowska, 'Nostalgia', p. 60.
[2] Emil Cioran, *The Fall into Time*, trans. by Richard Howard (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1970), pp. 173–4.

temporal vision by Arthur Schomburg in his contribution to *The New Negro*, which offers perhaps its best articulation. 'The Negro', he writes, 'has been a man without a history because he has been considered a man without a worthy culture', but through various 'corrective influence[s]' a defiant perspective on this history of cultural exclusion has been made possible:

> Into these fascinating new vistas, with limited horizons lifting in all directions, the mind of the Negro has leapt forward faster than the slow clearings of scholarship will yet safely permit. But there is no doubt that here is a field full of the most intriguing and inspiring possibilities. Already the Negro sees himself against a *reclaimed background*, in a perspective that will give pride and self-respect ample scope, and make history yield for him the same values that the treasured past of any people affords. (Emphasis added)

The most significant of the 'corrective influence[s]' that have facilitated the reclamation of this 'background' is a form of historical anthropology that takes African (and African American) history and culture seriously: 'the latest and most fascinating of all the attempts to open up the closed Negro past' is, for Schomburg, 'the important study of African cultural origins and sources.'[4] As I suggested in my earlier discussion of the contributions of both Locke and Schomburg to *The New Negro*, objective, rigorous ethnographic study is crucial not only to 'overcome […] certain handicaps of disparagement and omission' but also as a corrective against the 'Ethiopian counterpart' to the 'Caucasian racialist'. McKay dramatises this *literal* Ethiopian counterpart in *Amiable* in his complex plotting of different African and African American factions vying for control of cultural authenticity, racial and international politics, and of course, historical materialist that he was, money.

As I detailed in Chapter 10, when, in McKay's *Home to Harlem*, Ray first mentions Ethiopia, he echoes Schomburg's enthusiasm for historical, archaeological, and anthropological research as a tool for cultural salvage: 'All the ancient countries have been yielding up the buried secrets of their civilizations […] I wonder what Abyssinia will yield in her time?' What McKay later narrates in *Amiable*, then, is the political and cultural contestation of these buried secrets whose recovery was earlier anticipated. This is not merely a question of archival politics in the

[4] Schomburg, 'The Negro Digs Up His Past', pp. 231–7 (p. 237).

novel, an intellectualised debate about Ethiopian history and its meaning, but also refers to an incredibly poignant political issue *in the present*. Ethiopia is therefore both a mythologised *idea*, a distant, exotic black nation that provided African Americans with creative inspiration (as with Hurston's *Moses* and George Schuyler's *Ethiopian Stories*), and simultaneously a country on the brink of fascist occupation and domination. In *Amiable*, McKay offers not only a vivid portrayal of this tension between conceptions of Ethiopia, but also how these tensions were weaponised by competing ideological factions.

If ethnography offered a grammar and practice through which both to preserve and comprehend not just so-called 'primitive' societies but all cultural history, what this ethnography revealed, and the way in which it was itself (con)textualised, was an intensely political issue. The most immediate manifestation of this political contestation of cultural meaning emerges in the debates between nationalist, Stalinist, Trotskyite, and other voices in *Amiable*. In *Ulysses*, Joyce draws attention to the often comical aporias that surface in Irish nationalist rhetoric, but as with McKay's novel, the more consequential elements of this rhetoric arise from racialised conceptions of nation and culture. Joyce therefore threads antisemitic stereotypes between the playful, overblown speeches of nationalist excess in order for the patrons of Barney Kiernan's pub to challenge the very possibility of Bloom as a rooted citizen. The rootless cosmopolitanism that they ascribe to him, emphasised by their distaste for his scientific language, suggests that they, unlike Bloom, can be 'racy of the soil'. At the same time, however, their discomfort at being unable to categorise and define Bloom exposes their fear and incomprehension of ethno-cultural hybridity and Otherness.

It would be overly simplistic to associate the nationalists' aversion to scientific 'codology' in *Ulysses* with Yeats's suspicion of scientific folklore. His position appears to stem less from a fear of European intellectualism than from his vision of how ethnography should shape the folkloric text: 'To me, the ideal folk-lorist is Mr. Douglas Hyde. A tale told by him is quite as accurate as any "scientific" person's rendering'. However, Yeats's suspicion of the truth claims of science in his review of *Irish Wonders*, detailed in Chapter 1, gestures towards a hierarchy of what he sees as the *utility* of ethnography in terms of the recovery, transmission, and reinterpretation of folklore, and particularly the influence that this folklore might have on the contemporary 'mythic'

writer. In this way, he shares in the romantic optimism of Ray in *Harlem*. For Yeats, as with Ray, who is curious about the 'buried secrets' of 'ancient countries', overly scientific attempts at systematisation and analysis detract from the sense of mystery attending mythological origins. They offer, Yeats believes, a less faithful account of ancient Ireland than the 'poetical' interpretations of Hyde.

In the production of texts that participate in a hybridisation of ethnography with other genres and discourses (travel-writing, political analysis, autobiography), Synge and Hurston in particular mediate, and complicate, the division between this Yeatsian conception of folklore, and the call for a 'new scientific' approach to the study of culture in *The New Negro*. They anticipate and reflect, respectively, the increased interest in the practice of participant-observation popularised by Malinowski. Yet the possibility of producing a traditional ethnographic text is made unfeasible not only by their own presence (Synge in Aran; Hurston in the American South, Jamaica, and Haiti) but also because these ethnographic observers are in turn partially fictionalised constructs of their own narratives. Synge and Hurston, like McKay in *Constab Ballads*, are, with variations in style and degree, involved in forms of autoethnographic writing. Despite the divergence between the modes of life, language, and economic status of Synge and the islanders, he was still committed to a critique of the forms of capitalism and imperialism to which Irish people were subjected to. In the pursuit of an inverted path of the Great Migration by returning to her native Florida to conduct fieldwork that would become *Mules and Men*, Hurston adopts the position of the autoethnographer more directly, and more easily, than Synge was able to do. As I explored in Chapter 6, the tensions between 'inside' and 'outside' ethnography were highly politicised and contested, and inflected through the interplay of Hurston's unique ethnographic style with her background in academic anthropology.

