

AUTOBIOGRAPHY'S QUEER FORMS:
MODERNIST SELF-WRITING FROM AUDEN TO H.D.

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The cure for all ills is (a) indiscriminate sexual intercourse; (b) autobiography.
— W.H. Auden, “Psychology and Art To-Day”

I. Modernism and Autobiography

This dissertation considers the work of four queer modernists: W.H. Auden, Gertrude Stein, Elizabeth Bishop, and H.D. These authors have all been considered autobiographers, but their relationships to autobiography as a genre are variously ambivalent. Auden wrote occasional poems based on his life, including the volume of travel-writing, *Letters to Iceland*; nonetheless, he has been described as a speaker who is “playing at autobiography, suffering its generic demands with good humor, while the essential Auden...remains enigmatically removed from the scene of writing.”¹ Stein’s *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and *Everybody’s Autobiography* are often read as satires of autobiographic conventions.² Bishop’s poetry has been read through the lens of her biography, but her most influential readers have reminded us that she “abhorred” confessional writing, and the collapse of author and voice.³ Finally, H.D. wrote memoirs including *Tribute to Freud* and *The Gift*, and autobiographical novels including *HERmione*, *Paint it Today*, and *Asphodel*. Still, her bisexuality, as well as her interest in occultism and mysticism, are only obliquely mentioned in these texts, and criticism focuses on strategies of silence, fragmentation, and the presentation of multiple selves to present her queer experience and esoteric spirituality.⁴

Modernist autobiography has only recently become a topic in literary criticism; Laura Marcus writes that “There has been a long-held assumption that the genre of autobiography did not flourish in the contexts of literary modernism, with few of the writers most fully associated with Anglophone modernism producing fully-fledged autobiographical works.”⁵ Although modernism was, for the first half of the 20th century, a genre associated with Eliotic impersonality, several recent volumes have drawn attention to autobiographical works by non-canonical modernists, and have considered authors including James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and even T.S. Eliot as autobiographers.⁶ Maria Di Battista and Emily O. Wittman provide a definition of the genre: “Modernist autobiography troubles both ‘bios’ —the life matter—and the ‘auto’ —the grammatical and existential first person—of the form.”⁷ The authors in this study likewise “trouble” autobiographical form: Auden and Stein redefine how a “self” comes to be expressed in literature, while Bishop and H.D. expand the field of “life” to contain experiences beyond the human—two points that I will return to later in this introduction.

Modernism writ large was skeptical of autobiography, and the queer modernists in this study had an even more complex relationship to the culture of the early 20th century, in which popular memoir flourished and psychoanalysis encouraged confessional narratives.⁸ The scope of these queer writers’ practice was limited by both laws and existing sexual mores; they wrote in the wake of Oscar Wilde’s trials and imprisonment, as well as the banning of Radclyffe Hall’s *The Well of Loneliness* (1928). Autobiography has traditionally been understood as a genre that allows authors to present the totality their lives; this possibility was foreclosed to queer modernists. In addition, these writers worked at the height of Sigmund Freud’s popularity, and all but Stein underwent

psychoanalysis. Narratives of their own psychological development would be read as perverse by their moment's dominant discourse. Indeed, Freud's definition of homosexuality as perversion impacted some of these authors quite directly: Auden went to psychoanalysis in the hopes of "developing heterosexual traits," while H.D., Freud's pupil, sought to understand her own sexuality without speaking publicly of her disagreement with her teacher. Their autobiographical work thus explores methods of self-knowledge and self-representation possible in frameworks that are adjacent or in opposition to the aesthetic tenets of the literary historical moment, especially the doctrine of impersonality, as well as the dominant discourses, especially confessional culture as enforced by psychoanalysis.

II. Joyce, Foucault, and the Critique of Confession

Impersonality and confession are shaping forces for modernist literature—a point taken up by James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in ways that directly illuminate the stakes of this study. Joyce's novel is one of the few texts by canonical modernists that has long been recognized as troubling autobiographical conventions. Its engagement with terms central to this study thus serves as a starting point for re-considering the relationship between autobiography and modernism. Joyce's critique of impersonality and confession proposes one solution to these competing discourses: the creation of a "fictional" autobiography in which the author blurs with and recedes from the protagonist. His work thus anticipates a number of approaches to the genre that the authors in this study will adopt and further radicalize. Read alongside Michel Foucault's stringent critique of autobiography in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, a genre he

identifies both as a type of *scientia sexualis* (a technology for producing sexual selves) and as a latter-day literary equivalent of Christian confession, Joyce's engagement with and rejection of "impersonality" and "confession" provides a literary-theoretical context for the second-generation modernists considered in this study.

The first of these terms, "impersonality," appears when Stephen Dedalus lectures his friend Lynch on the qualities of great literature. Joyce writes,

The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalises itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination...The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within of behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.⁹

Stephen suggests that the writer, in composing fictional worlds, strives to become like God not just in his creative capacity, but also in his absence from those worlds. The author of such literature "impersonalises" himself as he strives towards a purer representation of his world. Joyce's use of the terms "personality" and "impersonality" in this passage is striking; appearing in *The Egoist* five years before Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," this fictional utterance presents an aesthetic mandate that anticipates Eliot's famous essay.¹⁰ However, Stephen's dictum is not Joyce's, and the narrative structure of the text suggests the impossibility and even folly of achieving impersonality within a confessional culture.

A Portrait of the Artist contains so much verifiable detail from Joyce's life that it has been called "more candid than other autobiographies."¹¹ While I do not take up the question of the text's generic status at length here, I read it as a text that acknowledges the inescapability of confession and the consequent impossibility of impersonal literature. Stephen may idealize impersonal literature, but in the text, he is repeatedly compelled to confess. In Chapter III, a scene of confession is preceded by a thirty-odd page quotation from Father Arnall's sermon on hell.¹² Stephen hears this sermon after sleeping with prostitutes; troubled by his mortal sin and Arnall's fiery rhetoric, he retires to his room to cry and pray. Joyce describes Stephen's internal monologue: "Confess! Confess! It was not enough to lull the conscience with a tear and a prayer."¹³ "Confess," echoed repeatedly until Stephen makes his way to a nearby chapel, may be Stephen urging himself to do what he knows is right, or may be the echo of previous sermons coming back into memory. Either way, the confessional imperative is part of Stephen's Catholic upbringing—a call that he cannot resist.

By Chapter V, Stephen has begun to doubt his faith, but finds himself confessing once again. After admitting his faith is wavering to his friend Cranly, he says,

And you made me confess to you...you made me confess the fears that I have. But I will tell you what I do not fear. I do not fear to be alone or to be spurned for another...And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake and perhaps as long as eternity too.¹⁴

Stephen's first confession is inspired by his fear of eternal punishment; his second is inspired by the intimacy of friendship, and the naturalness of self-disclosure within that context. In his second confession, he reveals that he plans to strike out on his own, away

from Ireland and the church, even if it means risking eternal punishment once again. His confession to Cranly is the last exchange in the novel before it turns into diary form, and we might read his diary entries as a third confession—even freed from the bonds of the church, and of friendship, he sees the revelation of his innermost desires as productive, even desirable.

Joyce's narrative structure thus dramatizes the inescapability of personal, emotional disclosure in writing. The final pages are composed of diary entries that are both personal and trivial, a far cry from the dramatic literature Stephen praises earlier in the text. These entries contain Stephen's impressions spanning the course of a month, concerning fights with his mother, conversations with his friends, and the famous statement of his intention to "forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race."¹⁵ However, there are no notes towards this grand Irish drama. Rather, the novel seems to dissolve into a final confession, thus serving as a reminder that that all literary texts are threaded through with their author's confessions, intentional or unintentional.

A Portrait of the Artist can thus be read in light of Foucault's writing on confessional culture, as mentioned above.¹⁶ In Foucault's account, the urge to confess is deeply rooted in Western culture, and is in fact "inscribed at the heart of procedures of individualization by power": individuals come to see themselves as subjects through sexual confession.¹⁷ Foucault traces a transformation between the Middle Ages, when Christianity explicitly required confession, and the 20th century, by which the confessional imperative of the church has been all but replaced by secular discourses that encourage or require self-disclosure. Through a centuries-long process that takes place

through legal structures, medicine, family relationships, and the educational system, the compulsory nature of confession is disguised. Foucault writes, “The obligation to confess is relayed through so many different points... that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, ‘demands’ only to surface.”¹⁸ Confession has increasingly been aligned with freedom and liberation; in the Freudian talking cure, for example, confessing oneself is the only route towards self-understanding and healing. The transformation taking place over the course of centuries is in fact played out in *A Portrait of the Artist*: Stephen’s first confession comes after Father Arnall’s sermon, which is based on a 17th century text that demands confession; his second confession seems at first a more joyful, liberatory act that sets him on the path of realization.¹⁹

Foucault’s discussion of autobiography, spanning from *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I* to his later essays on self-writing, provides a critical framework for understanding the modernist engagement with autobiography. His earlier writing suggests that autobiography is always complicit with power. In *The History of Sexuality*, the proliferation of autobiography as a genre is a confirmation of confessional culture: “we have passed from a pleasure to be recounted or heard...to a literature ordered according to the infinite task of extracting from the depths of oneself, in between the words, a truth which from the very form of confession holds out like a shimmering mirage.”²⁰ As an effect of power-knowledge-pleasure’s mobilization of confession as a mode of individuation and domination, literature tends towards the autobiographical. Authors attempt to achieve self-knowledge by looking at their own lives, but the truth they seek “between the words” is infinitely receding. Truth is a mirage—but reaching towards it,

individuals willingly produce confessions. While the outlook for autobiography is bleak in this account, Foucault's late essays on self-writing provide a model for the re-imagination of autobiographical practice. To better understand this re-imaginative work, I trace some of the ways in which Anglophone autobiography cast doubt on the genre in the following section. I then return to Foucault's late writings on the "technologies of the self" to consider the autobiographical experiments of my authors.

III. Autobiography's De-Facement: The Legacy of Impersonality

Recent criticism has sought to argue that autobiography from the 18th century onward has not naively accepted the availability of self-knowledge and the ease of self-representation. Rather, autobiography is a site at which the lines between self and other, author and narrator, truth and fiction are tested and contested. Modernist autobiography in particular has been shaped in response to the discourse of psychoanalysis: concepts including the unconscious, condensation and displacement, and the centrality of childhood to psychic life all inevitably shaped works that strove towards self-representation.²¹ However, following Foucault, psychoanalysis is a discourse that both shaped autobiography and compelled its production. Joyce engaged with the compulsion to confess by refusing autobiography and troubling the distinction between author and character. The authors in this study follow Joyce in rejecting impersonality; however, unlike Joyce, they embrace the possibility of anti-confessional autobiography, thus transforming the genre. In tracing a literary history of Anglophone autobiography and the discourse that surrounds it, I suggest that queer autobiographies explicitly written with skepticism towards psychoanalysis and its confessional imperative can be understood by

turning towards reading methodologies and intellectual traditions that are likewise adjacent to psychoanalysis.

Max Saunders reminds us that autobiography has a long history of experimentation, and argues that this history was further propelled by psychoanalytic thought. Saunders argues that the experimentation associated 20th century examples in fact dates back to the 18th century, during which fake and parodic autobiographies including *Tristram Shandy* and *Robinson Crusoe* flourished. However, 19th century autobiography was less self-effacing, and more culturally aligned with sentimentality and aestheticism; canonical modernism embraced the doctrine of impersonality in part as a rejection of autobiography's popularity. Nonetheless, new discourses, especially psychoanalysis, fueled an interest in investigating the limits of self-knowledge. The result is "a discourse of personality plus impersonality...one in which the relation between autobiographical subjectivity and aesthetic objectivity is being reinvented."²²

Laura Marcus's wide-ranging *Auto/biographical Discourses* contends that the resurgence of autobiographical criticism in the second half of the twentieth century occurs alongside a critical move away from discourses of impersonality, especially New Criticism; autobiography comes to be of interest alongside multiple discourses interested in representations of subjectivity.²³ On one hand, some thinkers—James Olney, M. H. Abrams—see autobiographies as narratives in which selves come to consciousness, providing unique insight into psychological development. On the other hand, deconstruction turns towards autobiography for quite different reasons: to examine the lines between truth and fiction, self and other, trope and genre. In particular, Paul de Man cites autobiography as a form that demonstrates the fictionality of subjectivity.²⁴

Conversely, Jacques Derrida's work provides a "redistribution of the autobiographical."²⁵

Derrida troubles "the border between 'the life' and 'the text,' the significance of the authorial 'proper name' and of the signature," not to suggest that autobiography is impossible but to re-consider what defines the limits and scope of the term itself.²⁶ Each of these models of criticism differ in method and aim, but share an interest in the boundaries of the genre.

These accounts show that modernist autobiography shares many of the same interests as the theory that surrounds it: the way that selves come to knowledge; the limits of that knowledge; and the possibility of self-representability. Modernist autobiographers might be seen to presciently engage in a project like Derrida's: to redistribute the autobiographical in texts that are both firmly grounded in personal experience while skeptical of the discourses that shape that experience and its disclosure. They are aware of the discourses that have shaped the genre—its popularity, its reception, its form—during their lifetime. These texts were written at the height of Freud's popularity, a fact not lost on the authors themselves. In an essay considering Freud's influence on modernist art, Auden wrote that the Freudian artist would have to hold the belief that "The cure for all ills is (a) indiscriminate sexual intercourse; (b) autobiography."²⁷ In this statement, Auden acknowledges that psychoanalytic discourse has led *some* subjects to seek self-understanding through the narration of their psychological development and the exploration of their sexuality. However, this opportunity was foreclosed to Auden himself. How, then, do queer writers working at the height of Freud's popularity in the Anglophone world engage with normative psychoanalytic models and the confessional imperative in their autobiographical projects?

IV. Queer Autobiography, Queer Forms

While the impact of psychoanalytic thought surely pervaded the lives of the authors in this study, my goal is not to track their resistances to Freud. Some work of this kind has been done by scholars including Brian Loftus, Barbara Will and Georgia Johnston.²⁸ Johnston's study is the most extensive and representative. She argues that queer autobiography emerges to resist dominant discourse about sexuality: "violation and change...emerge from literary struggles over sexual subjectivity."²⁹ In her study, Johnston identifies repetition, masks, and coding as formal strategies used to reform the genre and to articulate queer subjectivity. However, my approach differs. Noting the centrality of indeterminacy and alienation to accounts of both queer modernism and canonical modernism, Heather Love writes that "Of all forms of marginal modernism that have surfaced in the past couple of decades, queer modernism seems particularly likely to merge into modernism proper."³⁰ With this in mind, I draw on Michael Snediker's account of queer modernism, as well as on Foucault's late essays on "self-writing," in order to consider formal and theoretical strategies that distinguish the authors in this study.

In *Queer Optimism*, Snediker argues that queer theory and modernist studies intersect in their interest in self-abdicating subjects. Reading Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" alongside the work of Leo Bersani and Judith Butler, he writes:

Poetry criticism and queer theory...have intersected in their mutual insistence that poets and persons aestheticize their own self-abdication for something (prematurely or preemptively) designated as 'more valuable,' a

self-immersion in the naturalized entanglements of knowledge and pain, stability and sadness.³¹

Snediker aligns what Eliot calls the “continual extinction of personality” with Butler’s account of melancholy in subject formation, as well as with Bersani’s argument for *jouissance* as a social and aesthetic imperative. If impersonality shaped modernist studies in the first half the twentieth century, Snediker argues this interest continues through queer theory’s focus on performances of incoherent selves. And, he suggests, there is an increasing tendency to collapse formal instantiations of self-shattering (language that fails to signify) with real self-shattering; he cites as an example criticism that reads Hart Crane’s “poetics of failure” alongside his suicide. This kind of reading is attentive to biography and autobiography only to the extent that it confirms concepts from what Snediker terms the school of queer pessimism. His project thus seeks to re-align queer reading around queer texts that “aestheticize not the abdication of personhood, but its sustenance.”³²

Where might we find the “sustenance” of queer subjectivity in modernist autobiography? To answer this question, I turn again to Foucault; in his late account of self-writing, Foucault argues that aesthetic invention is a mode of resistance to power that may do no less than open new fields of experience. In a 1984 interview, he suggests the necessity of such practices for gay culture in particular, but also admits that he doesn’t know what a contemporary practice of aesthetic innovation would look like. He states, “I’m not sure we have to create our *own* culture. We have to *create* culture. But, in doing so, we come up against the problem of identity. I don’t know what we would do to form these creations, and I don’t know what form these creations would take.”³³ He argues for

the creation of culture that does not thematize queerness, but rather moves towards the “differentiation, creation, innovation” of queer identity. While his work does not identify 20th century practices that participate in this self-innovation, he does identify such writing in ancient Greek culture. Self-writing carves out a space for the study of oneself that may actively oppose or exist alongside normative discourse. “Technologies of self” exist within a matrix of technologies through which subjectivity is constituted—technologies of production, of sign systems, of power. Technologies of self are inextricable from these other technologies, but nonetheless provide the potential for a limited, qualified independence within them. They enable individuals “to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.”³⁴

Practices of self-writing move towards this not through the definition or discovery of a hidden self. He writes that these writers began with another question:

First, what is the self? *Self* is a reflexive pronoun, and it has two meanings.

Auto means ‘the same,’ but it also conveys the notion of identity. The latter meaning shifts the question from ‘What is this self?’ To ‘Departing from what ground shall I find my identity?’³⁵

For Foucault, technologies of self do not seek to rediscover the self, or to put one in contact with a true or essential self that exists outside the matrix of power. These technologies help individuals to consider not the question “Who am I?” But “what shall I model myself on?” or “what shall I pursue?” To put it otherwise, they bring the “autos” of autobiography into question. Here, the description with self-writing precisely aligns with the cultural innovation he imagines elsewhere.

Furthermore, self-writing is defined against confession. For example, Foucault considers *Hupomnemata*—diaries made up of quotes read or overheard, often grouped together by theme. These are *not* confessions: “the intent is not to pursue the unspeakable, nor to reveal the hidden, nor to say the unsaid, but on the contrary to capture the already said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self.”³⁶ Writing down one’s experiences is not done to absolve oneself of a sin, to reveal oneself to a confessor, or to make amends. It is to take stock of experience, and in doing so, to establish the ground from which to make or innovate the self. In the same essay, he describes another self-writing practice—*ascesis*, writing down everything that one has done in a day in order to make sure one is living in accordance with one’s values. This record of daily activities becomes a tool for living within constraints including celibacy and physical privation. However, privation and abstinence in this case are not purifying rituals, but rather opportunities to “test and establish the independence of the individual with regards to the external world.”³⁷ This writing is thus not a confession, but “a remembering” of the self, and of one’s values.³⁸ And, importantly, what this self-writing makes possible is no less than “a new experience of self,” a new field of experience invented by and through writing.³⁹

Foucault, then, gives an account of ancient self-writing practices that provide a ground for examining modernist works written both within and against the early 20th century’s culture of confession. At a time when autobiography and confession are almost synonymous—and when psychoanalytic treatment focuses on establishing a clear narrative of psychological development—Auden, Stein, Bishop, and H.D. re-think what it

means to be or become a self. In order to trace the contours of each author's engagement with theories of self and life, I put their poetry and prose in conversation with theoretical sources that exist to the side of psychoanalysis, ranging from the psychological theory of William James, to Foucault's concept of asceticism, to yoga philosophy, to Derrida's writing on the animal other. I argue that Auden and Stein engage in projects that re-imagine the *autos* of autobiography. Auden's ascetic practice presents a queer self through methods of self-subtraction; Stein's work, by contrast, draws on psychological theory to include her partner, Alice Toklas, in the narrative "I." Bishop, drawing on Auden's self-subtracting aesthetics, writes restrained poetry that also expands our understanding of autobiography's *bios* in its inclusion of animal others. Finally, H.D. draws on her own visionary experiences as well as on Eastern philosophy to include a realm beyond the human in her account of psychic life. Rather than mapping out a literary tradition, this project is interested in the many discourses and literary predecessors these four authors turn to in variously re-imagining the scope of autobiography as a genre.