In the introduction I suggested that modernist writers' sense of the utility of ethnography was highly varied, but indicated that I would focus particularly on ethnography as antidote, imperial practice, and mode of historical consciousness. These conceptions of the uses and misuses of ethnography were far from homogenous within both Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance. Beyond this, important differences can be identified between the two movements as a whole. The most important example, as I detailed in the introduction, relates to the discourse of

primitivism. Primitivist imagery and description, and particularly exoticised descriptions of Africa were tropes frequently demanded of Renaissance writers by white patrons such as Charlotte Osgood Mason. The presence of primitivist elements within a poem such as Helene Johnson's 'Magalu' cannot then be read as a writerly decision entirely divorced from economic considerations. At the same time, as I have argued in Chapter 5, the anxieties coalescing around any external imposition of a primitivist mode ironically served as partial forms of inspiration for meditations on the relationship between patronage and heritage more generally, including in the production of texts such as Hughes's 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain' and Cullen's 'Heritage'.

What I have ventured to enact in this thesis is what Jonathan Boyarin, discussing the intersection of Native American and Jewish studies, has described as 'a careful tracing, along back paths not already guarded by the intellectual patrols of neoimperialism, of the border lines where comparative experiences of imperial victimization and resistance meet and separate.' What emerges in my research, as in Boyarin's, is a recognition that '[t]hese paths and borders, of course, are not to be found on any Cartesian plane, nor will they stay in the same place as we change our relation to them.'[5] The example of primitivism as an externally imposed set of motifs offers perhaps the most striking example of the deformation of this Cartesian plane in the context of literary modernism. It exemplifies a point of separation of these 'border lines' between Irish, African American, and Caribbean writers. For these writers, primitivism was explored as a potential discourse to fulfil what James Weldon Johnson calls for in the preface to *The Book of American Negro Poetry*: 'a form that will express the racial spirit by symbols from within rather than symbols from without'. Langston Hughes's expression of primitivism as an imposition demonstrate that it constituted a collection of 'symbols from without', and was therefore ultimately insufficient as a model for Johnson's 'form': 'I did not feel the rhythms of the primitive surging through me, and so I could not live and write as though I did.'[6]

Crucially, the process of bringing to the fore 'symbols from within' was for Johnson 'what Synge did for the Irish'. The acknowledgement of Synge marks an important conjunction between

[5] Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 19.
[6] Hughes, *The Big Sea*, p. 325.

black and Irish attempts to locate these internal symbols. It was the deformations and reformations of ethnography, rather than primitivism, that offered a potential grammar and medium for the 'form' that Johnson calls for. The variety of ethnographic production and the modes of staging ethnographic discourse through fiction and poetry that I have considered gesture to the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of locating and implementing this form. At the same time, it was in fact this very heterogeneity of approach and the creative articulations that this engendered, that allowed both Irish modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, through a critical evaluation of the utility of ethnography, to make sense of the 'formless spawning fury' of modernity.[7]

[7] Yeats, 'The Statues', in *Poems*, pp. 344–5 (p. 345).

Bibliography

ARCHIVAL AND MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

Alain Locke Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC

Barnicle, Mary Elizabeth and Tillman Cadle, interview conducted by Gene Moore, (AFC 1979/077), Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, DC

Claude McKay Papers, James Weldon Johnson Collection of Negro Literature and Art, American Literature Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Kennedy, Stetson, Herbert Halpert, and Zora Neale Hurston, 'Halimuhfack', *Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections, 1937–1942*, Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/flwpa000014>

PRINTED AND DIGITAL MATERIALS

Aithal, S. Krishnamoorthy, 'Allusions to the Buddha in *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 16 (Summer 1979), 510–1

Allar, Neal A., 'Rhizomatic Influence: The Antigenealogy of Glissant and Deleuze', *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 6 (January 2019), 1–13.

Alston, Vermonja Romona, 'Race-Crossings at the Crossroads of African American Travel in the Caribbean' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Arizona, 2004)

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn (London: Verso, 2006)

Appadurai, Arjun, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996)

Ardener, Edwin, 'Social Anthropology and the Decline of Modernism', in *Reason and Morality*, ed. by Joanna Overing (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985), pp. 47–70

Arnold, Matthew, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. by J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932)

———, 'On the Study of Celtic Literature', in *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, ed. by R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 291-386

Baker, Jr., Houston A., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

———, 'Modernity and the Harlem Renaissance', *American Quarterly*, 39 (Spring 1987), 84–97

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981)

———, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. and ed. by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)
———, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, trans. by Vern W. McGee; ed. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986)
Barnes, Alfred C., 'Negro Art and America', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 19–28
Battaglia, Rosemarie, 'Yeats, Nietzche, and the Aristocratic Ideal', *College Literature*, 13 (1986), 88–94
Baudrillard, Jean, *The Mirror of Production*, trans. by Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975)
Bhabha, Homi K., 'The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994; repr. 2004), pp. 94–120
Boas, Franz, 'Preface', in Zora Neale Hurston, *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995), p. ix.
Boas, George, and Arthur Lovejoy, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1935)
Boehmer, Elleke, *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)
Booker, Keith, '*Ulysses', Capitalism, and Colonialism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000)
Bossche, Chris R. Vanden, *Carlyle and the Search for Authority* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991)
Bourgeois, Maurice, *John Millington Synge and the Irish Theatre* (London: Constable, 1913)
Boyd, Valerie, *Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston* (New York: Scribner, 2004)
Boynton, T. J., '"Things That Are Outside of Ourselves": Ethnology, Colonialism, and the Ontological Critique of Capitalism in Matthew Arnold's Criticism', *English Literary History*, 80 (2013), 149–172
Braddock, Jeremy, *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012)
Brannigan, John, *Archipelagic Modernism: Literature in the Irish and British Isles, 1890–1970* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015)
———, *Race in Modern Irish Literature and Culture* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2009)
Brathwaite, Edward Kamau, *History of the Voice* (London: New Beacon Books, 1984)
Brooks, Daphne A., '"Sister, Can You Line It Out?": Zora Neale Hurston and the Sound of Angular Black Womanhood', *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, 55, 'African American Literary Studies: New Texts, New Approaches, New Challenges' (2010), 617–27
Bryan, Patrick, 'The Creolization of the Chinese Community in Jamaica', in *Ethnic Minorities in Caribbean Society*, ed. by Rohda Reddock (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1996), pp. 173–272
Budgen, Frank, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1934; repr. 1960)
Bulhof, Francis, 'Agendath Again', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 7 (1970), 326–32
Burke, Mary, *'Tinkers': Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
Byron, George Gordon, *Don Juan* (London: Thomas Davison, 1819)
Cameron, Verney Lovett, '[On the Anthropology of Africa]', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 6 (1877), 167–181

Carlyle, Thomas, 'The Repeal of the Union', in *Essays on Politics and Society*, ed. by John M. Ulrich, Lowell T. Frye, and Chris R. Vanden Bossche (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), pp. 181–190
———, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle,* ed. by Joseph Slater (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964)
Carville, Justin, 'Visible Others: Photography and Romantic Ethnography in Ireland', in *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive*, ed. by Maria McGarrity and Claire A. Culleton (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 93–114
Castle, Gregory, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
———, 'Staging Ethnography: John M. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* and the Problem of Cultural Translation', *Theatre Journal*, 49 (October 1997), 265–86
Chadwick, Joseph, 'Violence in Yeats's Later Politics and Poetry', *ELH*, 55 (1988), 869–893
Cheng, Vincent, *Inauthentic: The Anxiety Over Culture and Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004)
———, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
Chrostowska, Sylwia Dominika, 'Consumed by Nostalgia?', *SubStance*, 39.2 (2010), 52–70
Cixous, Hélène, *The Exile of James Joyce*, trans. by Sally A. J. Purcell (New York: David Lewis, 1972)
Clifford, James, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988)
Cloutier, Jean-Christophe, *Shadow Archives: The Lifecycles of African American Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019)
Coles, Robert A., and Dianne Isaacs, 'Primitivism as a Therapeutic Pursuit: Notes Toward a Reassessment of Harlem Renaissance Literature', in *The Harlem Renaissance: Revaluations*, ed. by Amritjit Singh, William S. Shiver, and Stan Brodwin (New York: Garland, 1989), pp. 3–12
Conley, Tim, *Joyces Mistakes: Problems of Intention, Irony, and Interpretation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003)
Cooper, Wayne F., 'Claude McKay And The New Negro Of The 1920's', *Phylon*, 25.3 (1964), 297–306
Cronyn, George W. (ed.), *The Path on the Rainbow: An Anthology of Songs and Chants From the Indians of North America* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918)
Crooke, Elizabeth, *Museums and Community: Ideas, Issues and Challenges* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008)
Cullen, Countee, *Color* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1925)
———, 'Foreword', in *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets*, ed. by Cullen (New York: Harper, 1927), pp. vii–xii
———, 'Heritage', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 250–3
———, letter to Alain Locke, 28 November 1924, Alain Locke Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC
Cullerton, Claire A. and Maria McGarrity (eds.), *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
Curtius, Ernst Robert, 'Technique and Thematic Development of James Joyce', trans. by Eugène Jolas, *transition*, 16–17 (June 1929), 310–25

Curtis, Lewis Perry, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd edn (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1997).
Daily Gleaner, 7 April 1879; 27 January 1912; 25 November 1912; 5 November 1928
Daly, Nicholas, *Modernism, Romance and the 'Fin de Siècle': Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)
Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987)
de Nie, MIchael, 'Pigs, Paddies, Prams and Petticoats: Irish Home Rule and the British Comic Press, 1886-93', *History of Ireland*, 13.1 (January–February, 2005), 42–7
Diagne, Souleymane Bachir, 'Négritude', The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2023) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/negritude/> [Accessed 3 March 2023].
Doggett, Rob, 'Writing out (Of) Chaos: Constructions of History in Yeats's "Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen" and "Meditations in Time of Civil War"', *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 47 (2001), 137–168
Donato, Eugenio, 'Tristes Tropiques: The Endless Journey', *Modern Language Notes*, 81 (May 1966), 270–287
Doyle, Arthur Conan, *The Stark Munro Letters* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1895; repr. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1912)
Doyle, Laura, 'Races and Chains: The Sexuo-Racial Matrix in Ulysses', in *Joyce: The Return of the Repressed*, ed. by Susan Stanford Friedman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 149–189
Drouin, Jeffrey, *James Joyce, Science, and Modernist Print Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2015)
Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. by Brent Hayes Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
Duffy, Enda, *The Subaltern 'Ulysses'* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)
Dunbar, Eve E., *Black Regions of the Imagination: African American Writers between the Nation and the World* (Philadelphia, Temple University press, 2013)
Dundes, Alan (ed.), *International Folkloristics: Classic Contributions by the Founders of Folklore* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999)
Dunham, Katherine, *Island Possessed* (1969; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
Eagleton, Terry, 'The Archaic Avant-Garde', in *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 273–319
Echeruo, M. J. C., 'American Negro Poetry', *Phylon (1960–)*, 24 (1963), 62–68
Edwards, Brent Hayes, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003)
Edwards, Elizabeth, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001)
———, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Philips (eds.), *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006; repr. Abingdon: Routledge, 2020)
Eliot, Thomas Stearns, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', *Poetry*, 6 (1915), 130–5
———, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920; repr. 1957), pp. 47–59
———, '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth', *Dial*, November 1923, pp. 480–3