V. Outline

Chapter 1, "Auden's Invisibility: Queer Subjectivity and Formal Asceticism," begins with the contention that Auden's contribution to modernism, although widely noted, is misunderstood because of a critical focus on queer *jouissance* that fails to account for a history of queer *asceticism*. I read Auden's asceticism between accounts of this term in Bersani and Foucault. I begin with a reading of Auden's *Letters from Iceland*, an experimental travel guide co-written with Louis MacNeice. Exploring this volume, I propose that Auden, an author who is famously "invisible" from his poetry, provides a formal example

of queer ascesis through his use of rhyme royal. This poem's address to Jane Austen and Lord Byron, self-subtracting authors in their own right, uncovers an alternate form of queer subjectivity in literature. Next, I turn to Auden's writing on Baudelaire's "excess," and compare his reading and terminology to Bersani's. I read the prose monologue in *The Sea and the Mirror* through the lens of Auden's terms. In this long poem, Auden experiments with a poetics of excess to engage with Freud's theory of homosexuality. Auden here acknowledges the value of *jouissance*, but ultimately rejects it in favor of the fixed form verse that characterizes so much of his career. Drawing on Auden's readings of queer predecessors and his experiments in form, I contribute to a history of queer ascesis as a mode of self-writing.

Chapter 2, "From Portrait to Person: Transpersonal Thinking in in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*," focuses on Gertrude Stein's portraits and autobiography, expanding on the use of the term "impersonality" in the early 20th century. The Stein of *Tender Buttons* and *The Making of Americans* is more easily aligned with a poetics of *jouissance* than the other figures in this text. Thus, the uncharacteristically straightforward and immensely popular *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* is often treated as a part of Stein's self-crafted literary persona rather than a part of her innovative oeuvre. However, I argue that this piece foregrounds the centrality of autobiography to Stein's artistic practice, and also provides a unique account of lesbian intersubjectivity. While Stein explicitly rejects "personality," her autobiography is not, like Auden's work, ascetic. Rather, she expands the category of narration to incorporate multiple persons—in this case, those of both Stein and Toklas. I argue that Stein's account of consciousness, explicitly rejecting Freud's topographical model in favor of William James' "stream of

pure experience,” allows for the possibility that in both narrative and in life it is possible for two minds to share a single thought, as well as a radical, transpersonal intimacy. Stein thus proposes the possibility for an autobiographical “I” to contain multiple selves.

Chapter 3, “‘The Opposite of History’: Autobiographical Shame in the work of Elizabeth Bishop,” considers Bishop’s verse in the context of her well-known disapproval of Confessional poetry. Literary criticism has settled on a particular narrative of Elizabeth Bishop’s poetic career: that her work moves from keen observation of the natural world in *North & South* and *A Cold Spring*, becoming more personal in *Questions of Travel* and *Geography III*. In this chapter, I seek to counter this narrative by arguing that “keen observation” is a feature of all of Bishop’s poetry, and that Bishop’s environmental encounters are importantly linked to her interest in autobiography. Detailed descriptions of animals are omnipresent in her most personal poetry, and their inclusion is best understood as extending the scope of autobiography beyond the personal, questioning what it is that constitutes “a life” in writing. I read Bishop’s poetry in light of Jacques Derrida’s interest in animals in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*. There, Derrida suggests that all modern autobiographical practices are rooted in shame: not only the Christian shame that requires confession, but also the broadly human shame derived from our knowledge that “autobiography” narrows the definition of *bios* in autobiography to human life alone, thus erasing the animal that, Derrida insists, we are. Derrida’s theoretical practice seeks to open up autobiography to life beyond the human. In this chapter, I argue that Bishop takes a special interest in the natural world in a project similar to Derrida’s; her autobiographical practices theorize intimacy and community in ways that extend beyond the confessional, as well as beyond the human, constituting a

reevaluation of autobiography as a genre.

Chapter 4, “H.D.’s ‘Real Dreams’: Spirituality and Auto-analysis in *Tribute to Freud* and *HERmione*,” considers the role of mysticism and Eastern thought in H.D.’s autobiographies. Of the authors in this study, H.D., as Freud’s analysand, is the most obviously committed to psychoanalytic thought. Scholarship considering her work’s relationship with and resistance to Freud is plentiful. Also widely noted is H.D.’s spirituality and belief in a transcendental principle that made her—and her work—somewhat inassimilable to Freud’s analysis. My project considers H.D.’s mysticism as a supplement to Freud’s theory of mind. I begin by reading H.D.’s theory of the “over-mind” alongside Freud’s three-part theory of mind. H.D. includes psychic visions and dreams in the realms of over-mind experience, arguing that these experiences are not neurotic, but a genuine way of accessing truths beyond the individual. I turn to *Tribute to Freud* to suggest that H.D.’s book for her mentor also serves a tool for her to locate herself as Freud’s disciple, giving further credence to her claims for an understanding beyond his. Finally, in *HERmione*, H.D. draws on her concept of the over-mind, and on yoga philosophy, to argue for lesbian sexual experience as a means towards self-transcendence and spiritual insight. H.D. presents the transcendental vibration “Om,” the sound that creates the universe in yoga philosophy, as a cipher for lesbian experience that moves towards spiritual enlightenment. Through these readings, I argue that H.D. conceives of mysticism not as an alternative to Western frameworks or languages, but rather as a supplement to psychoanalytic thought that opens new possibility for queer self-understanding.

¹ Michael O'Neill, "Poetry and Autobiography in the 1930s: Auden, Isherwood, MacNeice, Spender," *A History of English Autobiography*, Eds. Adam Smyth, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 343.

² For example, Barbara Will describes the text as "a campy send-up of straight autobiography." See: Barbara Will, "Queer Autobiographical Masquerade: Stein, Toklas, and Others," *Modernism and Autobiography*, Eds. Maria DiBattista and Emily O. Wittman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 80-95.

³ Bonnie Costello provides both a history of biographical criticism, and a critique of it. See: Bonnie Costello, "Elizabeth Bishop's Impersonal Personal," *American Literary History* 15.2 (2003): 334-366.

⁴ Georgia Johnston, *The Formation of 20th Century Queer Autobiography: Reading Vita-Sackville West, Virginia Woolf, Hilda Doolittle, and Gertrude Stein* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).

⁵ Laura Marcus, "Experiments in form: Modernism and autobiography in Woolf, Eliot, Mansfield, Lawrence, Joyce, and Richardson," *A History of English Autobiography*, Ed. Adam Smyth, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 298.

⁶ Max Saunders provides readings of all these authors; see Max Saunders, *Self-Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). A recent critical volume and a special issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* also feature essays on these canonical modernists. See: *Modernism and Autobiography*, Eds. Maria DiBattista and Emily O. Wittman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 59, Number 3, Fall 2013.

⁷ "Modernism and Autobiography: Introduction," *Modernism and Autobiography*, xxii.

⁸ Leigh Gilmore describes the linear growth of the market for memoirs; see Leigh Gilmore, *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 1.

⁹ James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1993), 233.

¹⁰ T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *Selected Essays 1917-1932* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), 3-11.

¹¹ Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1960), 45. While Levin reads *A Portrait of the Artist* as autobiography, other critics including Hugh Kenner and, more recently, Max Saunders, contest this reading, suggesting that Joyce maintains an ironic distance from Stephen. See Hugh Kenner, *Dublin's Joyce*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956); Max Saunders, *Self-Impression*, 291-303.

¹² Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 166-14, 137-146.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 269.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 275-276.

¹⁶ My thinking on Joyce's relationship to confession is influenced by Wolfgang Streit's analysis. Streit argues for a parallelism between Joyce and Foucault, writing that "From the very beginning, Joyce constitutes sexual confession as a result of power effects." My analysis departs from his in my consideration of *A Portrait of the Artist's* engagement

with autobiography as a genre. See: Wolfgang Streit, *Joyce/Foucault: Sexual Confessions* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 2.

¹⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Volume I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 58-59.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁹ Seamus Hane notes that Father Arnell's sermon is based on Giovanni Pietro Pinamonti's *Hell Opened to Christians, to Caution Them from Entering Into It* (1688). See "Notes," *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 288.

²⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 59.

²¹ For accounts of the relationship between literary modernism and narrative form, see Laura Marcus, *Auto/Biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), 214-223; Maud Ellman, "Psychoanalysis and Autobiography," *A History of English Autobiography*, 313-328.

²² Saunders, *Self-Impression*, 23.

²³ Novel readings of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" have challenged the narrow reading of Eliotic impersonality described by Marcus. Louis Menand reads Eliot's criticism—including "Tradition and the Individual Talent"—as ironic. See: Louis Menand, *Discovering Modernism: T. S. Eliot and His Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 133-151.

²⁴ Laura Marcus, *Auto/Biographical Discourses*, 203.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁶ Marcus also suggests that the resurgence of interest in both actual autobiographies and in definitions of the genre, there is a renewed critical interest in testimony, and indeed a feeling of obligation on the part of critics to testify. De Man's legacy, especially his failure to write or speak about his wartime journalism and fascistic remarks, has inspired literary critics to venture speaking about their own beliefs and experiences, and to seek as their objects of study texts that do likewise. Marcus, *Auto/Biographical Discourses*, 213.

²⁷ W.H. Auden, "Psychology and Art To-Day," *The Arts Today*, Ed. Geoffrey Grigson (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1935), 13.

²⁸ See: Brian Loftus, "Speaking Silence: The Strategies and Structures of Queer Autobiography," *College Literature* 24.1 (1997): 28-44; Barbara Will, "Queer Autobiographical Masquerade: Stein, Toklas, and Others," *Modernism and Autobiography*; Georgia Johnston, *The Formation of 20th Century Queer Autobiography*.

²⁹ Johnston, *The Formation of 20th Century Queer Autobiography*, 2.

³⁰ Heather Love, "Introduction: Modernism at Night," *PMLA* 124.3 (May 2009): 744.

³¹ Michael Snediker, *Queer Optimism: Lyric Personhood and Other Felicitous Persuasions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 41.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Michel Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, Ed. Paul Rabinow (The New Press: New York, 1984), 165.

³⁴ Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 225.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 230.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 240.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 232-233.

CHAPTER 1

AUDEN'S INVISIBILITY: QUEER SUBJECTIVITY AND FORMAL ASCESIS

I. Introduction

W.H. Auden's poetry, renowned for its restraint and formal precision, is not an intuitive place to begin a discussion of autobiographical writing. Edward Mendelson, Auden's literary executor, provides a particularly interesting observation when he writes, "In his poems he had no need for a dramatic mask; he was invisible without one."¹ Auden's "invisibility" separates him from other modernists. Mendelson and others have argued that Auden's poetry forwarded an alternative to T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and the previous generation of expatriate modernists whose formal experimentation often aligned with problematic politics: his use of fixed forms reflects a process of revision and thinking through complex political positions that is more in line with America's democratic values.² Auden's poetry does indeed stand out from both the experimental poetics of first-generation modernists, as well as the work of Confessional poets who rose to prominence during his lifetime. Confessional poetry is characterized by the expression of personality through autobiographical disclosure, while modernism that strives towards impersonality features formal innovations that create signature styles. Auden's dedication to traditional verse forms, coupled with his frequent lack of personal disclosure, does express subjectivity differently than either school. However, if Auden, a queer poet

writing at the height of modernism, writes as an invisible subject, present but concealed, the methods for this concealment deserve further attention. To speak invisibly would seem completely different than speaking as an impersonal modernist subject.

Auden's invisibility from his poems has already been linked to his homosexuality in a number of recent studies. Auden was limited by the law in his articulation of queer subjectivity, and was ambivalent towards his sexuality more generally.³ He underwent psychoanalysis in 1927, writing to a friend that his motivation was a "wish to improve [his] inferiority complex and to develop heterosexual traits."⁴ A lifelong student of psychoanalysis, Auden eventually rejected Freud's model of homosexuality as perversion and embraced his sexuality, at least in private. However, as others have noted, his infrequent and coded treatment of gay themes in his poetry often makes him unrecognizable as a queer subject.⁵ Criticism from Richard Bosworth, Benjamin Kahan, and others has sought to make him visible once more, arguing that the social context for his work has long been ignored, and that renewed attention to the repressive environment of mid-Century England and America can help decode content relating to Auden's homosexuality, as well as his periods of celibacy.⁶ In Bosworth's reading, for example, the spies, secret agents, and other isolated figures in Auden's *Poems* (1930) are allegories for queer experience, bound to secrecy and silence. While these studies and others provide numerous and valuable readings of Auden's poetry, they consistently locate his queerness as identifiable primarily though repressed content. My approach differs: I am interested in Auden's use of formal restraint, especially fixed forms, as it participates in a longer history of queer writing—one that Auden explicitly locates himself in his treatment of queer history from Lord Byron to Shakespeare's Caliban. Auden's

“invisibility,” read not a condition of the closet, but rather a formal strategy for representation, provides an opportunity to re-examine the formal mechanisms through which 20th century writers articulate the autobiographical.

“In Memory of W. B. Yeats” (1939), heralded as one the 20th century’s most important commentaries on the social value of poetry, is a useful starting place for thinking through the relationship between poet, voice, and poem in Auden’s work. The poem unfolds in three sections, beginning in free verse and gradually resolving into rhymed trimeter quatrains. The second section of the poem reads:

You were silly like us; your gift survived it all:
The parish of rich women, physical decay,
Yourself. Mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its making where executives
Would never want to tamper, flows on south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.⁷

The language here, like in most of Auden’s poetry, is simple and clear. Its only metaphor is in the comparison of poetry to a river. While the poem’s language is straightforward, its engagement with generic convention is not. Intersubjective exchange, in which an “I” calls out to a “you,” is a hallmark of lyric poetry; in an elegy particularly, a subject usually addresses a mourned addressee. Here there is no clear lyric subject—an “us” but

no “I.” Following Mendelson, we might see Auden as invisible, mourning on behalf of an inclusive public rather than on his own. Read thusly, this poem argues that verse’s power does not depend on the humans who voice it: Yeats’ poetry lives on without him—and Auden, recognizing this, never locates himself as lyric speaker in the first place.

The subjectivity that lives on is inarguably abstracted—or subtracted—from an articulation of a lyric “I”; however, as the poem progresses, it explicitly considers the role of the poet rather than his poetry, and resolves into an incantatory rhythm. By the third section of the poem, the subject is audible if not visible:

[...]

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.⁸

These rhymed stanzas build a rhythm that directly addresses the reader, advising him how to proceed in the wake of Yeats' death. In this appeal, Auden describes the poet as a farmer who creates a regular vineyard out of words. Once properly farmed, this vineyard's fruit is song: the distressed poet's singing flows into the fountain of his reader's heart. The writing of poetry is, here, compared to successful irrigation. The constraint of the vineyard's rows—a metaphor for the poem's lines— harnesses the force of the words that go into it. The figure who speaks these words is indeed “invisible”: a non-lyric subject, dispersed and audible in the poem's meter and rhyme, but nowhere represented in its tropological or thematic content. This subject non-lyric subject can be read productively alongside queer theory. “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” participates in what Leo Bersani calls an “ecological ethics, one in which the subject, having willed its own lessness, can live less invasively in the world.”⁹ In this poem, Yeats and Auden both dissolve into a landscape, while poetry itself becomes a “mouth” that is severed from a human body or consciousness, more akin to the mouth of a river than to a mouth that articulates words. The mouth of this undecidedly human river lives on in the third section, irrigating rows of verse that grow the reader's understanding. Auden's aesthetics of self-diminishment in this poem and others can thus illuminate and complement queer theory's understanding of subjectivity, as well to revise current accounts of autobiography in relationship to modernist poetry.

In the introduction to this study, I argue that in modernist studies, formal difficulty has consistently been upheld as the characteristic marker of queer subjectivity; Auden's poetry presciently acknowledges this model and provides an alternative. For example, John Vincent argues that queer lyrics “want[] to be cruised”; they intentionally

deploy difficult constellations of syntax and tropes in order to create a specific readerly pleasure that relies on the oscillation between knowing and not-knowing.¹⁰ Vincent's terms come from Bersani's; the terms in "Sociability and Cruising" are particularly useful for understanding the attraction of reading-as-cruising. According to Bersani, the cruising individual does not take pleasure in a relationship, the process of coming to know another and also becoming known to that other; contact made through cruising enables a purely formal relationality in which one practices a kind of *ascesis* or "self-subtraction," while also taking pleasure "in the *jouissance* of otherness": through cruising, "an entire category of exchange is erased: the category of intersubjectivity."¹¹ The queer lyric subject who invites reading-as-cruising is made manifest through nodes of difficult language that reveal the *jouissance* of incoherence.¹² And, although *jouissance* and *ascesis* are curiously co-mingled for Bersani's self-shattering subjects, criticism to date has focused disproportionately on describing and defining poetic practices that are excessive rather than constrained. Following Foucault's account of classical *ascesis* as self-writing, where might we locate *ascesis* as a strategy in modernist writing? Auden's work both provides a model of *ascesis*, and locates itself in a longer history of queer self-subtraction. His poetry—occasionally breezy "light verse," always formally brilliant—elicits a readerly pleasure. And, as in cruising, it depends on the anonymity of the encounter; that is, on Auden's invisibility. In his early poetry, this anonymity is largely achieved through formal restraint rather than tropological excess. In later essays and poems, Auden explores the value of excess, always in contrast to and in conversation with his earlier poetics of *ascesis*.

This chapter will demonstrate the ways in which Auden's poetry provides its own evolving account of two queer poetic practices, one of *jouissance* and one of *ascesis*. In Auden's first long poem, "Letter to Lord Byron" (1936), the poetic "I" is abstracted through the sustained use of a single verse form—rhyme royal. In addressing this poem to two recipients, Jane Austen and Lord Byron, Auden places himself in dialogue with two previous authors whose impersonal style has marked them as queer subjects. Auden thus develops a queer subjectivity with affinities to the one D. A. Miller describes in *Jane Austen, Or the Secret of Style*.¹³ Following this ascetic long poem, Auden's essays turn to a range of poetic and ethical responses to modern life and social norms. Auden, like Bersani, turns to Baudelaire as an exemplary modernist subject; he calls Baudelaire's rejection of social bonds a valid and even heroic aesthetic response to heteronormativity. In these essays, he considers the attractions and limits of *jouissance* as a poetic practice, ultimately rejecting it in favor of a poetry that sustains the author's personhood rather than destroying it. His last long poem, "The Sea and the Mirror" (1948), embraces the poetics of *jouissance* and explicitly speaks from a queer subject position, that of Caliban. This prose monologue is both an experiment in and commentary on the modernist practices that Auden elsewhere rejects. The poem is the clearest display of Auden's lifelong interest in psychoanalysis, and provides a reading of both Shakespeare and Freud that elucidates his other works' commitment to and articulation of abstracted queer subjects. These texts emphasize *ascesis* as a practice of autobiography through self-diminishment: the queer subject at the center of Auden's oeuvre may at times seem invisible, but is always audible as he thinks through the relationship of literary form, personal disclosure, and social responsibility.

II. Queer History in *Letters from Iceland*

In the eclectic 1937 *Letters to Iceland* (co-written with Louis MacNeice), Auden reveals his difficulty beginning the manuscript in a letter to his then-wife Erika Mann: “I’ve been here a month and haven’t the slightest idea how to begin to write the book. Gollancz told me before I left that it couldn’t be done, and he’s probably right. Still the contracts are signed and my expenses paid, so I suppose I will get it done.”¹⁴ *Letters* is a reluctant travel guide in which Auden seems to write about everything *but* Iceland; it thus mirrors his larger poetic practice, in which he is reluctant to write about himself. These two reluctances are intertwined in the long poem “Letter to Lord Byron,” which Auden addresses to Byron as a confession. The long poem, written in rhyme royal, is a sort of manifesto for Auden’s ascesis, especially as it relates to the formal constraint of rhyme royal and other fixed forms. The poem addresses Lord Byron directly, and Jane Austen indirectly, thus locating itself in a history of queer aesthetics as discussed by D.A. Miller and Jerome McGann. This poem’s ascetic queer subject is not readily visible, but he is always *audible* in the masterfully written stanzas. The poem’s meter and rhyme, its sonic qualities, not only unify the poem but also forward formal constraint as a queer strategy for addressing social life.

Letters to Iceland is comprised of ambivalent lists of hotels and local delicacies, quotations from histories of Iceland, letters to friends and family, and, of course, “Letter to Lord Byron.” These elements provide insight into Auden’s real challenge in writing about Iceland: there is nothing to write about. He describes Reykjavik as “the worst possible sort of provincial town,” says that there is “no architecture,” and criticizes a

concert as “pompous and silly.”¹⁵ Even the famously beautiful landscape often fails to impress, depending on the weather. Iceland is a country without culture, and with a landscape that can only compensate in fits and starts. Nonetheless, Auden remains convinced that writing about Iceland rather than travelling further is his best course of action: “...a travel book about unconnected places becomes simply a record of a journey, which is boring.”¹⁶ Thus, even though the topic itself—Iceland—is uninspiring to him, he is determined to write a guide that delves further in rather than travelling outward. The idea of addressing Byron occurs to Auden as a solution for his difficulty in writing about the landscape. He addresses Erika Mann:

In the bus today I had a bright idea about this travel book. I brought a Byron with me to Iceland, and suddenly thought I might write him a chatty letter in light verse about anything I could think of, Europe, literature, myself. He’s the right person I think, because he was a townie, a European, and disliked Wordsworth and that kind of approach to nature.¹⁷

Auden nestles the reasons for his address in *another* address, one to the wife he married so that she could acquire an English passport. The intimacy Auden and Mann share is a queer one—affirmed legally, but unconsummated. The address to Byron also finds intimacy on nontraditional grounds: Auden’s explicit reason for writing to him is that Byron is uninterested in the Romantic reverence for nature. However, as the poem progresses, Auden holds out the hope that Byron will provide more than a sympathetic ear for another urbanite.

The long poem is the genre through which many a modernist poet attempted to secure his or her place in literary history by providing an account of that history, and by

placing him or herself in it.¹⁸ “Letter to Lord Byron,” Auden’s first experiment in the genre, is irreverent in its commentary on both the literary canon and its own value within that canon. The poem is remarkably different in style and tone from other roughly contemporaneous modernist long poems including Eliot’s *Four Quartets* (1936-1943), Pound’s *Cantos* (1915-1962), and Hart Crane’s *The Bridge* (1930). Nonetheless, just as Pound revises Homer and Crane addresses Walt Whitman, Auden engages with a literary predecessor. In his address, the poet suggests that Byron is one of two possible addressees; the other is, as aforementioned, Austen. He reaches out in the hopes of making a confession:

For since the British Isles went Protestant
A church confession is too high for most.
But still confession is a human want,
So Englishmen must make theirs now by post
And authors hear them over breakfast toast.
For, failing them, there’s nothing but the wall
Of public lavatories on which to scrawl.¹⁹

Auden, a gay poet in a protestant country, is in no place to attend Catholic confession. And, although Auden is not a confessional poet, he writes here that confession is “a human want.” Rather than writing graffiti in a “scrawl,” he chooses to confess in a way that might find him Byron’s favor: he writes within the neat container of a fixed verse form as an homage. Auden hopes Byron may be sympathetic because he is also a poet; however, it remains unsaid that he may also be sympathetic because of his own queer

experience, which could no more easily be confessed in the 19th century than in Auden's time.

Auden's admiration of Byron and Austen fits interestingly into the lineage of queer studies as discussed so far: both authors present models of queer subjectivity through anonymity or ascesis. Following Miller, I define queer literary subjects as those whose sexuality falls outside of the scope of representative possibilities during their epochs. Austen, an unmarried and successful woman, could not represent a subject like herself in her texts; for this reason, as well as her iconicity within queer communities, I include her in queer literary history. Auden is not expressly inspired by Byron's work; by way of praise, he writes, "...I have, at the age of twenty-nine/Just read *Don Juan* and I found it fine."²⁰ Byron's verse is fine, as in well crafted, but also as in mediocre or passable, especially, it seems, when compared to Austen's work. He exclaims, "...I don't know whether/You will agree, but novel writing is/A higher art than poetry altogether."²¹ Auden goes on to confide that Austen "shocks" him: "You could not shock her more than she shocks me;/ Beside her Joyce seems innocent as grass."²² Following Miller, this can be read as an affirmation of Austen's place in queer genealogy. Miller, in an endnote to *Jane Austen*, asserts that his analysis of Austen's work is a response to a passage in "Is the Rectum a Grave?", in which Bersani writes, "The butch number swaggering into a bar in a leather get-up opens his mouth and sounds like a pansy, takes you home, where the first thing you notice is the complete works of Jane Austen, gets you into bed, and—well, you know the rest."²³ In this passage, Austen's novels undermine gay male machismo. Miller takes Bersani's "lacerating anecdote" and more generously explores the self-identification of queer readers with Absolute Style.²⁴ The queer subject Miller theorizes

in *Jane Austen* is particularly helpful in illuminating Auden's modest turn away from Austen as a possible addressee, and in better describing the queer subjectivity articulated in "Letter." Furthermore, this critical framework is useful in thinking through what Jerome McGann calls Byron's "anonymous lyric," an impersonal verse style that resonates with Austen's prose.²⁵

McGann and Miller both describe a style that seems to evacuate the category of personhood; Auden's ascetic style in his "Letter" is an elaboration of this narrative technique. Both critics describe the inhuman quality of their queer subjects: according to Miller, the omniscient narrator of Austen's novels speaks in precise, beautiful prose with a voice that is "bare of personal specification" and even "thrillingly inhuman."²⁶ Similarly, McGann describes Byron's verse as presenting its speaker as a "thing"—an inhuman object rather than a human person. According to Miller, this style possesses a particular attraction for queer readers—at least in part because Absolute Style is itself the representation *in absentia* of a queer subject. Miller writes, "Austen style...presupposes, and enforces, its author's own 'under-representability,' a condition I can describe most simply for the moment by observing that the realism of her works allows no one like Jane Austen to appear in them."²⁷ The under-representable author becomes, through style, a queer subject, both because of the narrator's resultant social illegibility, and because its very brilliance suggests the shame it conceals and manages.²⁸ The author cannot represent herself as a person, so she instead presents herself as style itself. That style appears effortless, exemplifies artfulness, and conceals the author's marginal societal status by appearing universal rather than personal. Following this line of argumentation, Byron's

anonymous style also points to an under-representable queer subject. And Auden, in addressing them, affirms his place in queer literary history.

Auden's address to Byron and Austen can thus be read as knowing instance of queer identification—a poetic homage to ascetic queers of the 19th century that also opens the possibility of making social commentary. The first section of the poem largely focuses on establishing Auden's place in this literary tradition. As in much epic poetry, Auden's address is double. In a declaration of modesty akin to Spenser's address to Queen Elizabeth in Book III of *The Faerie Queene*, he paints himself as unworthy of addressing Austen, and addresses Byron instead (just as Spenser addresses Sir Walter Raleigh). The conceit of lyric address further enables the long poem to explore, though poetic form, what a modern anonymous subject looks like. Mastery—the perfect inhabitation of *form* rather than personhood—is the connecting link between these three authors' work. Once Auden has announced his intention to adopt the “easier” stanza form of rhyme royal rather than the ottava rima of Byron's *Don Juan*, he begins to offer social commentary. Auden writes from an Iceland that is well-aware of the rise of Nazism. Although he writes to Erika Mann that his poem will be “chatty,” and calls it “light verse” at various points, it appears in a volume that acknowledges Iceland as the cradle of Aryan culture, and that describes Europe as a continent in political danger. In this context, Auden begins to lament the developments of the 20th century—and to consider what his own role should be.

As Auden updates Byron on the 20th century, he also questions the responsibility of the poet in times of crises. He writes to Byron:

Forgive me for inflicting all this on you,

For asking you to hold the baby for us
[...]
Yet though the choice of what is to be done
Remains with the alive, the rigid nation
Is supple still within the breathing one;
Its sentinels yet keep their sleepless station,
And every man in every generation,
Tossing in his dilemma on his bed,
Cries to the shadows of the noble dead.²⁹

Here, Auden turns to the question that many critics have read as the one that shapes his career: what is to be done? He presents this as a question that personally plagues him—and he holds out Byron as someone who might give him answers. Byron’s characteristic satire might seem like a far cry from the tone Auden adopts here. However, as Auden expands his discussion to consider the usefulness of modernist experimentation, Byron becomes a resource for thinking through the potential of an ascetic poetics. Auden describes the heyday of Modernism to Byron as “the Poet’s Party.” He praises some of its innovations: “Brilliant the speeches improvised, the dances, /And brilliant, too, the technical advances.”³⁰ However, he also reports that the progress seems to have stalled. From Auden’s perspective, the scene of the party already looks different: the artists are all “swinging madly from the chandeliers” or otherwise occupied with pursuits other than writing. It is only “the sobering few” who are “trying hard to think of something new.”³¹ In this period of crisis, Auden asks, how does one keep from going mad? We might ask:

under these conditions, and after tossing in his bed, why does Auden write a poem to Byron?

At the center of the poem, Auden asserts that the artist “like a secret agent, must keep hidden.”³² Here, Auden refers to his early poem, a sonnet entitled “The Secret Agent.” This poem, which appears in *Poems*, has been read by Bosworth as an example of a poem that appears to be about a spy trying to keep hiding; however, its sonnet form suggests that it is also an allegory for the homosexual closet. The spy is not only in exile from his country, but also his sexuality. This reference suggests that “Letter” is an expansion on and revision to the aesthetic project begun in his first book of poems. If Auden counts himself among the few innovators, he does it by hiding in plain sight: his innovation is in using traditional verse forms to new ends. He writes in “Letter” that the rhyme royal of his poem is a form “large enough to swim in.”³³ The verse is the ocean, a great formlessness that is also a highly-constrained form. It is this paradox that allows the poet freedom. This form allows him to string together any number of topics, “light” or heavy, preserving a sense of humor and displaying technical mastery through its resonance in each rhyme rather than through its attachment to a lyric subject.

Within this constrained verse form, Auden’s ascetic poem arrives at its goal: to use a regular verse form in praise of the irregular, aberrant, and experimental. He writes to Byron:

I hate the modern trick, to tell the truth,
Of straightening out the kinks in the young mind,
Our passion for the tender plant of youth,
Our hatred for all weeds of any kind.

Slogans are bad: the best I can find
Is this: 'Let each child have that's in our care
As much neurosis as the child can bear.'³⁴

Auden speaks out against a modern tendency to encourage psychological regularity. In the rest of the poem, he tells Byron about his upbringing, his appearance, and how he came to find a passion for poetry. His address to Byron on his barren Icelandic vacation has been an occasion to reflect on his passions, and to share his disdain for “normality.” So, while Auden’s poems are often considered as attempts to forward liberal and democratic principles, “Letter” suggests that he has something more subversive in mind. Although he is content to keep hidden in his poems—to use regular form, to adhere to older standards of good verse—this precise container allows him the freedom to rebel against normality. Part of what falls under the category of “normality” itself seems to be the expression of subjectivity—the imperative to confess—in verse. Freed from this constraint, Auden joins Byron and Auden as queer writers who eschew the performance of their queerness. And, in criticizing authoritarian tendencies in England and in Iceland, he begins his lifelong project of writing poems that comment on the social from a queerly personal vantage point.

III. Antisocial Poetics from Auden to Bersani

While Auden’s early work from *Poems* to *Letters from Iceland* is characterized by fixed form and self-diminishment, by the 1940s, he begins to describe a poetics of excess as an equally attractive response to the same set of real-world conditions that inspire his ascesis. In his essays on Baudelaire, Auden suggests a spectrum of practices across the

two poles of restraint and excess, including at one end the real-life practice of celibacy and the poetic practice of restraint, and, at the other end, a life of debauchery coupled with antisocial poetry. These practices are, per Auden, both ways to “reject the bourgeois parody of marriage and home”: they are the choices available to the queer 20th century writer.³⁵ Half a century before queer theory’s negative ethics, Auden takes up Baudelaire as an exemplary poet for investigating the attraction of excess and antisociality in essays including his introduction to Baudelaire’s *Intimate Journals*. His terms are strikingly similar to those taken up by contemporary queer theorists, especially Bersani and Foucault. Reading Auden’s commentary alongside these contemporary thinkers illuminate his defense of excess—or *jouissance*—as well as his ultimate preference for ascesis.

Bersani locates self-shattering in narratives like Jean Genet’s *Funeral Rites* and Baudelaire’s poetry, suggesting that these literary examples transform *jouissance* from a trope into an ethics that destroys the ego, and defies the future of sociality. Bersani’s valuation of self-shattering and *jouissance*, as discussed in the introduction, refers to real acts. These acts, when represented in a narrative like Jean Genet’s *Funeral Rites*, argue for an “ethics of evil.” The gay sex in *Funeral Rites*—often aligned with hatred, revenge, and self-hatred—celebrates the antisociality of queerness. In tearing apart all social bonds, the text produces compost (in Genet’s text literalized by scatological fetishes) from which a new sociality might arise.³⁶ For Bersani, Baudelaire’s Dandy likewise reimagines sociality, and becomes both an aesthetic and ethical model. He writes, “As an alternative to both the socially defined self, literature has also celebrated marginal or partial selves, or, to put it another way, a disseminated, scattered self which resists all

efforts to make a unifying structure of fragmented desire.”³⁷ The Dandy is one such example: his identity is shattered by the experiences that he seeks out and narrates in his poems.

Auden, writing on Baudelaire, is similarly interested in the potential of antisociality; however, he ultimately finds that Baudelaire fails in his ego-destroying project because his excess becomes self-indulgent and egoistic. Auden defines Baudelaire’s Dandy as a figure who embraces both moral and formal excess. He argues that the Dandy, as introduced in *The Painter of Modern Life*, is the implied lyric speaker in Baudelaire’s poetry. Auden describes the Dandy:

...his ambition is neither to be admired by men nor to know God, but simply to become subjectively conscious of being uniquely himself, and unlike anyone else. He is, in fact, the religious hero turned upside down—that is, Lucifer, the rebel, the defiant one who asserts his freedom by disobeying *all* commands, whether given by God, society, or his own nature.”³⁸

He notes that the Dandy’s “evil,” his identification with Satan, is not antithetical to striving towards godliness: it is a different way of defining a self, a self with a freedom that is the inverted image of God’s. Auden follows Baudelaire’s lead in collapsing the distinction between lived and aesthetic practice. Auden, like Bersani, thus affirms Baudelaire’s Dandy as a possible ethical model.

We might expect that Auden dismisses Baudelaire’s poetics of excess as inferior to his formal and lived asceticism on moral grounds. However, in Auden’s commentary, Baudelaire’s excess is only a failure to the extent that it remains egoistic; as an ego-

affirming practice, this antisociality can never create true innovation in the social or the aesthetic sphere. In another essay, Auden compares Baudelaire and Tennyson, writing,

Baudelaire was right in seeing that art is beyond good and evil... [but] was the victim of his own pride in persuading himself that a mere game was 'le meilleur témoignage/ Que nous puissions donner de notre dignité' [the clearest proof / That we can give of our nobility]."³⁹

Baudelaire's valuation of the lyric speaker, and that speaker's attempt to repel the addressee, mistakes the "game" of poetry—the assembling of lines, rhymes, and stanzas—for an opportunity to impose a moral point of view on the audience. For Auden, poetic excess sees the antisocial poet exacting revenge on his reader in a way that affirms his ego. He writes, "[To] Baudelaire...the whole pleasure in love was the knowledge of doing evil and who hoped to conquer solitude by inspiring universal horror and disgust. If [his] pose still appeals to us, it is because it flatters our modern forms of egoism."⁴⁰

According to Auden, the poetic performance of *jouissance* does not destroy the ego; rather, that performance actually serves the ego. The boundary between poet and reader, self and other, transgressor and transgressed, remains all too static in Baudelaire's poetics. But, Auden suggests, there is an alternative.

Auden, in discussing Baudelaire, suggests that his goals—rejecting heteronormative ideals through poetry and lived practice—would be better served by a different set of choices. He contrasts the Dandy's "real" choices and contrasts them with what a hypothetical "logical" version of the Dandy might do:

Logically, the Dandy should remain chaste: if, like Baudelaire, he lacks the will-power to do so, he can at least partially assert his freedom from natural

desire by choosing to be debauched, i.e. by yielding deliberately to what he despises and making it as despicable as possible, until every pleasure in love has been eliminated except the knowledge that he is deliberately doing evil. Again, the Dandy should, logically, become a hermit: if, like Baudelaire, he cannot endure the loneliness which lack of relation to other entails, then at least he can assert his freedom from social relations by deliberately making them negative, i.e., by giving offense.⁴¹

In this passage, Auden stresses three times that the Dandy's actions are done "deliberately." The Dandy desperately grasps for freedom in and through debauchery, in and through antisocial choices, when it would be more "logical" to be a hermit, to be chaste. Here, Auden clearly advocates for an ethical practice of self-restraint. In his other prose, he connects this to poetic restraint.