Ellmann, Richard, *The Consciousness of Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977)
———, *James Joyce: New and Revised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)
Emery, Amy Fass, 'The Zombie In/As the Text: Zora Neale Hurston's Tell My Horse', *African American Review*, 39.3 (Fall, 2005), 327–366
Eriksen, Ingunn, 'The Manly Love of Comrades: Male Romantic Friendship and Masculinity in "Tennessee's Partner," *The Shadow of a Dream*, and *Home to Harlem*' (unpublished candidata philologiæ thesis, University of Oslo, 2005)
Etherington, Ben, *Literary Primitivism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018)
Eze, Emmanuel Chukuwudi, 'Language and Time in Postcolonial Experience', *Research in African Literatures,* 39 (Spring 2008), 24–47
Fabian, Johannes, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)
Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. by Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967; repr. London: Pluto Press, 2008)
———, 'Racism and Culture', in *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*, trans. by Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1969; repr. 1988), pp. 29–44
Finn, Jonathan, *Capturing the Criminal Image: From Mug Shot to Surveillance Society* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)
Finn, Julio, *Voices of Négritude* (London: Quartet, 1988)
Fischer, Michael M. J., 'Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 194–233
Fitzpatrick, David, 'Synge and Modernity in *The Aran Islands*', in *Synge and Edwardian Ireland*, ed. by Brian Cliff and Nicholas Grene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 120–158
Foley, Barbara, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2003)
Förster-Nietzsche, Elisabeth, 'Introduction', in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. by Thomas Common (1909; repr. New York: Modern Library, 1917), pp. ix–xxiii
Foster, Hal, 'The "Primitive" Unconscious of Modern Art', *October*, 34 (1985), 45–70
Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995)
Fraser, Robert (ed.), *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination: Essays in Affinity and Influence* (New York: Macmillan, 1990)
Frazer, James George, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3rd edn (1915; repr. London: St Martin's Press, 1990)
Frazier, E. Franklin, 'La Bourgeoisie Noire', in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader,* ed. by David Levering Lewis (New York: Penguin 1994), pp. 173–181
Frydman, Jason, *Sounding the Break: African American and Caribbean Routes of World Literature* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014)
———, ''Zora Neale Hurston, Biographical Criticism, and African Diasporic Vernacular Culture', *Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 24 (Winter 2009), 99–118

Garrigan Mattar, Sinéad, *Primitivism, Science, and the Irish Revival* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
Garvey, Marcus, 'Africa for the Africans', *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. by David Levering Lewis (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 17–25
Gates, Jr., Henry Louis, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)
Gibbons, Luke, *Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)
———, 'Race Against Time: Racial Discourse and Irish History', *Oxford Literary Review*, 13 (1991), 95–117
———, *Transformations in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996)
Gifford, Don, and Robert Seidman, '*Ulysses' Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's 'Ulysses'*, 2nd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)
Gilroy, Paul, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993)
Glasheen, Adaline, *Third Census of 'Finnegans Wake'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977)
Glissant, Édouard, 'Errantry, Exile', in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 11–22
———, 'The French Language in the Face of Creolization', in *French Civilization and its Discontents: Nationalism, Colonialism, Race*, ed. by Tyler Stovall and Georges Van Den Abbeele (New York: Lexington Books: 2003), pp. 105–113
Gould, Warwick, 'Frazer, Yeats and the Reconsecration of Folklore', in *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination*, ed. by Robert Fraser (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 121–153
Grau, Anna Kathryn, 'Hearing Voices: Heteroglossia, Homoglossia, and the Old French Motet', *Musica Disciplina*, 58 (2013), 73–100
Greene, David H., 'The Playboy and Irish Nationalism', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 46.2 (April 1947), 199–204
———, '*The Shadow of the Glen* and the Widow of Ephesus', *PMLA*, 62 (March 1947), 233–8
———, and Edward M. Stephens, *J. M. Synge 1871–1909* (New York: Macmillan, 1959)
Griffith, Arthur, 'The Abbey Theatre', *Sinn Féin*, 2 February 1907, p. 4
Gruening, Martha, 'The Negro Renaissance', in *The New Negro: Readings on Race, Representation, and African American Culture, 1892–1938*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Gene Andrew Jarrett (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 240–6
Haddon, Alfred Cort, and Charles R. Browne, 'The Ethnography of the Aran Islands, County Galway', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 2 (1891–93), 769–830
Hamilton, Thomas, 'Apology', *The Anglo-African Magazine*, January 1859, p. 1
Harper, Frances, 'National Salvation: A Lecture Delivered Last Evening at National Hall, by Mrs. F. E. W. Harper, with Some Account of the Lecturer', *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph*, 1 February 1867
———, 'Moses: A Story of the Nile', in *Women's Work: An Anthology of African-American Women's Historical Writings from Antebellum America to the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp and Kathryn Lofton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 33–49

Harrison, Beth, 'Zora Neale Hurston and Mary Austin: A Case Study in Ethnography, Literary Modernism, and Contemporary Ethnic Fiction', *Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 21.2, 'Varieties of Ethnic Criticism' (Summer, 1996), 89–106

Hart, Matthew, *Nations of Nothing But Poetry: Modernism, Transnationalism, and Synthetic Vernacular Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Harte, Bret, *The Heathen Chinee* (Chicago: Western New Company, 1870)

———, 'Plain Language from Truthful James', *Overland Monthly*, September 1870, pp. 287–8

Hathaway, Heather, *Caribbean Waves: Relocating Claude McKay and Paule Marshall* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991)

Haverty, Martin, *The Aran Isles: or, a Report of the Excursion of the Technological Section of the British Association from Dublin to the western Isles of Aran, in September, 1857* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1859)

Heaney, Seamus, 'Synge on Aran', in *Death of a Naturalist* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 52.