Auden suggests that fixed form poetry provides a restrained, orderly structure in which to write; comparing his to Foucault's account of *ascesis*, it provides a model for a withdrawal from the world and into the self that is antisocial but productive. In "Squares and Oblongs" (1948), a collection of fragments containing meditations on Baudelaire and the role of the poet more generally, Auden allegorizes the relationship between poet and work as a domestic partnership, identifying poets as both fathers and husbands to their work.⁴² The poet chooses his relationship to language: if he practices formal restraint, there is an "orderly happy household."⁴³ Auden asserts that Baudelaire's mistake is in "judging a relation by its intensity alone."⁴⁴ While this quotation does not refer explicitly to Baudelaire's relationship with language, the practice of self-restraint and poetic restraint is clearly differentiated from the practice of rejecting social bonds and rejecting

verse forms. Auden says, of poets who write in free verse, “In a few exceptional cases this manly independence produces something original and impressive, but as a rule the result is squalor—empty bottles on the unswept floor and dirty sheets on the unmade bed.”⁴⁵

Auden holds out regular verse form and real-life ascetic practice as necessary for the poet who would respond productively to a society that rejects him; his account thus resonates with Foucault’s. As discussed in the introduction, Foucault lists asceticism as a mode of self-writing, a method for shaping and investigating the self from outside the purview of confessional culture. In “Technologies of the Self,” asceticism takes the form of abstinence, physical privation, and reflective writing on one’s behavior within self-imposed constraints. By subjecting the self to constraints including privation and daily writing, the writer comes to better understand his relationship to the external world. The ancient Greek practices aim at “control of representations, not the deciphering of truth.”⁴⁶ Their purpose is to make sure one is adhering to his or her own ethical rules, even in the face of adversity.⁴⁷ Auden suggests that the Dandy’s antisocial impulse is valid, but that he should logically act—and, it follows, write—differently. The antisociality of excess or *jouissance* requires the continual reaffirmation of the author’s ego. Auden suggests that asceticism is a preferable for shaping a self in accordance with one’s values, and for creating the orderly context in which self-examination and writing are possible. While Auden at various times practiced celibacy and withdrawal, his asceticism persists throughout his life in his poetry. He innovates the social not by seeking to offend, but by removing the ego from the poem, and writing within constraint. However, Auden does not deny the appeal of Baudelaire’s poetics. And, although his preference is for

restrained form that enables the articulation of an invisible subject, his post-war writing shows him experimenting with irregular form and the performance of antisociality.

IV. Queering Caliban in “The Sea and the Mirror”

Auden’s poems and essays as discussed thus far do not anywhere speak from the position of an explicitly queer subject. However, “The Sea and the Mirror: A Commentary on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*,” Auden’s last long poem, explicitly represents a queer version of Caliban; queer subjectivity is no longer invisible in this text. The poem is an epilogue to the events of *The Tempest*, and takes the form of a three-act play. The first act is comprised of Prospero’s final address to Ariel before leaving behind his island and forsaking magic. The second act consists of dramatic monologues from the other characters in *The Tempest*, each of them in a different verse form, including Miranda’s villanelle, Ferdinand’s sonnet, Sebastian’s sestina, and so on. These persona poems distill and crystallize characters into lyrics. The third act is comprised solely of Caliban’s thirty-odd page prose monologue. This section defines Caliban, the colonized subject and the savage who speaks in beautiful poetry, as the only subject whom the muse of western literature does not permit into her realm. In the poem, Auden embraces a poetics of excess: Caliban’s monologue features multiple shifts in address as well as intense, difficult prose in its articulation of a queer subject. In bringing Caliban out of the shadows and working through his relationship to both Ariel and Auden himself, Auden writes a psychoanalytic allegory that questions the limits of values and asceticism: what is repressed and erased when subjects like Caliban are left invisible? What is gained by

representing them? The form the long poem in its three acts contextualizes this monologue, defending Auden's preference for restraint while testing its limits.

Section III, "Caliban to the Audience," begins after the curtain falls on the production; Caliban presents himself to a crowd that hopes to speak to the writer, but it is stuck with him, a reminder of the realities outside the construct of the play and poem. He assures the audience both of his own displeasure at the situation, and of the reasons for his appearance: "...in default of the all-wise, all-explaining master you would speak *to*, who else at least can, who else indeed must respond to your bewildered cry, but its very echo, the begged question you would speak to him *about*."⁴⁸ The question they would ask, it is implied, is why Caliban is needed in the work of art at all. And the question "The Sea and the Mirror" asks is why Caliban's prose address is needed in *this* work. Answering this question, Auden's turn away from verse at the end of this poem, and his confrontation of the audience at length with their own abhorrence of Caliban, is often read as a critique of poetry. Brian Conniff writes that this address serves as "an epilogue to that part of Auden's life when he could believe in poetry as an important act."⁴⁹ The turn to prose in "The Sea in the Mirror," however, does not mark the end of Auden's career: he would publish eight more volumes of verse after it. Following Conniff, Rainer Emig goes on to read the poem's title's two terms—the sea and the mirror—as referring, respectively, to "life" and to "art." In this opposition, Caliban represents the sea, and the real. He seeks to confront the audience with all that has been left out of the play—experience that is *not* idealized, aestheticized, and put into verse.⁵⁰ If Caliban represents the sea—the vast formlessness of life—the mirror represents art that pretends to reflect that life even as it frames it and reduces it to a stagnant image. However, in Auden's

work, the opposition between reality and art, formlessness and form, is not this simple. In “Letter to Lord Byron,” poetic form is itself an ocean, and in “The Sea and the Mirror,” Caliban’s prose is just as stylized as any of the preceding lyrics. Caliban’s address thus seeks to put lyric form and the realities it reflects into conversation.

Caliban presents himself as a queer subject that the author—Shakespeare, Auden—has sought to exclude from his work. As the monologue progresses, the boundaries between the author, Ariel, and Caliban blur. Caliban’s address to the audience is characterized by shifting pronouns: “we” may refer to the audience (as “echoed” by Caliban), or to Caliban and Ariel as a pair of friends, and “He” may refer to Caliban, Ariel, or to the author. In the long poem, the identity of any “I” is always unstable; Caliban’s difficult prose most thoroughly explores the consequences of this instability. Speaking for himself and the audience, he asks why his fate hasn’t been dealt with at the end of *The Tempest*. In addressing the audience, he asserts that he is viewed as an excess both on Prospero’s island and in Shakespeare’s text. He also inquires into the fate of Ariel, who has been freed by Prospero, but whose fate is also left untold. How do these two characters, one Prospero’s helper and the other his nemesis, interact when abandoned on the island after the magician has abandoned his art?

The monologue suggests that audience members who identify with Caliban’s outsider status might share his questions and concerns. Echoing these members, he asks:

Are we not bound to conclude, then, that whatever snub to the poetic you may have intended incidentally to administer, your profounder motive in so introducing Him to them among whom, because He doesn’t belong, He couldn’t appear as anything but His distorted parody, a deformed and

savage slave, was to deal a mortal, face-slapping insult to us among whom
He does...?⁵¹

Caliban posits that the well-known beauty of the verses he speaks in *The Tempest* was perhaps in part meant as a “snub to the poetic.” Rather than ennobling him—Prospero’s slave—those verses call into question the beauty of poetry itself. Caliban, though, assumes that there is something even more insidious at work alongside this mockery of verse. His presence is meant as an insult to those who would identify with him: exiles, outsiders, those who feel their isolation even more acutely *after* his articulation of that isolation in beautiful verse. When Caliban begins to speak in his “natural voice,” he further specifies his addressee: he offers a warning to the audience, and especially to “to any gay apprentice in the magical art” who would choose Ariel as his muse.⁵²

Ariel and Caliban may thus appear to be part of a dyad, the two opposing muses that guide the author; however, Auden ultimately problematizes the distinction not just between Ariel and Caliban, but also between the muse and the authorial self. If Caliban is included in the text as an insult to queers, he is also always queerly part of the author. To put it otherwise, he is a representation of the author’s psychic excess, and it is for this reason that he must appear as an extra character in the play. This prose monologue suggests that the author is a subject, and one who is *subject to* emotions and desires that remain unintegrated into any literary construction of personhood in the text. These excessive desires—personified by Caliban—are increasingly indistinguishable from the idea of the perfect muse—personified by Ariel. In one scene, Caliban imagines the author walking up to his muse (in this passage, “Him”) to confront him for the misery he inflicts. In this passage, which I will quote at length, the muses and the self blur

together:

Striding up to Him in fury, you glare into His unblinking eyes and stop dead, transfixed with horror at seeing reflected there, not what you had always expected to see, a conqueror smiling at a conqueror, both promising mountains and marvels, but a gibbering fist-clenched creature with which you are all too unfamiliar, for this is the first time indeed that you have met the only subject that you have, who is not a dream amenable to magic but the all too solid flesh you must acknowledge as your own; at last you have come face to face with me, and are appalled to learn how far I am from being, in any sense, your dish; how completely lacking in that poise and calm and all-forgiving because all-understanding good nature which to the critical eye is so wonderfully and domestically present on every page of your domestic inventions.⁵³

The “gay apprentice in the magical art” is the “you” who looks into the eyes of Ariel and sees “reflected there” the gibbering creature that is Caliban. The passage’s syntactical complexity raises a real ambiguity: is this a moment in which the author sees his muse for what he is—not only a helpful creature, but also a cruel one? Or a moment in which Ariel’s eyes reflect (as does a mirror) to the author an image *of* the author, who for the first realizes that *he* is Caliban? Through the co-existence of these two possibilities, the passage suggests that Ariel and Caliban are both facets of the self. Ariel is the authorial persona who crafts careful poems that showcase a coherent subjectivity: he has helped in the creation of “domestic inventions” that are the collaboration between the artist and his cohabitating muse. We can infer that all the previous poems from the supporting cast in

the second act, in their technically brilliant forms, are such “domestic inventions.” And this self, the self that wishes to live in words, rejects the self-as-Caliban. The assertion that Caliban is “The only subject that you have” is interpretively rich; the confrontation with Caliban reveals to the author that his only subject is himself. He is the only thing that he writes about, whatever he tells himself and whatever steps he takes towards restraining this impulse (as with Auden’s ascesis). Additionally, Caliban is also the only thing over which the author holds dominion; the “self” that he writes about stands at a distance from the lived experience of loneliness, shame, and exclusion which the author, through his dedication to his work, holds at bay.

Auden’s long poem, then, uses Caliban as a personified and eloquent id who speaks to the ego that treats his desires—his existence—as excess. Allowing the id to directly address the author splits the self in two. And in this passage, these two parts are figured as a pair of quarreling lovers who have been in an open relationship. Caliban complains that he has been allowed to roam, but at the cost of his exclusion from the author’s poetry:

The strain of oats, therefore, that you prudently permitted me to sow were
each and all of an unmitigatedly minor wildness: a quick cold clasp now
and then in some *louche* hotel to calm down...while you polished to
perfection your lyric praises of the more candid, more luxurious world to
come.⁵⁴

The author has allowed Caliban some freedom, mostly so that the author may pursue his creative work, giving his attention to his fantasies of the ideal. In particular, the author fixates on Ariel, the ideal of an art-object that exists without shame, without the *louche*

exploits Caliban seeks out. Coming face-to-face with Caliban, however, the author must reconcile himself to a domestic partnership on more equal terms. Caliban entreats him, “If I have had...a good deal to put up with from you, I must own that, after all I am not just the person I would have chosen for a life companion myself.”⁵⁵ He admits his own self-disgust, but asks that the author begins to acknowledge him more fully as his partner.

In this representation of the author as Caliban’s lover, the poem’s main point is not in positing the relationship between the unconscious and artistic inspiration. Rather, it is in representing homosexual desire as an ambivalent self-love, and, in doing so, also coding the writing of poetry as more generally queer. In this, it is as much commentary on Freud’s “On Narcissism” (1914) as it is on *The Tempest*, as well as Auden’s fullest expression of his lifelong interest in Freud. As noted, Auden struggled with the Freudian idea that his sexual preferences were the result of arrested emotional development. His own stated reasons for undergoing psychoanalysis (“to develop heterosexual traits”) suggest he was familiar with Freud’s famous formulation in “On Narcissism.” Freud writes in this essay: “We have discovered, especially clearly in people whose libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, such as perverts and homosexuals, that in their later choice of love-objects they have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves.”⁵⁶ In “The Sea and the Mirror,” the author’s love-object is Caliban, a literally and literarily externalized version of himself.

By the time Auden wrote “The Sea and the Mirror,” he had met his lifelong partner Chester Kallman and given up on celibacy—and also significantly changed his attitude towards psychoanalysis. In his elegy “In Memory of Sigmund Freud” (1939), Auden says of Freud, “often he was wrong and, at times, absurd.”⁵⁷ Freud’s description

of homosexuality as a regressive stage likely struck Auden as one of Freud's absurdisms. However, Auden acknowledges the real value of Freud's work in allowing individuals to begin to understand themselves and their pasts. Auden concludes his elegy to Freud by describing what is, to him, Freud's most important dictum:

...he would have us remember most of all
to be enthusiastic over the night,
not only for the sense of wonder
it alone has to offer, but also

because it needs our love. With large sad eyes
its delectable creatures look up and beg
us dumbly to ask them to follow:
they are exiles who long for the future.⁵⁸

The poet maintains the value of Freud's interest in dreams; these dreams are personified in "creatures" who are not monsters or the stuff of nightmares. Rather, they are "delectable," ripe for digestion and interpretation. Furthermore they are, like Caliban, exiles who deserve love. "The Sea and the Mirror," then, is the investigation of and expression of love towards Caliban, who is finally allowed to speak. The poem explicitly equates homosexual desire with externalized self-love—although Caliban is an exile, a sometimes-ill-treated lover, he is nonetheless the author's lifelong companion. If, in other modernist poems, queer desire is represented as textual excess that shatters the lyric speaker, "The Sea and the Mirror" represents queer desire as an excess that does not shatter the subject—rather, it requires the careful splitting of the subject into parts so that

they may speak to one another.

“The Sea and the Mirror,” then, is a queer reading of Freud, and of *The Tempest*. However, insofar as the poem is an attempt to address and correct the self-incoherence of the original text, it seems to duplicate what Caliban describes as *The Tempest*’s formal problem: his own presence as excess. “The Sea and the Mirror” emphasizes the split between its source text’s artificial and damaging split between author and id in its form, and attempts to reintegrate them in Caliban’s narrative. Caliban, though, concludes with self-admonishment, asserting that his performance has been “indescribably inexcusably awful.”⁵⁹ If the poem has set out to give those who identify with Caliban a more satisfying account of the character’s fate than that provided in *The Tempest*, the prose of his monologue, its difficult sentences and its shifting referents, has made the task of readerly identification all but impossible. There has, however, been some value to the awful performance. Caliban ends,

...it is just here, among the ruins and the bones, that we may rejoice in the perfected Work which is not ours. Its great coherences stand out through our muffling banks of artificial flowers and unflinching delivers its authentic and molar pardon; its spaces greet us with all their grand old prospect of wonder and width; the working charm is the full bloom of the unbothered state; the sounded note is the restored relation.⁶⁰

The aesthetic failure of the poem—its nonintegrated parts, its disharmonious voices, its incoherence—has only one value. They are the mirror-image of what the text has failed to represent: a vision of coherence and community, a “space” and “state” in which actors are not isolated. I argue that “Letter to Lord Byron” draws on the ascesis of Austen and

Byron to represent *in absentia* a gay subject who is part of queer literary tradition of self-subtraction. “The Sea and the Mirror,” in its exploration of excess, gestures *in absentia* towards something grandly coherent.

“The Sea and the Mirror” casts doubt on the ability of any poem to integrate the author and his two muses—to represent queer experience without excess, pain, or doubt. However, if the sprawling and experimental form of the long poem is inadequate, it is still more successful than the lyric poem; Auden imbeds a critique of that genre within the final section. In this Postscript, Ariel expresses his love for Caliban:

Weep no more but pity me,
Fleet persistent shadow cast
By your lameness, caught at last,
Helplessly in love with you
[...]
Spare me a humiliation,
To your faults be true:
I can sing as you reply
... *I*⁶¹

Ariel’s concluding monologue suggests that lyric poetry can express only the shadow of the subjectivity that has been split and narrativized in a larger text. This might seem, as other readers have suggested, to sound a final, unoptimistic note about the potential for poetry to articulate complexity. But Auden is not a lyric poet; his verse is not primarily concerned with the presentation and representation of an “I.” “The Sea and the Mirror,” Auden’s experiment with modernist collage and the representation of queer subjectivity,

can thus also be seen as a manifesto and defense for the rest of his work. The difficulty of expressing any subjectivity—and especially an explicitly homosexual subjectivity—is reflected not only in Caliban’s unwieldy monologue, but also in the elaborate dramatic frame needed to introduce it. Auden’s experimentation in “the novel art” is explicitly a failure. What it valorizes is its inverse: a coherent, self-contained, and integrated work that casts aside the pain of subjectivity. Another way of putting this is to say that if the author is, as Auden says, “passionately in love with language”—and, if, like the author in “The Sea and the Mirror,” his loved object is an extension of himself—then what the queer subject of Auden’s poetry loves is form. Its constraint and its rigor are what enables its inclusiveness. The great coherence that Caliban longs for is that which Auden’s other poems seek to manifest in their restraint.

V. Conclusion

If Auden seems “invisible” in his poetry, it is only because his poetry has been read as lyric. His poems have been understood as ones in which an inclusive, impersonal speaker addresses a broad audience; the speaker, affectless and high-minded, is more interested in imparting views on 20th century political and cultural reality than in personal disclosure. However, Auden’s poetry is specifically rooted in his own queer experience, and his formal strategies for expressing that experience both fit into a longer history of queer writing. Auden’s early poetry, including *Poems* and *Letters from Iceland*, draws on queer predecessors like Austen and Byron to communicate queer experience through fixed form. While the form itself may be austere and anonymous, Auden’s inhabitation of it is anything but; “Letter to Lord Byron” turns into a manifesto on the need for nurturing

and expressing irregularity—Auden simply argues that this is better accomplished through received form than innovation. But his use of received form seems tongue-in-cheek and wryer than is often assumed.

As Auden's career progresses, he further experiments with the styles more readily aligned with queer modernism. His writing on Charles Baudelaire suggests his interest in an antisocial ethics as forwarded by Baudelaire himself, anticipating thinkers like Bersani and Edelman. While Auden finds much to admire in a poetics that rejects readers who are hostile to its subject, he ultimately finds that this poetics does not go far enough in rejecting the ego. In this thinking, his poetics of asceticism contributes to our understanding of what queer antisociality can look like in literature. And, if Auden finds poetic excess to be too egoistic, he takes on this problem in "The Sea and the Mirror." In this long poem, Caliban is both the textual excess of *The Tempest* and the excess of queer desire more generally. In putting Caliban in dialogue with an imagined author, Auden opens himself to the critique that his work has elided queer identity. In his reading of Shakespeare—and Freud—Auden posits Caliban as a redemptive figure for queer self-love, and celebrates the beauty of excess in 30 pages of Jamesian prose. However, even in this poem, Auden affirms the value of asceticism: he characterizes the poem as a valuable failure.

Even if "The Sea and the Mirror" fails, it re-affirms Auden's dedication to writing poetry that *does* cohere—precisely because it dispenses with traditional methods of self-representation. Asceticism is not just a withdrawal from the world, but a withdrawal into form. Read in this light, "Letter to Lord Byron" and "The Sea and the Mirror" are parts of an autobiographical project that reconsiders the "autos" of autobiography. Auden writes

from his own experience, but his articulation of queer subjectivity departs from current accounts that equate formal difficulty with queer *jouissance*. Auden's "invisibility" produces one of the most recognizable voices in 20th century poetry precisely because his formal restraint produces subjectivity through different means. His influence on a generation of queer modernists including James Merrill and Elizabeth Bishop can thus be read in this light: his self-subtraction provides an alternative to Confessional poetry that participates in a lively if unrecognized tradition of queer self-writing.

¹ Edward Mendelson, *Early Auden* (New York: The Viking Press, 1981), 15.

² *Ibid.*, xxii. For other criticism that focuses on Auden's "monumentality"—the ways in which he seems to stand apart from other post-war poets—see: Aidan Wasley, *The Age of Auden: Postwar Poetry and the American Scene* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), and Rainer Emig, *W.H. Auden: Towards a Postmodern Poetics* (New York: Macmillan, 2000). Both of these volumes place Auden at the center of postwar poetry.

³ For a full account of Auden's celibacy, see Benjamin Kahan, *Celibacies: American Modernism and Sexual Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013). Kahan argues that celibacy is a strategy to maintain citizenship in nations that exclude queers; he reads "The Sea and the Mirror" as an allegory for queer citizenship. While I am interested in a strategy of formal restraint, I am less interested in tracing its evolving relationship to Auden's sex life. I argue that formal asceticism is a queer formal strategy tied to an ideal of self-diminishment, not self-restraint.

⁴ Letter, W.H. Auden to John Auden, nd [late July 1927]; *Juvenalia: Poems 1922-1928* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), xl.

⁵ Kahan and Wasley treat Auden's exclusion from queer literary history as a starting place for their studies. My argument extends theirs, proposing that we look to Auden's formal strategies to bring out another strain of queer modernism.

⁶ See: Richard R. Bosworth, "'But Who Would Get It?' Auden and the Codes of Poetry and Desire," *ELH* 62.3 (1995): 709-727; Benjamin Kahan, *Celibacies*, 100-115.

⁷ W.H. Auden, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," *Collected Poems*, Ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage International, 1991), 248.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 248-249.

⁹ Leo Bersani, "Sociability and Cruising," *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 61.

¹⁰ John Vincent, *Queer Lyrics: Difficulty and Closure in American Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 11.

¹¹ Bersani, "Sociability and Cruising," 61.

¹² Michael Snediker, in his trenchant analysis of the school of "queer pessimism," argues that queer studies has drawn heavily on Bersani's definition of *jouissance* in its valuation of subjects that undo their own coherence. According to Snediker, the interest of scholars

like Lee Edelman, Tim Dean, and Christopher Nealon in figures like Hart Crane. Difficult, intense poetics are associated with self-shattering subjects who figuratively reject the idea of self-coherence. See: Snediker, *Queer Optimism*, 1-32.

¹³ D.A. Miller, *Jane Austen, Or the Secret of Style* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, *Letters from Iceland* (London: Faber & Faber, 1937), 106.

¹⁵ Ibid., 107.

¹⁶ Ibid., 106.

¹⁷ Ibid., 139.

¹⁸ See Lynn Keller for an overview of the long poem as self-authorizing genre: Lynn Keller, "The Twentieth-Century Long Poem," *The Columbia History of American Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 534-63.

¹⁹ W.H. Auden, "Letter to Lord Byron," *Collected Poems*, 81.

²⁰ Ibid., 81.

²¹ Ibid., 89.

²² Ibid., 83.

²³ Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*, 13.

²⁴ Miller, *Jane Austen*, 97.

²⁵ Jerome McGann, "Byron and the Anonymous Lyric." *The Byron Journal* 20 (1992): 27-45.

²⁶ Miller, *Jane Austen*, 3-4.

²⁷ Ibid., 28

²⁸ Ibid., 48.

²⁹ Auden, "Letter to Lord Byron," *Collected Poems*, 96.

³⁰ Ibid., 102.

³¹ Ibid., 103.

³² Ibid., 102.

³³ Ibid., 84.

³⁴ Ibid., 108.

³⁵ W.H. Auden, "Introduction to *A Selection from the Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*," *Collected Prose, Volume II:1939-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 211.

³⁶ Ibid., 212.

³⁷ Leo Bersani, *Baudelaire and Freud* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), 13.

³⁸ W.H. Auden, "Introduction to *Intimate Journals*," *Collected Prose, Volume II:1939-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 311.

³⁹ Auden, "Introduction to *A Selection from the Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*," 211.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

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- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² W.H. Auden, "Squares and Oblongs," *Collected Prose, Volume II:1939-1948* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 344.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Auden, "Introduction to a Selection from the Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson," 211.
- ⁴⁵ Auden, "Squares and Oblongs," 345.
- ⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 241.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror: A Commentary on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" *Collected Poems*, 422.
- ⁴⁹ Brian Conniff, "The Modern Lyric and Prospero's Island," *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1988): 84-112. For another account of Auden's lyric renunciation in *The Sea and the Mirror*, see Dwight Eddins, "Quitting The Game: Auden's The Sea And The Mirror," *Modern Language Quarterly* 41 (1980): 73-87. According to Eddins, Auden sees the only escape from the art/reality dilemma as turning towards a third term: Christianity, and a belief in God's "Work."
- ⁵⁰ Emig, *W.H. Auden: Towards a Postmodern Poetics*, 164.
- ⁵¹ W.H. Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," *Collected Poems*, 429.
- ⁵² Ibid., 430.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 433.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 434.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 435.
- ⁵⁶ Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), *The Freud Reader*, Ed. Peter Gay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 554.
- ⁵⁷ W.H. Auden, "In Memory of Sigmund Freud," *Collected Poems*, 66.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Auden, "The Sea and the Mirror," *Collected Poems*, 433.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid. 433.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 445.

CHAPTER 2
FROM PORTRAIT TO PERSON: TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN *THE*
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS

Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) is filled with anecdotes about Stein and Toklas' encounters with modernist writers and painters ranging from Ernest Hemingway to Henry Matisse between 1907 and 1930, the peak years of Stein's famous salon at 27 rue de Fleurus in Paris. One such anecdote concerns Stein's two meetings with Ezra Pound. Toklas, the text's ostensible narrator, writes that after a first meeting in Stein and Toklas' home, during which Pound discusses "Japanese prints and the like," Stein remarked, "he was a village explainer, excellent if you were a village, if you were not, not."¹ During a second meeting, the topic of conversation grew "worse than Japanese prints, it was much more violent."² Here, Toklas alludes to Pound's developing fascist views, and, after this encounter, states that Stein rejected further overtures of friendship from Pound:

Gertrude Stein did not want to see Ezra again. Ezra did not quite see why. He met Gertrude Stein one day near the Luxembourg gardens and said, but I do want to come to see you. I am so sorry, answered Gertrude Stein, but Miss Toklas has a bad tooth and besides we are busy picking wild flowers. All of which was literally true, like all of Gertrude Stein's literature, but it upset Ezra, and we never saw him again.³

Toklas' claim that all of Stein's literature is "literally true," nestled within an "autobiography" that is, as confirmed by both the book's title and its final paragraphs, written by Stein, deserves further attention, as does Pound's reaction. *The Autobiography* is often read as a metafictional game that rejects the relationship between authorship and work insofar as it pretends to be Toklas' "autobiography" even though it is written by Stein and discloses more about Stein's life than it does Toklas'.⁴ The idea that Stein's work is a satire of the autobiographical form is supported by Stein's assertions in "What are Masterpieces and Why are There So Few of Them?" (1936), in which Stein answers her own question: "There are so few of them because mostly people live in identity and memory that is when they think."⁵ In this lecture, Stein argues that individual identity has nothing to do with artistic creation. Autobiography as a genre, however, depends on reference to a real person: its main purpose is to give the reader insight into the author's self-fashioned identity. If *The Autobiography* were indeed a satire of popular autobiography, it would serve to prove the point Stein makes in this essay, and would also confirm that Stein strives to write "masterpieces" in her more experimental pieces, including the poems in *Tender Buttons*. However, following the assertion that Stein's writing is "literally true"—that is, taking seriously the claim that *The Autobiography* is the autobiography of Alice Toklas, not just the autobiography of Stein in disguise—opens the possibility for understanding what Stein means when she says her work is "literal," as well as the centrality of autobiographical disclosure to the texts of an author whose work is often considered to be experimental and abstract in ways that challenge the possibility of making literary meaning altogether.

The Autobiography, Stein's first popular piece of literature and the one that brought her fame, is often treated less seriously than Stein's other work for a number of reasons: first, Stein herself claims to have written it quickly and for money, causing scandal and outrage among the artists of the left bank.⁶ Second, it is widely understood as an apology or "love letter" to Toklas after Toklas' discovery of an earlier affair as disclosed in the manuscript to *Q.E.D.* (written in 1903);⁷ and, thirdly, because it has so much in common with the realist novel and so little in common with the experimental texts that are most often treated by Stein scholars: both scholarship on gender & sexuality—including work by Ellen Berry, Georgia Johnston, & Leigh Gilmore—that value Stein's texts for their subversive play with codes of meaning, as well as scholarship in pragmatist thought—including work by Joan Richardson & Steven Meyer—that finds in Stein's work an attempt to painstakingly record the actions of the human mind.

However, the above passage suggests that *The Autobiography* is a vital resource not only for thinking about Stein's interest in autobiography and representation, but also the politics of her literary project. Stein was, during her lifetime, not an advocate for women's suffrage, or a self-declared feminist, but rather a writer avowedly interested in non-mimetic description, and especially the transformation of the material world into words. Toklas says that description was her obsession: "...she described objects, she described rooms and objects, which joined with her first experiments done in Spain, made the volume *Tender Buttons*. She always however made her chief study people and therefore the never-ending series of portraits."⁸ Meyer and Richardson both argue that Stein's project is not open, postmodern play, but rather the painstaking record of the human brain in human language. Richardson writes that Stein's repetition and variation

result in “an elaborate brain model mapping,” and adds, “Reading Stein is to experience the mind’s associative processes, *feeling thinking*.”⁹ While scholarship in pragmatist thought treats this descriptive practice extensively, it does not relate it back to other aspects of her lived experience—Stein’s gender and sexuality in general, and as described in *The Autobiography* in particular. This opens onto a key question: does this descriptive impulse relate to lesbian aesthetics? And, furthermore, how does it manifest in *The Autobiography*, which does not proceed through sentence-level repetition, but rather through a straightforwardly realist narrative structure?

Toklas’ description of Pound raises a possibility for understanding Stein’s queer feminism in a narrative, autobiographical context. When Pound comes calling for Stein, he does it in a garden rather than at 27 rue de Fleurus. In this particular encounter, Stein re-establishes the social space of the salon as a domestic setting, the household of two women picking flowers and attending to one-another’s ailments rather than a place for the exchange of artistic ideas. In doing so, she bars him entry. However, it is not just Stein’s rejection that angers Pound, but also that the reasons given to deny him entrance seem to place his importance below a woman’s toothache. Stein’s home had of course always been a domestic space; it was not only a salon, but also home to Stein along with her brother Leo from 1903-1914, and to Stein and Toklas from 1910 on. Nonetheless, Stein’s choice to use gendered labor (picking flowers) and domestic intimacy as the excuses for denying Pound access to her household for the foreseeable future place the personal above the artistic, the intimate above the aesthetic. By drawing a parallel between these domestic facts and “all of Gertrude Stein’s literature” we can begin to see

the centrality of the literal intimacy between Stein and Toklas to both *The Autobiography* and Stein's later narrative works.

Although *The Autobiography* is very much the story of a relationship, it is nonetheless read as a text in which its protagonist's lesbianism is invisible. As Annamarie Jagose has argued, "invisibility" often *is* a representational strategy for lesbian content.¹⁰ While Catherine Stimpson asserts that the "simplicity and plainness" of the text's prose are "masterstrokes in covering up and covering over [Stein's] lesbianism,"¹¹ more recent readers have located the text's lesbian erotics not in what is represented, but in the text's porousness. Johnston, in an argument resembling accounts of *écriture féminine*, suggests that *The Autobiography*'s feminist, lesbian politics are manifest in the text's reference to works outside itself; its incompleteness is the mark of its departure from the realist novel.¹² As discussed in Chapter 1, queer subjectivity in poetry is often linked to a "self-shattering" lyric "I"; the quality of *jouissance* associated with the queer subject is allegorized in literary figures that strain the sense or coherence of a text—chiasmus, catachresis, "intensity," and intentional difficulty all fall under this umbrella. The term "jouissance," in Bersani's text, refers explicitly to male homosexual relationships and dissolved identities, and has consequently not been taken up by Stein's critics. However, they have made the same basic assertion: that the performed incoherence of a textual "I" marks, celebrates, and appropriates "excessive" queer desire.

In "A Signature of Lesbian Autobiography: 'Gertrice/Altrude'," Leigh Gilmore departs from the model of the invisible lesbian and the incoherent queer subject, linking the text's "I" not to the postmodern problem of the author, but to queer performativity. Gilmore argues that the lesbian content of *The Autobiography* is coded through the

displacement of the autobiographical “I” onto a lesbian “we.”¹³ This reading is helpful to understanding the composite character of the text’s narrator. Gilmore argues that the possibility of spliced subjectivity arises from the two women’s butch/femme relationship. This relationship allows for what Gilmore calls “playfulness” and “self-construction.” Following Foucault’s account of BDSM, we might extend Gilmore’s thinking to argue that, in Stein’s household and in *The Autobiography*, gender performativity is an intimate and liberatory practice with room for role-reversal and shifting power dynamics.¹⁴ My argument builds on Gilmore’s, acknowledging the queer performativity of this shared autobiography while also suggesting that the text goes further still in its account of intimacy. My account thus seeks to bridge pragmatist scholarship and lesbian aesthetics, suggesting that the concept of transpersonal thinking, briefly explored in William James’ *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, is made manifest in Stein’s narrative: two women share not only a domestic space, but also the capacity to share thoughts and experiences. It expresses what is “literally true” for both women, because, as represented in this text, they are co-conscious. This chapter thus accounts for the text’s strong realism in the work of an author who is famously experimental, not by disavowing the text’s realism, but by further contextualizing the “we” that emerges in the text in light of Stein’s understanding of identity, consciousness, and experience.

Important, here, is that most feminist and queer readings of Stein use psychoanalytic assumptions to assess the lesbian content of *The Autobiography*.

However, like Auden, Stein is a queer author who explicitly rejected psychoanalysis; in fact, Stein’s stance against Freud is much more radical than Auden’s. After working with philosopher and psychologist William James at Harvard, and pursuing a medical degree

at the Johns Hopkins University, Stein, contra Freud, emphatically rejected the notion of an unconscious. *The Autobiography* describes Stein's belief that she "never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing."¹⁵ Stein asserts that it is entirely "normal" to display no unconscious reactions. This is significant, as it ties to Stein's beliefs that her thoughts and experiences are entirely accessible to her; none are repressed. It follows that Stein's work, obsessed with perfecting the art of description, would faithfully record these thoughts and experiences, and, as a record of consciousness, also have no "subconscious." In short, Stein's Jamesian worldview would reject surface/depth models of readings. While Stein's own disbelief in the unconscious may seem irrelevant to psychoanalytically based criticism of her texts, it is very much the case that James' metaphor for experience as a stream rather than a "place" provides a critical tool for understanding the conditions under which it may be possible for one person to write another's autobiography with that autobiography remaining "literally true"—true to the experiences of both the author, Stein, and the narrator, Toklas. My argument thus builds on criticism such as Gilmore's while seeking an explanation for the appearance of a "we" in *The Autobiography* grounded in pragmatist thought. I will argue that Stein, following James, imagines the possibility for shared experience that results in co-consciousness. According to James' model, one individual's experience can in fact be one and the same with another's—an experience or thought can be identical within two minds. It is from this theory that Stein builds *The Autobiography*: it is a text made possible only as a result of experience that is shared, be it through encountering the same persons, ideas, and things, or through talking about one's encounters with persons, ideas, and things.

In “What are Masterpieces,” Stein says that talking and listening are absolutely crucial to an artistic disposition, but that “talking has nothing to do with creation.” However, in “Portraits and Repetition,” she elaborates on the importance of “talking and listening” to the cultivation of genius, a necessary precondition for the creator of a masterpiece. Stein writes, “... the essence of genius, of being most intensely alive, that is being one who is at the same time talking and listening...it is necessary to be at once talking and listening, doing both things, not as if there were one thing, not as if they were two things...they are part of the same thing.”¹⁶ Talking and listening—that is, fully engaged human conversation—is essential for living, and then creating. *The Autobiography* is a text *about* talking and listening, composed of listening, telling, retelling and gossiping; it is also a text composed from the fabric of Stein and Toklas’ shared experience, their twenty-five years of talking and listening to each other. Read this way, a lesbian relationship is not simply what *The Autobiography* is about; it is its very condition of possibility.

This argument suggests that much of the political force of the text lies in its narrative conceit; the cover itself, with Toklas’ name in the title and Stein’s name beneath might sufficiently gesture to the necessity of intimacy for an autobiography to be shared. However, the text as a whole elaborates on Stein’s interest in the expressions of a human personality, and the conditions under which one can come to share or inhabit another’s. *The Autobiography* progresses not only through conversations and anecdotes, but also through portraits: both Toklas’ portraits of the various figures discussed, as well as extended discussion of Stein’s literary portraits, especially those of Toklas and of Picasso. These portraits can be read alongside Stein’s theory of experience, as established

in “What are Masterpieces.” The portrait of Picasso, although he is one of Stein’s dearest friends, bears great similarity to the descriptions in *Tender Buttons*: it relays an immediate stream of experience, a thinking-through of Picasso’s significance in the art world without any reference to the two friends’ shared history. The portrait of Toklas, in contrast, stands halfway between “Picasso” and *The Autobiography*; it places its subject in a narrative context, but also shares stylistic similarities with Stein’s descriptions of objects. *The Autobiography*, read after and alongside these portraits, massively expands the process of portraiture begun with these pieces and others, resulting in a piece that is neither portrait nor self-portrait. Its thirty-year narrative does more than describe a person: it provides a new model of intimacy in which a single stream of experience is so fully shared by two individuals that they count as one.