Hegeman, *Patterns for America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1999).

Hemenway, Robert, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977; repr. 1980)

Herskovits, Melville, 'The Negro's Americanism', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 353–61

Hill, Geoffrey, '"The Conscious Mind's Intelligible Structure": A Debate', *Agenda*, 9.4/10.1 (Autumn/ Winter 1971/2), 14–23

Holdeman, David, *Much Labouring: The Texts and Authors of Yeats's First Modernist Books* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997)

Hughes, Langston, 'Afro-American Fragment', *Crisis*, July 1930, p. 235.

———, *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes,* ed. by Arnold Rampersad (New York: Knopf, 1994)

———, *The Big Sea* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940; repr. London: Pluto Press, 1986)

———, 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain', in *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, ed. by David Levering Lewis (New York: Penguin 1994), pp. 91–5

Hurst, Fannie, 'Zora Hurston: A Personality Sketch', *The Yale University Library Gazette*, 35.1 (July, 1960), 17–22

Hurston, Zora Neale, *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1995)

———, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000)

———, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1939; repr. New York: HarperCollins, 1991)

———, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters, ed. by Carla Kaplan* (New York: Anchor, 2003)

Hutchinson, George, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995)

Hyde, Douglas, *A Literary History of Ireland* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1899)

———, 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland', in *The Revival of Irish Literature: Addresses by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, K.C.M.G., Dr. George Sigerson, and Dr. Douglas Hyde* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1894)

James, Cyril Lionel Robert, *A History of Negro Revolt* (New York: Haskell House, 1938)

James, Winston, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth- Century America* (London: Verso Books, 1998)
Jameson, Frederic, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in T*he Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 111–125
Jastrebski, Joan, 'Pig Dialectics: Women's Bodies as Performed Dialectical Images in the Circe Episode of *Ulysses*', in *James Joyce and the Fabrication of an Irish Identity*, ed. by Michael Patrick Gillespie (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 151–175
Jenkins, Lee M., '"Black Murphy": Claude McKay and Ireland', *Irish University Review*, 33 (Autumn–Winter 2003), 279–90
Jenkins, William D., 'It Seems There Were Two Irishmen', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 15 (1969), 63–71
Johnson, Barbara, 'Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (Autumn 1985), 278–289
Johnson, Charles Spurgeon, 'The Negro Renaissance and its Significance', in *Remembering the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Cary. D Wintz (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp. 226–233
Johnson, Helene, 'Bottled', *Vanity Fair*, May 1927, p. 76
———, 'Fulfillment', *Opportunity*, June 1926, p. 194
———, 'Futility', *Opportunity*, August 1926, p. 259
———, 'Magalu', in *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets*, ed. by Countee Cullen (New York: Harper, 1927), pp. 223–4
———, 'A Missionary Brings a Young Native to America', *Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life*, 1 (1928), 40
———, *This Waiting for Love: Helene Johnson, Poet of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. by Verner D. Mitchell (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000)
Johnson, James Weldon (ed.), *The American Book of Negro Poetry* (New York: Harcourt Press, 1922)
Jones, Ellen Carol, 'Memorial Dublin', in *Joyce, Benjamin and Magical Urbanism*, ed. by Maurizia Boscagli and Enda Duffy (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), pp. 59–121
Jones, Jeannette Eileen, *In Search of Brightest Africa: Reimagining the Dark Continent in American Culture, 1884–1936* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011)
Joyce, James, *The Critical Writings of James Joyce*, ed. by. Ellsworth Mason and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking, 1959)
———, *Dubliners: An Annotated Edition*, ed by. John Wyse Jackson and Bernard McGinley (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1993)
———, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Viking, 1939)
———, *Letters of James Joyce*, ed. by Stuart Gilbert and Richard Ellmann, 3 vols (London: Faber 1957; New York: Viking, 1966)
———, *Joyce's Notes and Early Drafts for 'Ulysses': Selections from the Buffalo Collection*, ed. by Philip F. Herring (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1977)
———, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. by Chester G. Anderson (New York: Viking, 1964; repr. 1970)
———, *Stephen Hero*, ed. by Theodore Spencer, John J. Slocum, and Herbert Cahoon (London: New Directions, 1963)
———, *Ulysses*, ed. Jeri Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