II. Identity and Experience in Gertrude Stein and William James

Perhaps the greatest challenge to this line of argumentation is Stein’s own objection to the inclusion of an author’s “identity” in works of art, an assertion that would seem to eliminate autobiography—or the biography of an author’s partner—from the category of art or literature altogether. In “What are Masterpieces,” Stein differentiates between “the human mind” and identity, writing that great works of art strive to investigate the former while, as much as possible, avoiding the latter. The task of this section is to elucidate what Stein means by “the human mind,” and how her interest in the mind leads her to *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, a text that ostensibly contains much of the author’s identity. Following Stein’s rejection of Freud, I turn to James’ *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, in which James critiques “consciousness,” a term that has

much in common with Stein's "identity." In this essay, he asserts that mind—and world—is made up of "a stream of pure experience." Using James' terms, I turn again to "What are Masterpieces," suggesting that Stein's literature of the "human mind" primarily records experience, but that identity/consciousness does not disappear in it altogether. However, Stein's account raises a problem: she suggests not only that "identity" is a problem for the artist, but also that "recognition" of identity impedes artistic creation. Finally, I return to James to propose the possibility of what I call "transpersonal thinking," or the sharing of a thought between two individuals, proposing that Stein's record of experience is able to encompass more than one person's mind.

By turning our attention to Stein's teacher, William James, we can further elucidate Stein's interest in experience—or "the human mind"—as separate from identity. In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James presents a critique of consciousness that informs Stein's critique of identity. James famously argues that "consciousness" as conceived of by Kant and post-Kantian philosophers does not exist. James objects to the philosophic argument that our mind has two functions: first, to think and experience, and second, to recognize that it is thinking and experiencing. This second function is, for Kant, what makes up "consciousness." James' view of psychology, however, rejects the separation between the human subject and his or her experiences, and the bifurcation of the mind. All thoughts are part of the stream of experience; there is no level of distinct meta-cognition. Important, here, is that James positions his view of psychology not only against Kant's higher-level consciousness, but also against Freud's idea of a lower-level unconscious. In James' model, there is no unconscious—no stream of thoughts that are repressed and inaccessible to the subject. Richardson puts this precisely, writing,

"James... considered the unconscious simply at the chaos of feelings that had not yet found words—‘a feeling of *and*, a feeling of *if*, a feeling of *but*, and a feeling of *by*’—and the labyrinth, inherited grammatical structure in which these feelings paced and bellowed as half-human expressions at its center.”¹⁷ And part of James’ project, which treats both language and thought as living, changeable organisms, is to put these feelings *into* words. Thus, for James, the mind is never a topographical “place,” but a moving stream. A fixed and stable “self” with a reality prior to or separate from experience is impossible; the mind’s reality is continually shifting.

Scholars including Richardson and Meyer have emphasized the extent to which, for James, the project of elucidating forms of thinking—including new forms—depends on linguistic and aesthetic innovation. Richardson, writing of pragmatist thought more broadly, writes that pragmatism “is grounded in the premise that both thinking and language are life forms, subject to the same laws as other life forms.”¹⁸ Richardson argues that American pragmatist thinkers use language to gradually develop a philosophy of cognition, accounting for additional experiences over time. James’ contribution is, in a large part, to locate emotions within the stream of thought, and indeed *as* thought. Meyer likewise argues that Stein’s thinking takes James’ a step further. He suggests that James saw writing as a representational act that opens up new experiences for readers, whereas Stein emphasizes the potential for writing not to re-present but to *directly* present its authors experience to the reader.¹⁹ In what follows, I follow Meyer and Richardson, suggesting that Stein contributes to pragmatist philosophy in aesthetically representing the transpersonal potential of thought.

James’ rejection of “consciousness” serves as an essential tool in understanding

Stein's rejection of identity within an artistic practice that so often takes as its material Stein's own life. In "What are Masterpieces," Stein asserts that identity is a problem for the modern artist—both the writer and the painter—because, traditionally, he or she has been able to "more or less describe the things that happen you imagine them of course but you more or less describe the things that happen."²⁰ This statement aligns with Stein's descriptive practice as outlined above: artwork is not a reflection of the world, but rather a process of becoming with the world. The mind takes in experiences, and then "imagines" them, not in the sense of making them up but in the sense of uniquely apprehending them. The artist's descriptions should be, at their core, a record of the artist's impressions. In the past, "identity"—the artist's clear assertion of his own presence as experiencer and observer within a literary text—was not necessarily a problem that impeded the creation of art. However, Stein asserts that in the 20th century Western world, seeing "is no longer interesting": enough experience is shared through mass media that no one is interested in the particulars of an artist's experience. She suggests that, given this change, including one's "identity" in one's artwork is now not only inadvisable, but destructive. Stein goes on to define the problematic category of identity:

Identity is recognition, you know who you are because you and others remember anything about yourself but essentially you are not that when you are doing anything. I am I because my little dog knows me but, creatively speaking the little dog knowing that you are you and your recognising that he knows, that is what destroys creation.²¹

As soon as one begins to reflect on one's self—or, following James, to posit that one is in possession of a coherent “consciousness”—one ceases to be able to create anything. The same problem occurs not only if the artist begins to reflect on his or her own coherence, but also if he or she is aware that anyone else has begun to do so, even a “little dog” like the one Stein refers to throughout the piece. Self-recognition and recognition by another both lead to artworks that are meant to shore up the artist's identity. Art thus becomes a transaction between the artist and the audience. The art will have thus become utilitarian, part of a social exchange. Again, following James, we can further specify why recognition (either self-recognition, or recognition by another) impedes creation. Stein's project is non-mimetic description—the record of the functioning of the human mind—and this requires that the artist concentrate on the stream of experience. While one's concept of his or her identity is certainly *a part of* experience in general, pausing or interrupting the practice of intense observation that is “creation” in order to reflect on this identity re-directs the stream of experience, and leads the author to describe not what his or her mind encounters, but how she sees herself.

Stein's stated goal, then, is to describe the experiences of “the human mind” separate from identity, and autobiography is not an intuitive genre for achieving this goal. The “autobiography” Stein writes about herself and Toklas would seem to fail all the criteria for a masterpiece. First, it is based almost entirely on what Toklas sees and hears during her years with Stein, and thus seems dependent on their mutual recognition. Furthermore, it tells the story of Stein's gradual rise to fame, and might be seen as having a highly transactional purpose: cementing her public persona as a Modernist celebrity. Indeed, it is hard to imagine *The Autobiography* having *less* to do with the narrative genre

Stein describes as the only modern genre that solves the problem of identity: the detective story. Stein writes that the detective story avoids the pitfalls of other narrative genres in having “the man dead to begin with the hero is dead to begin with so you have so to speak got rid of the event before the book begins.”²² Stein’s identification of the “hero” of a detective story as a dead man is an odd interpretation of the genre; the hero of an Arthur Conan Doyle story is hardly a dead body, but rather Sherlock Holmes. Stein’s point, however, is that the detective is a blank figure, unrelated to the hero/dead man of the story except insofar as he tries to discern what has happened to him. The novel is thus never focused on a living relationship, but on the somewhat impersonal process of detective work, which is purely a process of the human mind—it “has nothing to do with human nature or with identity, it has to do with the human mind and the entirety that is with a thing in itself and not in relation.”²³ Here Stein seems to imply that narrative fiction almost inevitably reveals truths about an author’s identity rather than his or her mind because it moves forward by means of plot and human interaction. Stein expands on this point in “Portraits and Repetition,” writing that novels, written as they are from the artist’s act of “remembering”—that is, thinking about identity as it moves through time—produces novels that are “soothing” because remembering is most people’s default state-of-mind.²⁴

It would be easy to draw the conclusion that *The Autobiography*, supposedly written for fame and money, is simply not a work Stein herself would classify as a masterpiece, nor was it, like her other works, intended to focus on the mind “itself and not in relation.” Within *The Autobiography*, Toklas again and again makes references to Stein’s other work, especially *The Making of Americans* as well as her literary portraits of

Matisse, Picasso, Toklas, and others. All of these works are markedly different in style than *The Autobiography*; Toklas recounts that, during the period before WWII, Stein “was struggling with her sentences, those long sentences that had to be so exactly carried out...Gertrude Stein’s lifelong passion.”²⁵ The sentences that Toklas writes quite obviously lack Stein’s characteristic complexity. However, “What are Masterpieces” explicitly links the compositional method of *The Autobiography* to Stein’s goal of creating works about the human mind. In the lecture, she praises Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) as a true masterpiece, writing, “Robinson Crusoe and the footsteps of the man Friday is one of the most perfect examples of the non-existence of time and identity which makes a masterpiece.”²⁶ *Robinson Crusoe* was famously mistaken for an autobiography when it was first published. And, in the final sentence of *The Autobiography*, Stein tells Toklas that she will follow Defoe’s lead in composing Toklas’ autobiography; the sentence reads,

About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it is simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it.²⁷

Stein thus explicitly compares *The Autobiography* to “a perfect example” of narrative that is free of time and identity. Here, Stein opens space for interpreting Toklas’ narrative as a “masterpiece,” a text that takes as its material identity, memory, talking, and listening, but that nonetheless reveals the functions of the human mind.

Helpful, here, is Lisi Schoenbach's analysis of the reference to Robinson Crusoe. In *Pragmatic Modernism*, Schoenbach treats the dialectic of habit and innovation in Stein's work more broadly. She argues that this closing passage of *The Autobiography* refers not only to the faux-autobiographical element of Crusoe, but also to the plot of the earlier novel. She writes,

This evocation of Crusoe, who had to re-create life anew on his island, to forge new habits taken from the past but shaped and molded to the new context in which he found himself, is at once a powerful tribute to the habits of the past, and a celebration of those who are willing to create new habits and thus new ways of living in the present.²⁸

According to Richardson, Stein is interested in connecting the broader habits of culture to individual habits, and values Toklas' domestic labor—her attention to the repetitive, almost unseen tasks of everyday life—for enabling Stein's artistic work. She reads the Crusoe reference to suggest that the autobiography will be a “a celebration” of “new habits.” Her assertion poses a question—whose habits? Stein's habit of staying up at night to compose literature, or Toklas' flower picking? Following Richardson, I argue that the “new habit” celebrated is the new way of thinking that Stein and Toklas forge together.

A clear problem remains, however. Stein's project of description, as laid out in “What are Masterpieces,” states that observation is the only possible method for composition. Its anathema is recognition. However, I have also asserted that *The Autobiography* is a realist text, the “autobiography” of two women because it is the record of their intimate relationship, developed through “talking and listening” that is not

often represented in the text, but that is its condition of possibility. Stein, throughout her oeuvre, stresses the importance of talking and listening not exactly to artistic creation, but to the development of an artistic way-of-being. In “What are Masterpieces,” Stein writes, “I have said the essence of being a genius is to be able to talk and listen to listen while talking and talk while listening but and this is very important very important indeed talking has nothing to do with creation.”²⁹ For Stein, talking and listening at the same time is what a genius does when he or she is not creating. It is not simply the act of conversation, but rather the mastery of always and simultaneously taking in impressions (listening) as well as sharing one’s impressions and experiences (talking). Coordinating both actions is, we can infer, more difficult than the usual rhythm of conversation, in which one alternates between talking and listening. However, it would nonetheless seem to depend on the two conversing partners’ mutual recognition for basic understanding to occur; it is thus isolated from the act of creation, which, in “What are Masterpieces,” seems to result from an independently undertaken and intense concentration on what we might call “inner listening.”

However, continuing to take seriously Toklas’ proposition that the words in the autobiography are “literally true”—that is, that they are true in relation to Stein and Toklas’ lived experiences between 1903 and 1933—allows us to further examine the conflation of Stein and Toklas’ experiences, thoughts, and identities within the text through an underread assertion in James’ account of experience. In *Essays*, he argues that individual experiences are not sealed off from one another in isolated chambers of subjectivity. Rather, he describes the “world of pure experience as a fluid mosaic of individual experiences blurring with one another.”³⁰ The “fluid mosaic” is an image in

which individuals abut one another, but are not necessarily defined by their boundaries. The permeability of the lines between individuals are precisely what Stein investigates. James expands on the possibility of two minds sharing a single experience within this mosaic, writing:

...whatever differing contents of our minds may eventually fill a place with, the place itself is a numerically identical content of the two minds, a piece of common property in which, through which, and over which they join. The receptacle of certain of our experiences being thus common, the experiences themselves might someday become common also. If that day ever did come, our thoughts would terminate in complete empirical identity, there would be an end, and so far as *those* experiences went, to our discussions about truth. No points of difference appearing, they would have to count as the same.³¹

James builds on his assertion that radical empiricism is not solipsistic; in his model, an object of experience (i.e. a pen that two individuals look at) can be shared by two minds, and considered the same object rather than two different and autonomous mental representations. In this passage, James goes further— if two minds share the same object of experience, their *experience* is the same; the two minds are joined. James imagines that two minds can indeed share one thought, although this is unlikely, given that the stream of experience passing through each mind combines imaginative experiences, embodied experiences, and affective experiences. However, it is precisely this possibility—that two minds can “count as the same”—that Stein explores in *The Autobiography*.

Thus, I propose that *The Autobiography* imagines that all the experiences, thoughts, and feelings recorded in it are fully shared by two minds. This solves the problem of recognition. While the *capacity* for transpersonal thinking is developed through a reciprocal process of “talking and listening at the same time,” transpersonal thinking itself occurs when this process comes to fruition, and when two minds genuinely share the same thought. Thus, the narrator of *The Autobiography* is engaged in recording a singular stream of experience that belongs to two human minds. This experience, as described over the course of a long narrative, often takes as its subject matter the identity of the two women who co-compose it, as well as their relationships with friends, acquaintances, and each other. However, this does not diminish its capacity as an artwork or even a “masterpiece.” The narrative structure of the text engages in Stein’s project of non-mimetic description while also considering more closely the role of “talking and listening” in making that process possible at all.

III. Stein’s Portraits

An important precursor to *The Autobiography* is Stein’s interest in portraiture. Toklas begins her narration stating that she will write about her encounters with three geniuses: Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso, and Alfred North Whitehead. Toklas describes each of these geniuses, dedicating the most time to Stein, much to Picasso, and some to Whitehead; her descriptions mostly concern conversations heard or overheard, with some physical description. Toklas’ “portraits” of geniuses thus stand in stark contrast to the other works she describes throughout the text—especially Stein’s series of portraits, written beginning in 1910. This text as well as “Portraits and Repetition” emphasize the

centrality of portraiture to Stein's artistic project, and begin to show the interest in narrative that is further developed in *The Autobiography*. Toklas repeatedly makes reference to portraits, including Stein's literary portraits of herself ("Ada"), Picasso, Matisse, and others. The portraits of Toklas as Picasso both give concrete examples of Stein's non-mimetic description that reveal the function of "the human mind" as described in the previous section. Additionally, the differences between these two portraits begin to show the role of intimacy in the form of talking-and-listening in modifying Stein's descriptive practice: the portrait of Picasso resembles the descriptions of food and objects in *Tender Buttons*, while "Ada," even as it employs the same syntactic patterns, takes on some of the narrative qualities that reappear in *The Autobiography*. "Ada" serves as a study-in-miniature for the later text, and is also an early example of Stein's interest in transpersonal experience.

Toklas states that Stein's portraiture is an attempt to record both the interior and the exterior of persons, both their "characters" and the "rhythm of the external world" that they inhabit.³² During their 1914 trip to Spain, Stein began tackling this problem through a series of portraits. Toklas narrates:

It was a long tormenting process, she looked, listened and described. She always was, she always is, tormented by the problem of the external and the internal. One of the things that worries her about painting is the difficulty that the artist feels and which send him to painting still lives, that after all the human being is essentially not paintable.³³

According to Toklas, when an artist begins to paint still lives, he has given up on the possibility of representing a human subject. Stein "worries" that she too will encounter

this problem in her quest to write portraits. However, she uses the objects and rooms described in *Tender Buttons*, written during the same period as the portraits, as practice for the description of persons. Portraits are more challenging because they almost inevitably rely on recognition of their object, and are likely to draw on the artist's memory. In "Portraits and Repetition," Stein explicitly states this problem, writing that she intends to create portraits of individuals not from memory, but from "knowing." Stein states, "I wondered is there any way of making what I know come out as I know it, come out not as remembering. I found this very exciting."³⁴ Stein's interest in writing her portraits from "knowing" aligns with the project of recording the functions of "the human mind" as laid out in the previous section. The development of her interest and method in the genre are narrated in *The Autobiography*.

Chapter 3 of the text, "Gertrude Stein in Paris, 1903-1907," returns repeatedly to Picasso's portrait of Stein, which seems to carry an omniscient or predictive quality; sitting for this painting marks the beginning of her interest in the form. The portrait, painted in 1905, depicts Stein before she cut the two long braids she characteristically wore around her head. Picasso tells Toklas, "everybody says that she does not look like it but that does not make any difference, she will."³⁵ When Stein cuts her hair in 1931, Picasso sees that she resembles his portrait even further: "Let me see, he said. She let him see. And my portrait, said he sternly. Then his face softening he added, mis, quand meme tout y est, all the same it is all there."³⁶ The portrait, composed during ninety sittings, captures Stein not only as she was, but also as she would be, thus suggesting an insight beyond the visual. Toklas tells us that Picasso had not had a live model for eight years before the portrait of Stein, had not had one again afterwards, and that neither Stein nor

Picasso remembered how the sitting came about.³⁷ However, if, for Stein, talking and listening is the condition of possibility for genius, Stein and Picasso's long friendship and many conversations make possible a portrait in which Picasso records not only the workings of his own mind, but those of Stein's as well.

Thus, although Stein's portraits, unlike Picasso's, do not attempt to visually represent their objects, they do aspire to the same kind of insight.³⁸ Furthermore, Stein's interest in representing her own mind within the portrait is as of equal if not more importance than representing her object. Her portrait of Picasso is a case in point: it is bare of visual description as well as narrative progression. In fact, it mostly refers to its subject by the pronoun "one" rather than "he"; given Stein's interest in the flexibility of pronouns, it might hardly seem to be about Picasso at all. However, taken seriously as a portrait, it emphasizes through repetition a select few of Picasso's qualities: that he is charming, that he has a following, that he works, and that whether or not he works, something with a "completely real meaning" comes out of him.³⁹

The portrait begins:

One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming.⁴⁰

These four sentences proceed through minor changes; the adjectives "certainly" and "completely" move locations in each. In the first, Picasso "certainly" has followers and is "completely" charmingly. In the second two, one of these adjectives are dropped, and in

the final, Picasso is “certainly completely” charming even if his followers, stripped of their adjective, seem fewer. In “Poetry and Grammar,” Stein talks at length about the functions of pronouns and adjectives, remarking that pronouns are fascinating because their referent may vary over the course of a sentence, paragraph, or piece of writing, whereas adjectives are one of the duller parts of speech aside from nouns, precisely because they describe nouns.⁴¹ Here, however, the adjective’s main function is to describe the pronouns “one” and “some.” These slight shifts in observation reflect the action of a mind thinking through the relationship between an artist and his influence, so much that the four consecutive sentences might reflect the mind’s editing process, with the final sentence a revision of the previous. This sense of continual thinking through is also reflected in the use of the past progressive tense for almost all of the verbs. In “Portraits and Repetition,” Stein asserts that there is no such thing as repetition, as each iteration of a statement inevitably carries a different emphasis; the repetitions in this piece indeed seem to represent a mind thinking *more* precisely rather than repeating itself.⁴²

As the piece unfolds, it seems to move closer to its subject, Picasso, through modifications in pronoun use. In the first paragraph, Picasso is only “one.” In the next ten paragraphs, the subject pronouns used to refer to Picasso are “this one” and “one”; however, object pronouns including “him” and “himself” appear in variations on the same sentence: “Something had been coming out of him”; “This one was certainly being one having something coming out of him,” “This one was one having always something being coming out of him, something having completely a real meaning.”⁴³ In each of these constructions, the object pronoun “him” more clearly refers to the male artist than do the subject pronouns. The syntax thus places the artist in a position of passivity: the

something that comes out of him takes priority in the sentence. The something, presumably Picasso's art, also receives more description than the painter whom they come out of; what comes out is "a solid thing, a charming thing, a lovely thing, a perplexing thing, a disconcerting thing, a simple thing, a clear thing, a complicated thing, an interesting thing, a disturbing thing."⁴⁴ The series of adjectives used to describe Picasso's artwork can be read in two ways: as a continuous description of a single essence present in all of his work, or as a series of descriptions of discrete works. In either case, the list of attributes suggests abundance. There is no repetition of this sentence; it captures the essence of the art without the need for shifting emphasis in multiple iterations.

In the final sentences of the short portrait, the subject pronoun changes from "one" to "he." Stein writes:

He always did have something come out of him. He was working, he was not ever completely working. He did have some following. They were always following him. He was one who was working. He was one having something coming out of him something having meaning. He was not ever completely working.⁴⁵

Stein's interest in the slippage of pronouns suggests that the "one" who appears throughout could refer, at different times, to different expatriate artists in her circle. However, by the end, the "he" more clearly and stably refers to the titular artist. After working through a stream of observations, vacillating between statements that the artist is charming or is completely charming, always working or not always working, the portrait concludes with greater finality; the use of the auxiliary verb 'to do', here, adds certainty

to statements expressed and questioned earlier in the piece. This conclusion brings the variations to a halt, and arrives at a final portrait of Picasso: although he is “never completely working,” there was “always something coming out of him.” His art seems to have a life of its own; it is partially made without the aid of the artist. Here, as in his portrait of Stein, Picasso’s work takes on an almost supernatural quality. This contrasts with what Toklas describes as the “tormenting process” of Stein’s own portraiture. The painstaking compositional method of repetition and emphasis is evident in this short passage—it carefully considers the correct grammar for describing its subject in sentence after sentence, and only through a process of repetition and revision does it arrive at a conclusion.

Stein’s “Ada” shares many stylistic details in common with “Picasso,” but also shifts towards a more narrative representational model; in the opening pages of *The Autobiography*, Toklas suggests the reader refer to it for “a very good description of me as I was” upon arriving in Paris. This portrait, unlike Picasso’s, bears a clear relationship to its subject, beginning as it does by describing her family. The short piece, like “Picasso,” is characterized by shifting nouns and pronouns. The shifts in this piece, however, take the form of narrative progression: it begins not with Alice “Ada” Toklas, but rather with her brother Barnes Colhard. The second and third paragraphs focus on Barnes’ romantic life, and his father Abel’s opinions on it. Only in the fourth paragraph does his sister appear, and here Toklas is referred to as “she.” “Ada” is only used as a noun in the final lines of the piece. While Picasso’s portrait traces the movement of the author’s mind as it homes in on the most precise description possible, the portrait of Toklas homes in on the subject as its narrative swerves from character to character. This

is apt in a portrait that is very much about its subject's love for storytelling, in the sense of telling stories, and of listening to them. Like "Picasso," "Ada" features reoccurring adjectives and sentence constructions. The first mention of storytelling reads: "She had been a very good daughter to her mother. She and her mother had always told very pretty stories to each other."⁴⁶ After her mother's death, Ada is unhappy: "She was afraid then, she was one needing charming stories and happy telling of them and not having that thing she was always trembling."⁴⁷ The adjective "trembling" appears twice in this piece; in this first instantiation, she is trembling out of fear and loneliness. Ada leaves home to avoid this trembling, and finds another. This portrait concludes with a longer description of Ada's life away from her family, implicitly in Paris with Stein:

She came to be happier than anybody else who was living then...She was telling some one, who was loving every story that was charming. Some one who was living was almost always listening. Some one who was loving was almost always listening. That one who was loving was almost always listening. That one who was loving was telling about being one then listening. That one being loving was then telling stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending. That one was then one always completely listening.⁴⁸

Just as working, following, and coming are repeated again and again in "Picasso," living, loving, and listening are repeated in this passage. However, despite the syntactic similarity between the two passages—strong repetition with variation, the use of the past perfect tense, and the use of the pronoun "one"—the two passages fundamentally differ in the referent of the "one." While "That one" refers to Picasso himself in the former, in

“Ada,” “one” refers to Toklas and Stein as they take turns talking and listening to each other. Moreover, the pronoun is highly variable in its referent. In the first instance, “one” most definitely refers to Stein, as Toklas is the subject of the sentence. In the second, “some one” seems to refer again to Stein, but the very openness of the pronoun “someone” suggests that it might be another individual in their shared life, perhaps one of the many wives of geniuses referred to in *The Autobiography*. The introduction of the definitive article “that” narrows the field of reference to Stein and Toklas. However, here especially, “that one” refers to both one who is talking, as well as one who is listening; the two are both always talking and always listening to one another. Their experiences are shared, as is the pronoun “one.”

This ambiguity is resolved in the final sentences. Much as in “Picasso,” the subject of the portrait progressively clarifies itself. Whereas Picasso goes from “one” to “he,” however, the subject in “Ada” goes from Barnes to “his sister,” to “she,” to “one,” and, finally, to “Ada.” Stein writes:

Ada was then one and all her living then one completely telling stories that were charming, completely listening to stories having a beginning and a middle and an ending. Trembling was all living, living was all loving, some one was then the other one. Certainly this one was loving this Ada then. And certainly Ada all her living then was happier in living than any one else who ever could, who was, who is, who ever will be living.

This portrait finally captures Ada not just in a moment but in an ongoing, unfolding context; she was “then one” and “all her living then one” who talks, listen, loves, and trembles. The portrait’s linking together of living, loving, and trembling as its subject’s

main experiences make clear the erotic link between “she” and the “one” who switch places. The “trembling,” fearful Ada has been transformed into a trembling, ecstatic Ada; the portrait thus indeed tells a story rather than homing in on a precise description.

While the portrait thus shares surface level similarities with that of Picasso, including repetition, pronoun progression, and even word choice, it is important that its main difference is its narrative structure. If Stein’s portraits are meant to capture their subjects, it follows that the portrait of a painter is stiller; it focuses on more and more clearly representing its subject, just as do a painter’s brushstrokes. Stein’s portrait of Picasso is, then, not unlike his painting of her. Toklas’ story, by contrast, identifies storytelling as the passion of its subject, and thus makes her portrait a story. Including a story as part of a portrait, however, indicates that the author *cannot* apprehend her subject as she is a single moment. In “Portrait and Repetition,” Stein insists that writing what one remembers and writing what one knows or perceives in the moment are incompatible practices.⁴⁹ In “Ada,” though, the author’s perception of her subject is so colored by and enmeshed with her memories that the former cannot be described without reference to the later. The portrait of Toklas thus reveals much more than does the portrait of Picasso. The narrative progression indicates that Toklas once felt or was perceived as secondary to the men in her life; the portrait is one in which she quite literally moves away from them, building a life with another woman and modeling her interest in storytelling after her mother’s. It is a story of a woman finding herself. The narrative, told this way, seems similar to Stein’s own story—by the time of writing this portrait, she had had a falling out with her brother Leo, and would continue to build her own life with Toklas, while telling stories in her numerous poems, novels, and essays. Narrative, in Stein’s portraits, seems

to have a place only when lives and experiences intersect, only when the subject and object talk and listen so much that they are no longer entirely distinct. And, in this perpetual talking and listening, Toklas begins to take on the qualities of a genius in her own right.

IV. From Portrait to Autobiography

The Autobiography marks a progression in method from Stein's portraits rather than a departure: the strategies seen in miniature in the portrait of Toklas are magnified onto a much larger narrative scale in the later text. *The Autobiography* features the repetition of anecdotes throughout the narrative. While syntactic repetition allows Stein to more closely map the observations of her own mind in portraits including "Ada" and "Picasso," repeated anecdotes and scenes over the course of the long narrative serve a different purpose: they first establish the separate experiences of the two women living at 27 rue de Fleurus, and then progressively blur them. The text thus moves from "I" to "we." The narrative also employs repetition to re-examine the work and life of artists who are "not real geniuses," especially Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway serves as a point-of-contrast to Toklas, as he is incapable of talking and listening, further establishing Toklas' capacity for genius, the pre-condition for the co-conscious creation that makes up *The Autobiography*. The establishment of this co-mingled stream of experience allows Stein to explore a feature of thinking explicitly avoided in the portraits: writing from "memory" rather than from "knowing." Toklas' recursive, repetitious narrative demonstrates what it is like for two minds to share the same present reality despite the different paths towards its current shape.

The narrative structure of *The Autobiography* indicates a shift in the relationship between Toklas and Stein, both in the progression of chapters, and in the changing relationship of the narrator—first “I,” then “we”—and the primary author, Stein. Of the book’s seven chapters, two narrate Toklas’ life before her partnership with Stein; Chapter 1, “Before I Came to Paris,” and Chapter 2, “My Arrival in Paris.” Two chapters concerns Stein’ life before Toklas, Chapter 3, “Gertrude Stein in Paris—1903-1907,” and Chapter 4, “Gertrude Stein Before She Came to Paris.” The remaining three chapters narrate their lives together. The first two chapters thus rely on information given by the ostensible narrator, Toklas, to the primary author, Stein; the next two, concerning Stein, are nonetheless filtered through Toklas’ persona. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, critics including Gilmore and Coffman have read Toklas as a persona that enables Stein to highlight and play on the butch/femme dynamic of her lesbian household, separating her “masculine” genius from the feminized genre of autobiography while also casting herself as the object of a desiring gaze.⁵⁰ I argue, rather, that their progression represents a synthesis in the two women’s’ points of view. Importantly, Toklas refers to herself as “I” throughout the text, and primarily in the first four chapters. “Gertrude Stein” is always referred to by her full, proper name; sentences repeat her name again and again rather than substituting the subject pronoun “she.” She is thus fixed to her proper name, one of the types of speech Stein remarks is least interesting because its referent is inflexible. Notably, the other individuals referred to in the text—Picasso, Whitehead, their wives—are not referred to by their full names. The text thus takes great pains to make sure that Stein, when she appears, is presented as a famous author, a recognizable and recognized individual. There is thus a clear distinction between the two

women in these four chapters; Toklas' "I" and the Stein whom she recognizes as a unique, separate individual. I stress, here, the term *recognition*, which, as elaborated in Section II, Stein states is antithetical to creation. In these chapters, the refusal of the familiar pronoun "she" and insistence on the proper noun stresses the separation between the two women in order to emphasize its collapse in the later three chapters. In these chapters, the narrator predominantly uses the pronoun "we" rather than "I"; the two points of view have thus merged as the women cease to recognize their separateness, increasingly sharing thought and experience. The final passage of the text reads:

About six weeks ago Gertrude Stein said, it does not look to me as if you were ever going to write that autobiography. You know what I am going to do. I am going to write it for you. I am going to write it as simply as Defoe did the autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. And she has and this is it.⁵¹

At this point we know that the "I" of the autobiography was written by "she," Stein. The pronouns in this brief passage refer to the same individual as both a first-person speaker and as a third-person character who is spoken *about*. In this passage, the status of the "I" over the course of the text becomes, in retrospect, confused; the difference between "I" and "she" is unstable from sentence to sentence. It is an "I" that is flexible in its referent, one that, as the text unfolds, may at times refer to Toklas' experiences, at times to Stein's, and, at other times, to experiences shared by the text's "we." This flexibility does not disrupt the very idea of identity, but rather demonstrates the fluidity of the two minds whose twenty-five years of talking and listening come together to form the narrative. However, the narrative of a book as a whole does more than merely show this

progression: it elaborates and describes the emergence of this co-consciousness through strategies of repetition.

An essential scene of such repetition is the very one in which Toklas decides to compose the book. In Chapter 2, Toklas states:

Before I decided to write this book my twenty-five years with Gertrude Stein, I had often said that I would write, The wives of geniuses I have sat with. I have sat with so many. I have sat with wives who were not wives, of geniuses who were real geniuses. I have sat with real wives of geniuses who were not real geniuses. I have sat with wives of geniuses, of near geniuses, of would be geniuses, in short I have sat very often and very long with many wives and wives of many geniuses.⁵²

As Gilmore, Coffman, and others argue, this passage places Toklas amongst the wives. Thus, it serves to support readings that focus on either the exploitative potential of *The Autobiography*, or on its butch/femme play. However, this passage has several other functions. Significantly, it establishes that just as Stein talks with and listens to Picasso and others, Toklas talks and listens with their wives and mistresses, thus acquiring the same powers of observation as Stein. Additionally, Toklas' many modifications on the pairing "wife and genius" recall the gradual syntactic modifications of Stein's portraits, further establishing her status as a keen observer of the human mind. Most importantly, though, this passage reoccurs.

In the intervening pages between this passage and its near-repetition some two hundred pages later, Toklas relays stories about the wives of geniuses and would-be geniuses including Fernande Picasso, Mrs. Whitehead, Madame Matisse, and others. And

she depicts her interactions with these women as separate from those that Stein has with their husbands. On a number of occasions throughout the text, Toklas also describes the conversations for which she is *not* present between Stein and a number of geniuses and would-be geniuses. It is in these anecdotes rather than in her own that she stresses the importance of talking and listening, that quality Stein defines as necessary to genius in “What are masterpieces” and elsewhere. She writes of Stein and Picasso, “These two even today have long solitary conversations...And they explain about everything, about pictures, about dogs, about death, about unhappiness.”⁵³ Later, she narrates, “Gertrude Stein and Doctor Whitehead walked endlessly around the country. They talked of philosophy and history, it was during these days that Gertrude Stein realised how completely it was Doctor Whitehead and not Russell who had had the ideas for their great book.”⁵⁴ Both of these conversational partners illuminate Stein’s understanding of the work being done at the beginning of the 20th century, and the qualities of the minds doing that work.

However, conversations between Stein and Toklas are not often explicitly represented. Although Stein and Toklas take walks across the Spanish countryside, drive around France, and live together, most of the narrative describes their interactions with other people. The importance of talking and listening to their relationship, so clearly articulated in “Ada,” is not stressed in this text. In Section II, I argue that “talking and listening” is the *precondition* for transpersonal thinking. If *The Autobiography* seeks to aesthetically represent co-consciousness, conversation is perhaps not the best way to do so: this would reduce an intensely shared, singular experience to something that takes place *between* two people, emphasizing their separation. Stein, rather, develops new

narrative strategies to emphasize the two women's shared possession of experiences and thoughts. The most central strategy is repetition with difference.

The second instance of the "wives of geniuses" passage occurs in the final pages of the book. Toklas narrates:

For some time now many people, and publishers, have been asking Gertrude Stein to write her autobiography and she had always replied, not possibly. She began to tease me and say that I should write my autobiography. Just think, she would say, what a lot of money you would make. She then began to invent titles for my autobiography. My Life With The Great, Wives of Geniuses I Have Sat With, My Twenty-five Years With Gertrude Stein.⁵⁵

In the first passage, it is Toklas who imagines writing her autobiography, as well as possible titles for it. In the second, Stein has devised the titles. It is possible to read this passage as part of the gradual unveiling of the text's "I" as always truly Stein's; everything that Toklas "narrates" has actually been put in her mouth by Stein. I nonetheless read this passage not as a confirmation of Stein's authorship, but as a further blurring of the boundary between the two women, already begun on the book's cover. These titles are shared in conversation between the two women: Toklas "often said" that she would write an autobiography, and Stein "teased" Toklas. However, the return to these titles not in conversation, but rather first as the stated product of Toklas' mind and then the stated product of Stein's, suggests that the titles belong to both women. Both statements are "literally true": the titles originate solely in neither woman's mind, but

rather one thought shared by the two. And, given this reading, so does the autobiography that is actually written.

Other instances of narrative repetition in *The Autobiography* serve to further highlight the difference between “mere” repetition and Stein’s version, which I have argued traces the contours of transpersonal thinking. Stein’s portrait of Hemingway reveals the problem with merely recording conversations. Hemingway listens to Stein, and in fact uses the product of her thinking in his own stories. However, unlike Stein—and Toklas—Hemingway is not capable of talking and listening at the same time, that is, at absorbing a point of view while transmuting it in his own mind. His repetitions of Stein’s statements are thus mere “remarks” rather than works of literature that relay the process of a mind in conversation. Toklas introduces Hemingway’s failure within the context of his friendship with Stein: the two “used to walk together and talk together a great deal.”⁵⁶ However, her tutelage fails to teach him the skills necessary to talk and listen, or to record the motions of his own mind. Indeed, the portrait of Hemingway is one of the most unflattering depictions in *The Autobiography*.

A conversation between Stein and Hemingway at once continues Stein’s methodology of clarifying character through repetition, and also provides a lens for understanding the importance of talking and listening to literature. The incident is first relayed in Chapter Three. Stein expands on the way in which she writes, contrasting her approach with his. Toklas relays her view:

Observation and construction make imagination, that is granting the possession of imagination, is what she has taught many young writers. Once when Hemingway wrote in one of his stories that Gertrude Stein

always knew what was good in a Cézanne, she looked at him and said,
Hemingway, remarks are not literature.⁵⁷

Stein views literature as the record of the human mind; here, she uses different terminology to describe the process of writing. Observation and construction (modes of listening and talking, respectively) combine to create a unique imagination—a mind interesting enough to produce masterpieces. By parataxis, Toklas suggests that Hemingway does *not* display this quality. He has listened to Stein—he knows that she appreciates a good Cezanne. However, he has not responded to this information; it has not been filtered through his own mind or imagination. His retelling is thus merely a remark. However, we might note that this criticism is in fact contained within Toklas’ repetition of an anecdote from Stein. This raises a question: how is Toklas’ anecdote about Hemingway—a single sentence—different than Hemingway’s remark about Stein? Indeed, how are the many anecdotes relayed in *The Autobiography* different than remarks?