———, *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. by Hans Walter Gabler, Wolfhard Steppe, and Claus Melchior (New York: Random House, 1986)
Kelleher, John, 'Matthew Arnold and the Celtic Revival', in *Perspectives of Criticism*, ed. by Harry Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 197–221
Keller, James, '"A Chafing Savage, Down the Decent Street": The Politics of Compromise in Claude McKay's Protest Sonnets', *African American Review*, 28 (Autumn 1994), 447–456
Kelly, John, 'Eliot and Yeats', *Yeats Annual*, 20, 'Essays in Honour of Eamonn Cantwell' (2016), 179–227
Kenner, Hugh, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)
———, *Ulysses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980; repr. 1987)
Kershner, R. Brandon, 'Ulysses and the Orient', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 35 (Winter–Spring 1998), 273–296
Kiberd, Declan, *Synge and the Irish Language* (London: Macmillan, 1979)
———, 'Synge's Tristes Tropiques: The Aran Islands', in *Interpreting Synge: Essays from the Synge Summer School 1991–2000*, ed. by Nicholas Grene (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2000), pp. 82–110
Kipling, Rudyard, 'Manadalay', in *Departmental Ditties and Ballads and Barrack-Room Ballads* (London: Macmillan, 1892; repr. New York: Doubleday, 1919), pp. 190–193
———, *Kim* (London: Macmillan, 1901; repr. New York: Doubleday, 1959)
Kirby, David K., 'Countee Cullen's "Heritage": A Black "Waste Land"', *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 36 (1971), 14–20
Knights, Lionel Charles, 'W. B. Yeats: The Assertion of Values', in *W. B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by William H. Pritchard (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 182–6
Knowlton, Clark S., 'The Social and Spatial Mobility of the Syrian and Lebanese Community in São Paulo, Brazil', in *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, ed. by Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992)
Knox, Robert, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850; repr. Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing, 1969)
Kodat, Catherine Gunther, 'Biting the Hand That Writes You: Southern African-American Folk Narrative and the Place of Women in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*', in *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Texts*, ed. by Anne Goodwyn Jones and Susan V. Donaldson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), pp. 319–343
Konzett, Delia, *Ethnic Modernisms: Anzia Yezierska, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Rhys, and the Aesthetics of Dislocation* (New York: Palgrave, 2002)
Krause, David, 'Synge's Aesthetic Regeneration of Ireland', *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 20 (July 1994), 74–88
'The Lahore Museum', *Athenæum*, 9 August 1879, p. 185
Lancia, Kathleen, 'The Ethnographic Roots of Joyce's Modernism: Exhibiting Ireland's Primitives in the National Museum and the "Nestor" Episode', in *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive*, ed. by Claire A. Cullerton and Maria McGarrity (New York: Macmillan, 2009)
Lang, Andrew, 'The Celtic Renascence', *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1897, pp. 181–91
Larkin, Philip, 'Going, Going', in *High Windows* (London: Faber, 1974), p. 22
Lawrence, Karen, *The Odyssey of Style in 'Ulysses'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (New York: Atheneum, 1975)
Lewis, Pericles, 'The Conscience of the Race: The Nation as Church of the Modern Age', in *Joyce through the Ages: A Nonlinear View*, ed. by Michael Patrick Gillespie (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), pp. 85–106
Lindberg, Katheryne V., 'Rebels to the Right/Revolution to the Left: Ezra Pound and Claude McKay in "The Syndicalist Year" of 1912', *Paideuma*, 29 (2000), 11–77
Litz, Arthur Walton, 'Pound and Eliot on *Ulysses*: The Critical Tradition', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 10 (1972), 5–18
Locke, Alain, 'The New Negro', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 3–16
Lowney, John, 'Haiti And Black Transnationalism: Remapping The Migrant Geography of Home To Harlem', *African American Review*, 34 (Autumn 2000), 413–429
Lupton, Julia Reinhard, 'Mapping Mutability: or, Spenser's Irish plot', in *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534–1660*, ed. by Brendan Bradshaw, Andrew Hadfield, and Willy Maley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 93–115
Lynes, Katherine R., '"A real honest-to-cripe jungle": Contested Authenticities in Helene Johnson's "Bottled"', *Modernism/modernity,* 14 (2007), 517–525
Lyotard, Jean-Francois, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)
MacBride, Maud Gonne, and W. B. Yeats, *The Gonne-Yeats Letters*, ed. by Anna MacBride White and A. Norman Jeffares (New York: Norton, 1992)
Macharia, Keguro, *Frottage: Frictions of Intimacy across the Black Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2019)
Mackintosh, Daniel, *On the Comparative Anthropology of England and Wales* (London: Trübner, 1866)
MacNeice, Louis, 'Yeats's Epitaph', in *W. B. Yeats: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by William H. Pritchard (London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 168–70
Malinowski, Bronisław, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, trans. by Norbert Guterman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967; repr. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989)
———, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge, 1922)
———, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2013)
———, *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (London: Routledge, 1929; repr. 1932)
Manganaro, Marc, 'Textual Play, Power, and Cultural Critique: An Orientation to Modernist Anthropology', in *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text*, ed. by Manganaro (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 3–47
Manganiello, Dominic, *Joyce's Politics* (London: Routledge, 1980)
Massy, Richard Tuthill, *Analytical Ethnology: The Mixed Tribes in Great Britain and Ireland Examined and the Political, Physical, and Metaphysical Blunderings on the Celt and the Saxon Exposed* (London: H. Bailliere, 1855)
McCabe, Tracy, 'The Multifaceted Politics of Primitivism in Harlem Renaissance Writing', *Soundings*, 80 (Winter 1997), 475–497

McCormack, W. J., *Fool of the Family: A Life of J. M. Synge* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2000)
McDowell, 'Foreword: Lines of Descent/Dissenting Lines', in Zora Neale Hurston, *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1939; repr. New York: HarperCollins, 1991)
McKay, Claude, *Amiable with Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair Between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*, ed. by Jean-Christophe Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards (New York: Penguin, 2017)
———, *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* (New York: Harper, 1929)
———, *Complete Poems*, ed. by William J. Maxwell (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008)
———, *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1940; repr. New York: Harvest, 1968)
———, *Home to Harlem* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987)
———, *The Passion of Claude McKay: Selected Poetry and Prose, 1912–1948*, ed. by Wayne F. Cooper (New York: Schocken, 1973)
McKay, Uriah Theodore, letter to Claude McKay, 2 August 1929, Claude McKay Papers, James Weldon Johnson Collection of Negro Literature and Art, American Literature Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Meisel, Perry, *The Myth of the Modern: A Study in British Literature and Criticism after 1850* (New Haven: CT, Yale University Press, 1987)
Meyer, Kuno, *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry* (London: Constable & Company, 1911)
Miller, Nina, *Making Love Modern: The Intimate Public Worlds of New York's Literary Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)
Mishkin, Tracy, *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances: Language, Identity, and Representation* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida 1998)
Moore, George, *Hail and Farewell: Ave* (London: Heinemann, 1911)
———, The *Untilled Field*, (London: George Bell, 1903)
Moran, David Patrick, *The Philosophy of Irish Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1905)
Morrell, Sascha, '"There is No Female Word for Busha in These Parts": Zora Neale Hurston, Katherine Dunham and Women's Experience in 1930s Haiti and Jamaica', *Australian Humanities Review*, 64 (May 2019), 158–176
Mottolese, William C., '"Wandering Rocks" as Ethnography? Or Ethnography on the Rocks, *James Joyce Quarterly*, 39 (Winter 2002), 251–274
O'Brien, Conor Cruise (ed.), *The Shaping of Modern Ireland* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970)
O'Callaghan, Katherine 'Joyce's "treeless hills": Deforestation and Its Cultural Resonances', in *Memory Ireland, Volume 4: James Joyce and Cultural Memory*, ed. by Oona Frawley and Katherine O'Callaghan (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), pp. 95–111
Ó Floinn, Raghnall, and Patrick F. Wallace (eds.), *Treasures of the National Museum of Ireland: Irish Antiquities* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002)
O'Grady, Standish, *History of Ireland: The Heroic Period*, 2 vols (London: Sampson Low, Searle, Marston, & Rivington, 1878–80), I
'THE OLD WOMAN AND HER PIG', *Punch*, 104 (18 February 1893)
Onkey, Lauren, *Blackness and Transatlantic Irish Identity: Celtic Soul Brothers* (New York: Routledge, 2010)

Palmer, A. Mitchell, *Letter from the Attorney General Transmitting in Response to a Senate Resolution October 17, 1919, a Report on the Activities of the Bureau of Investigation of the Department of Justice Against Persons Advising Anarchy, Sedition, and the Forcible Overthrow of the Government* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919)

Panko, Julia, 'Curating the Colony: Museums in *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 51 (Winter–Spring 2014), 353–70

Patterson, Robert J., 'A Triple-Twined Re-appropriation: Womanist Theology and Gendered-Racial Protest in the Writings of Jarena Lee, Frances E. W. Harper, and Harriet Jacobs', *Religion & Literature,* 45 (2013), 55–82

———, *Exodus Politics: Civil Rights and Leadership in African American Literature and Culture* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2013)

Peppis, Paul, *Sciences of Modernism: Ethnography, Sexology, and Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)

Perina, Mickaella L., 'Beyond Négritude and Créolité: The Ongoing Creolization of Identities', *CLR James Journal*, 15 (Spring 2009), 67–91

Philipson, Robert, 'The Harlem Renaissance as Postcolonial Phenomenon', *African American Review*, 40 (Spring 2006), 145–160

Platt, Len, 'The Buckeen and the Dogsbody: Aspects of History and Culture in "Telemachus"', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 27 (1989–90), 77–86

———, *Joyce, Race and 'Finnegans Wake'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Rabinow, Paul, 'Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Postmodernity in Anthropology,' in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 234–261

Radcliffe, Evan, 'Yeats and the Quest for Unity: "Among School Children" and Unity of Being', *Colby Quarterly*, 21.3 (September, 1985), 109–121

Raiford, Leigh, 'Marcus Garvey in Stereograph', *Small Axe*, 17 (March 2013), 263–80

Rampersad, Arnold, 'Introduction', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. ix–xxiii

Renan, Ernest, *The Poetry of the Celtic Races and Other Essays*, trans. by William G. Hutchinson (London: Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1896)

Rhodes, Colin, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994)

Rice, Thomas Jackson, 'Conan Doyle, James Joyce, and the Completion of 'Ulysses', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 53 (2016), 203–34

Richardson, Willis, 'The Hope of a Negro Drama', *Crisis*, 19 (1919), 338–9

Ritter, Emily R., '"Belch the pity! / Straddle the city!": Helene Johnson's Late Poetry and the Rhetoric of Empowerment', *African American Review*, 47 (Winter 2014), 495–509

Roche, Anthony, 'J. M. Synge: Journeys Real and Imagined', *Journal of Irish Studies*, 16 (2001), 78–98

Rolleston, Thomas William, 'Some Recent Translations from the Gaelic', *All Ireland Review*, 26 May 1900, p. 2

Rose-Brown, J. A., *Critical Nostalgia and Caribbean Migration* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009)

Rowell, Charles H., 'An Interview With Chinua Achebe', *Callaloo*, 13 (1990), 86–101

Saddlemyer, Ann (ed.), *Theatre Business: The Correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J.M. Synge* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982)
Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978)
———, 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors', *Critical Inquiry*, 15 (Winter 1989), 205–25
Saint-Amour, Paul K., *The Copywrights: Intellectual Property and the Literary Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003)
Schomburg, Arthur A., 'The Negro Digs Up His Past', in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, ed. by Alain Locke (New York: Atheneum, 1925; repr. 1992), pp. 231–7
Senn, Fritz, 'The Joyce of Impossibilities', in *Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative*, ed. by Colleen Jaurretche (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 197–212
Sera-Shriar, Efram, 'What Is Armchair Anthropology? Observational Practices in 19th-Century British Human Sciences', *History of the Human Sciences*, 27.1 (2014), 26–40
Sheehy, Jeanne, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival 1830-1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980)
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 'Ozymandias', *Examiner*, 11 January 1818, p. 24.
Simmons, Ryan, '"The Hierarchy Itself": Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and the Sacrifice of Narrative Authority', *African American Review*, 36 (Summer 2002), 181–93
Sisson, Elaine, 'The Aran Islands and the Travel Essays', in *The Cambridge Companion to J. M. Synge*, ed. by P. J. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 52–63
Smith, Felipe, *American Body Politics: Race, Gender, and Black Literary Renaissance* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998)
Smurthwaite, John, 'That Indian God', *James Joyce Broadsheet*, 61 (February 2002)
Sowell, Thomas, *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005)
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313
Spurr, David, 'Myths of Anthropology: Eliot, Joyce, Lévy-Bruhl', *PMLA*, 109 (1994), 266–80
Srivastava, Neelam, *Italian Colonialism and Resistances to Empire, 1930–1970* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)
Stead, Christian Karlson, *The New Poetic: Yeats to Eliot* (London: Hutchinson, 1964)
Stocking, Jr., George W., 'The Ethnographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski', in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. by Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), pp. 70–120
———, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1987)
Summers-Bremner, Eluned, 'Unreal City and Dream Deferred: Psychogeographies of Modernism in T. S. Eliot and Langston Hughes', in *Geomodemisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 262–80
Synge, John Millington, *The Collected Letters of J. M. Synge*, ed. by Ann Saddlemyer, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), II
———, *Collected Works*, ed. by Robin Skelton et al., 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1962–8), II: *Prose*, ed. by Alan Price (1966)

Tedlock, Barbara, 'From Participant Observation to Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 41 (1991), 61–94

Thornton, Weldon, *Allusions in 'Ulysses': A Line-by-Line Reference to Joyce's Complex Symbolism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961; repr. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973)

Thurman, Kira, 'Singing the Civilizing Mission in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms: The Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nineteenth-Century Germany', *Journal of World History*, 27 (September 2016), 443–471.

Torgovnick, Marianna, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Vickery, John B., 'Finnegans Wake and Sexual Metamorphosis', *Contemporary Literature*, 13 (1972), 213–242

———, 'Frazer and the Elegiac: The Modernist Connection', in *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text*, ed. by Marc Manganaro (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 51–68

———, *The Literary Impact of 'The Golden Bough'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973)

Walcott, Derek, *Collected Poems 1948–1984* (London: Faber, 1992)

Walcott, Rinaldo, 'Queer Texts and Performativity: Zora, Rap, and Community', in *Queer Theory in Education*, ed. by William F. Pinar (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998)

Weheliye, Alexander G., *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005)

Westover, Jeff, 'Africa/America: Fragmentation and Diaspora in the Work of Langston Hughes', *Callaloo*, 25 (2002), 1206–1223

Wheatley, Phillis, 'To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Secretary of State for North America, Etc.', in *Poems of Phillis Wheatley* (London: 1773; repr. Philadelphia: R. R. and C. C. Wright, 1909), pp. 50–2

Wiggam, Albert, *The Fruit of the Family Tree* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1924)

Williams, Charlotte, 'The Celtic Nations and the African Americas: Reclaiming the '*lost cause*'?, *Comparative American Studies*, 8 (December 2010), 323–6

Williams, Daniel G., *Ethnicity and Cultural Authority: From Arnold to Du Bois* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006)

———, 'Introduction: Celticism and the Black Atlantic', *Comparative American Studies*, 8 (June 2010), 81–7

Williams, Paul, *Paul Gilroy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013)

Witt, Marion, 'A Note on Joyce and Yeats', *Modern Language Notes*, 63 (1948), 552–3

Yamasaki, Hiroyuki, 'Yeats and Darkness: The Hybrid Source of Values', *Journal of Irish Studies,* 20 (2005), 3–11

Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, Vol. II: 1896–1900*, ed. by Warwick Gould, John Kelly and Deirdre Toomey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)

———, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, Vol. III,* ed. by John Kelly and Ronald Schuchard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. I: The Poems*, ed. by Richard J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 1997)

———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. III: Autobiographies*, ed. by Douglas Archibald and William H. O'Donnell (New York: Scribner, 2010)
———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. IV: Early Essays*, ed. by George Bornstein and R. J. Finneran, (New York: Scriber, 2007)
———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. IX: Early Articles and Reviews*, ed. by John P. Frayne and Madeleine Marchaterre (New York: Scribner, 2004)
———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. VII: Letters to the New Island*, ed. by George Bornstein and Hugh Witemeyer (New York: Macmillan: 1989)
———, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. VIII: The Irish Dramatic Movement*, ed. by M. FitzGerald and R. J. Finneran (New York: Scribner, 2003)
———, *Ideas of Good and Evil* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1903)
———, 'Introduction', in Ezra Pound (ed.), *Certain Noble Plays of Japan: From the Manuscripts of Ernest Fenollosa* (Dundrum: Cuala Press, 1916), pp. i–xix (pp. iii, viii).
———, 'Introduction', in Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (London: Chiswick Press, 1912), pp. vii–xvi
———, 'Poetry and Science in Folklore', *The Academy*, 11 October 1890, p. 320
———, 'T'Yeer-Na-N-Og', in *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, ed. by Yeats (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Company, 1888), p. 200
———, *Yeats's 'Vision' Papers, Vol. 3: Sleep and Dream Notebook, 'Vision' Notebooks 1 and 2, Card File*, ed. by Robert Anthony Martinich and Margaret Mills Harper (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992)
Zwerdling, Alex, *Yeats and the Heroic Ideal* (New York: New York University Press, 1965)