Toklas’ anecdotes cease to be “remarks” as they accrue meaning over the course of the narrative. As Toklas repeats anecdotes, they change context and meaning. Their gradual modification recalls the sentence-level edits in portraits like “Picasso” and “Ada.” Toklas’ anecdotes thus bear the mark of her imagination, her process of talking and listening, as they shift and transform. A case in point is the repetition of the statement “remarks are not literature” itself. The next time Hemingway appears is in the seventh and final chapter. Toklas relays a similar incident to the first: “He had added to his stories a little story of meditations and in these he said that *The Enormous Room* was the greatest book he had ever read. It was then that Gertrude Stein said, Hemingway, remarks

are not literature.”⁵⁸ Here, Toklas refers to Hemingway’s *In Our Time*. The incidents are different, but Stein’s reply to Hemingway is the same. Crucially, Hemingway’s writing once again reveals *Stein’s* aesthetic preferences rather than his own; during an earlier conversation, Stein told Hemingway she was “much impressed by The Enormous Room,” whereas Hemingway disagreed, saying that Cummings had “copied everything.”⁵⁹ Yet it is Hemingway who twice uses Stein’s perceptive capabilities—her knowledge of Cezanne and her appreciation of e. e. cummings—in his writing. Stein does not condemn him for this plagiarized experience, but his remarks are placed in contrast with Toklas’ ability to both talk and listen. Whereas Toklas transforms Stein’s anecdotes and observations, Hemingway tries to pass them off as his own. He has listened, but he has not done the work of re-combining what he has learned with his own experience.

Toklas’s description of Hemingway thus demonstrates both her own aptitude for talking and listening, and Hemingway’s failure as Stein’s apprentice. She describes him as “an extraordinarily good-looking young man.... rather foreign looking, with passionately interested, rather than interesting eyes.”⁶⁰ Hemingway’s physical attractiveness reveals something about his inner self; he is “interested,” but ultimately not *interesting*. Toklas goes on to relay a conversation between herself, Stein, and Sherwood Anderson:

But what a book, they both agreed, would be the real story of Hemingway, not those he writes but the confessions of the real Ernest Hemingway. It would be for another audience than the audience Hemingway now has but it would be very wonderful. And then they both agreed that they have a weakness for Hemingway because he is such a good pupil. He is a rotten

pupil, I protested. You don't understand, they both said, it is so flattering to have a pupil who does it without understanding it, in other words he takes training and anybody who takes training is a favourite pupil.⁶¹

Stein is able to maintain her own affection for Hemingway who *might* be interesting—if he learned to write truly from his own experience. However, the conversation definitively places Hemingway as a pupil rather than a peer, and, furthermore, as a pupil who despite his fame is not writing as well as he might. Thus, his two teachers imagine that he might write a biography—a form they both agree can reveal something “real,” something from *his* experience rather than something overheard. Stein, as depicted in this conversation, is increasingly interested in works of art that record something “true” about their subjects; Hemingway fails to write in this way. At the same time, this conversation includes Toklas’ disgust with Hemingway. The text thus reaffirms that it is more than a recording of *Stein’s* mind; Toklas, unlike Hemingway, is perfectly capable of recording her own perspective rather than simply remarking.

In the conversation about Hemingway, Stein and Toklas remain distinct in their viewpoints. However, the text’s “we” increasingly accommodates their separate history and their shared present. Stein’s goal in her portraits is to write from immediate knowledge rather than memory; in *The Autobiography*, however, the text’s recursive, repetitious structure speaks from a vantage point that suggests the mind on display in *The Autobiography* is shaped by more than one set of experiences and memories, which inevitably color the project of life-writing. The non-linear, recursive structure of the narrative enables the narrator to capture more than one set of experiences, now enmeshed in her perspective. This narrative strategy occurs early in the text, when Toklas states her

intention to describe the art in Stein's salon. Setting out to discuss her arrival in Paris in 1907, she says, "There are a great many things to tell of what was happening then and what had happened before, which led up to then, but now I must describe what I saw when I came."⁶² Toklas suggests that her narrative will be expansive, but that the paintings must serve as a backdrop to it, just as they did to the gatherings in Stein's salon. However, before setting this backdrop, Toklas thrice returns to the moment just before looking—the moment when she *must* look—and then digresses to another topic. First, she describes the woman who cooked her first dinner at the salon, Hélène. The anecdote of Hélène begins two years before Toklas' arrival, and ends "much later, only about three years ago"—in 1930, the last time Stein and Toklas saw Hélène. This portrait delays the linear attention of the narrative, referring to Stein and Toklas' twenty-five years together. At the end of this reminiscence, Toklas refocuses her narrative: "But to come back to 1907. Before I tell about the guests, I must tell about what I saw."⁶³ However, once again, she does not immediately describe the pictures; first, she describes the doorbell of Stein's home, the key that opens the door to the atelier, and its décor. She then states, "But to return to the pictures," before describing the chairs in the room. Only after these three interruptions, moving from history to entry to furnishing, does she proclaim, "This time I am really going to tell about the pictures," and then really tell about them.⁶⁴

These digressions from the salon's famous paintings serve a dual purpose: their repetition both mimetically reflects Toklas' 1907 reaction to the salon, as well as colors her eventual description of the salon with the history and knowledge acquired during her twenty-five years with Stein. She narrates:

It is very difficult now that everybody is accustomed to everything to give some idea of the kind of uneasiness one felt when one first looked at all these pictures on these walls...Now I was confused and I looked and I looked and I looked and I was confused. Gertrude Stein and her brother were so accustomed to this state of mind in a guest that they paid no attention to it.⁶⁵

Toklas states that it is hard to communicate the unease once caused by the paintings, but her very hesitation at describing them in the narrative replicates her older impulse to look away from them. These pages, then, use the repetition of “I must,” as well as narrative digression, to reflect Toklas’ stream of experience—as described later to Stein. Stein’s “autobiography” of Toklas remains true to Toklas’ experiences, acknowledging that Stein was at the time completely unaware of Toklas’ reaction. At other points, the text suggests that Stein never had such a reaction to these paintings. She is upset when people mock an early Matisse painting: “It bothered her and angered her because she did not understand why because to her it was so alright.”⁶⁶ These two perspectives—Toklas’ confusion and Stein’s acceptance—are joined in *The Autobiography*, which describes the art as at once shocking and “alright.” The narrative thus does what the portraits cannot: it acknowledges the role of memory in shaping direct observation. Throughout the text, the memories come from two distinct individuals, but merge and emerge in the narrator’s singular voice and vision.

V. Conclusion

As aforementioned, *The Autobiography* has, at times, been understood as a love gift, a present from Stein to Toklas meant to make up for Toklas' discovery of the manuscript for *Q.E.D.* *The Autobiography* is a text in which everything reoccurs. The reasons for the composition of the text are recited at the beginning and at the end, first as Toklas', then as Stein's. Toklas and Stein's first and last encounters with individuals including their acquaintances, their cook, and their friends frequently appear in the text twice. In this way, the book both acknowledges the dyad of Stein and Toklas' experience, as well as unifies that experience through the fabric of the narrative. The text remembers, and then re-remembers. In doing so, it sometimes seems to stray from many of Stein's artistic goals: to avoid narrative, a genre that is "soothing" but not interesting; to write texts that reveal the movement of the human mind rather than tell us about human nature; to write portraits about subjects that are based in immediate "knowing" rather than remembering; and to create works of art that exist outside of time and memory.

This chapter has not sought to argue that *The Autobiography* somehow meets all of Stein's aesthetic criteria. Rather, it represents Stein's work moving in a new direction; whereas "What are Masterpieces" and "Portraits and Repetition" insist that genius is a quality that belongs to individual artists, and channeled directly into their art—thus treating the mind as "a thing itself and not in relation"—*The Autobiography* sees Stein moving towards a model of artistic production that is not so unipolar. This movement comes from Stein's increased interest in the nature of experience, as developed in her portraits: while her portrait of Picasso is, truly, a portrait of her mind, "Ada" acknowledges that the subject of the portrait and its author share so much experience that it is not always clear who is talking and who is listening. "Talking and listening at the

same time” is not something an artist can do alone; they must do it with a partner. The field of experience opened up in this practice—particularly between Stein and Toklas—is one that can be completely shared, one in which individuals can at least partially merge *without* dissolving. Stein and Toklas’ shared autobiography, then, sheds light on Stein’s claims that she writes “for everyone”; her utopian ideas of readerly communities are grounded in the transpersonal experience she and her partner share, both in life and in the narrative space she creates. Furthermore, it challenges our assumption that autobiography is about *one* life, opening up the field of the self to include multiple identities and intimacies.

Stein and Toklas’ experience is so much a single fabric that anything *not* shared is an aberration, and irrelevant to the narrative of *The Autobiography. Q. E. D.*, the text that caused a rift between the two women, is referred to once over the course of the narrative. The third chapter, “Gertrude Stein before shame came to Paris,” concludes:

She wrote a short novel. The funny thing about this short novel is that she completely forgot about it for many years. She remembered herself beginning a little later writing the *Three Lives* but this first piece of writing was completely forgotten, she had never mentioned it to me, even when I first knew her. She must have forgotten about it almost immediately. This spring ...she came across these two carefully written volumes of this completely forgotten first novel. She was very bashful and hesitant about it, did not really want to read it. Louis Bromfield was at the house that evening and she handed him the manuscript and said to him, you read it.⁶⁷

Because Stein did not share *Q.E.D.* with Toklas, the narrative asserts she *must* have forgotten it. Because the manuscript has not been talked about and read by both women, it ceases to exist for either. Furthermore, Stein does not want to read the manuscript herself, nor have Toklas read it, so irrelevant is it to their shared life as synthesized and recorded in *The Autobiography*; she hands it off to a person more-or-less irrelevant in their social world, and never seeks to publish it. Stein's love gift to Toklas thus affirms the fusion of their two lives, disavowing both the importance and memory of the early novel that records Stein's life with another woman. The text, in disavowing this manuscript, solidifies its mission: to record the motions of *two* human minds, working almost as one, thus creating a text that may be called portrait, biography, or autobiography, because the text's "She" and "I" truly share everything.

¹ Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 1933 (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 200.

² *Ibid.*, 202.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Ellen Berry reads Stein's corpus as a precursor to postmodernism, arguing that her readerly, open texts predict the poetics of the 1960s and 70s. See: Ellen E. Berry, *Curved Thought and Textual Wandering: Gertrude Stein's Postmodernism* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992). Jennifer Ashton gives a history of Stein's postmodern reception in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: American Poetry and Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-11.

⁵ Gertrude Stein, "What Are Masterpieces and Why Are There So Few of Them?," (New York: Pittman, 1970).

⁶ As has been widely noted, in the wake of *The Autobiography*'s publication, a number of the artists discussed within the text, including Henri Matisse and Tristan Tzara, published a letter discounting her description of the Paris art scene, and describing her as a marginal figure. See: "Testimony Against Gertrude Stein," *Differences*, 1935.

⁷ Gertrude Stein, *Stein: Writings 1903-1932*, Ed. Catherine R. Stimpson and Harriet Chessman (New York: Library of America, 1988), 924.

⁸ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 119.

⁹ Joan Richardson, *A Natural History of Pragmatism: The Fact of Feeling from Jonathan Edwards to Gertrude Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 248.

¹⁰ Jagose's *Inconsequence* provides a thorough overview criticism that insists on lesbianism as "less an absence than a presence that can be seen" at the "limits of cultural

visibility.” See: Annemarie Jagose, *Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and the Logic of Sexual Sequence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 1-13.

¹¹ Catharine R. Stimpson, “Gertrude Stein and the Lesbian Lie,” *American Women’s Autobiography: Fea(s)ts of Memory*, Ed. Margo Culley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 152-166.

¹² See: Georgia Johnston, “Narratologies of Pleasure: Gertrude Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 42.3 (1996): 590-606. The tendency to view the realist novel as antithetical to feminism—and all experimental text as feminist—is overviewed in Rita Felski’s *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics*. See: Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Literature and Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

¹³ See: Leigh Gilmore, “A Signature of Lesbian Autobiography: ‘Gertrice/Altrude’,” *Prose Studies* 14.2 (1991): 56-75. Chris Coffman makes a similar argument, relying on the changing perspective in successive descriptions of Stein. See: Chris Coffman, “Visual Economies of Queer Desire in Gertrude Stein’s *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*,” *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 70.4 (2014): 49-83.

¹⁴ Bob Gallagher and Alexander Wilson, “Michel Foucault: An Interview: Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity,” *The Advocate* 400 (August 7, 1984): 26-30, 58.

¹⁵ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 79. Steven Meyer gives an extended account of Stein’s antipathy to automatic writing, arguing that any attribution of an “unconscious” to writing served to mark it as clinically “hysterical.” Meyer goes on to argue that this rejection gives rise to Stein’s defense of writing as deliberate and descriptive in all cases. See Steven Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation: Gertrude Stein and the Correlations of Writing and Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 229-240.

¹⁶ Gertrude Stein, “Portraits and Repetition,” *Lectures in America* (New York: The Modern Library, Inc., 1935), 171.

¹⁷ Joan Richardson, *A Natural History of Pragmatism: The Fact of Feeling from Jonathan Edwards to Gertrude Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹⁹ Meyer, *Irresistible Dictation*, 214-221.

²⁰ Stein, “What are Masterpieces.”

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Stein, “Portraits and Repetition,” 181.

²⁵ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 41.

²⁶ Stein, “What are Masterpieces.”

²⁷ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 252.

²⁸ Lisi Schoenbach, *Pragmatic Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 59.

²⁹ Stein, “What are Masterpieces.”

³⁰ William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 86.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 119.

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- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Stein, "Portrait and Repetition," 181.
- ³⁵ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 12.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 59.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 43.
- ³⁸ Paul Cohen and Ulla Haselstein have recently written about the distinctively postmodern character of Stein's portraiture. Both note that Stein's literary portraits are written at a time when portraiture was an increasingly marginal pictorial genre thanks to the rise of the photograph, and both note that her experiments in the genre upset the assumption that portraits are mimetic representations of visual reality. Haselstein argues that Stein's portraits are self-portraits, while Cohen argues that Stein's portraits help us to understand her "postmodernism" by challenging assumptions about "medium, meaning, and subject." This criticism is helpful in thinking through Stein's pre-postmodern aesthetic; however, I depart from their approach in reading through a Jamesian framework, attending to the relationship between syntax and narrative progression. See: Paul Cohen, "Stein's Postmodern Portraiture," *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 9.2 (Spring 2008): 17-28; Ulla Haselstein, "Gertrude Stein's Portraits of Matisse and Picasso," *New Literary History* 34.4 (Autumn 2003): 723-43.
- ³⁹ Gertrude Stein, "Picasso," *Stein: Writings 1903-1932*, 283.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 282
- ⁴¹ Gertrude Stein, "Poetry and Grammar," *Lectures in America* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1935).
- ⁴² Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," *Lectures in America*, 181.
- ⁴³ Stein, "Picasso," 283.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 284.
- ⁴⁶ Gertrude Stein, "Ada," *Stein: Writings 1903-1932*, 275.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 276.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 276
- ⁴⁹ Stein, "Portraits and Repetition," 180-181.
- ⁵⁰ See also Corrine Anderson, "I Am Not Who 'I' Pretend to Be: *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and its Photographic Frontispiece," *The Comparatist* 29.1 (2005): 26-37.
- ⁵¹ Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, 252.
- ⁵² Ibid., 14.
- ⁵³ Ibid., 77.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 148.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 251
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 77, 219.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 57.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 219.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 218.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 212.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 216.
- ⁶² Ibid., 7.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 8.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 35

⁶⁷ Ibid., 84-85.

CHAPTER 3

“THE OPPOSITE OF HISTORY”: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SHAME IN THE WORK OF ELIZABETH BISHOP

I. Introduction

In a widely cited interview, Elizabeth Bishop talks about her feelings after her first poem was published: “I was embarrassed by it. And still am. There’s nothing more embarrassing than being a poet, really.”¹ She goes on to explain: “I think no matter how modest you think you feel or how minor you think you are, there must be an awful core of ego somewhere for you to set yourself up to write poetry. I’ve never *felt* it, but it must be there.”² In this statement, Bishop reveals two views that aid in understanding her consistent interest in autobiography in spite of her oft-noted disdain for her era’s Confessional poetry.³ Bishop, throughout her career, referred to herself as “minor,” calling herself a “minor female Wordsworth” in a letter to her friend Robert Lowell.⁴ Bishop’s feeling of slightness was no doubt influenced both by her admiration for Lowell, her awareness of his fame, and Lowell’s remarks in a 1947 review of *North & South*, in which he wrote that Bishop’s poems were “outside of Marianne Moore, the best poems I know of written by a woman in this century.”⁵ Bishop’s gender seemed to relegate her to a minor status for much of her career, as did her “reticence” in comparison to Lowell and other Confessional poets who achieved comparatively mainstream success

during her lifetime. However, it is important that Bishop felt not only minor but also embarrassed—and not embarrassed just because of her poetry’s “minor” status, but because she wrote poetry *at all*.

Recent criticism has all but erased Bishop’s formerly tangential relationship to the mid-century American canon; her critical reputation has been on the ascent since at least the 1980s, when Adrienne Rich suggested Bishop’s poems might be understood not as Wordsworthian naturalist observations, but as meditations on her “outsiderhood” as a lesbian and expatriate.⁶ In rescuing Bishop’s poetry from being “minor,” however, critics have also been dismissive of Bishop’s embarrassment. Bishop’s lesbianism, alcoholism, and even her asthma have been traced to her need for secrecy—often with the suggestion that Bishop would now be able to write more explicitly queer poetry.⁷ These accounts, however, ignore that Bishop’s embarrassment is about poetry more generally—for her, poetry always contains “some awful core of ego”; it is always personal, and always shameful. Critics who have suggested that Bishop’s content is increasingly personal in later volumes, especially *Geography III*, thus miss the way that shame—and specifically what I will call autobiographical shame—shapes Bishop’s relationship to lyric subjectivity and personal disclosure throughout her work.

Bishop’s ascent as a major rather than minor figure in American poetry has paralleled the descent of the poets who *were* major during the span of Bishop’s career, especially Robert Lowell. Critics have increasingly listened to Rich’s call for a criticism that attends to Bishop’s lesbianism, geographical isolation, and history of personal loss. Her famous reticence links up to contemporary interest in the rejection of an “authentic” self in literary theory, and in poetry.⁸ In *Lyric Shame*, Gillian White argues that American

readers have been ashamed of lyric poetry since the 1970s; since then, White observes, lyric poetry has been increasingly aligned with the naïve voicing of selfhood.⁹ Lowell's poetry, with its myriad references to his personal life and the literal incorporation of his ex-wife's letters in *The Dolphin*, is all but inseparable from his personhood. Bishop's, in contrast, has a more mercurial relationship to lyric subjectivity, as it contains little personal detail and often speaks from personae ("The Gentleman of Shallot," "Crusoe in England," "Manuelzinho"). However, somewhat ironically, most critical studies of Bishop rely heavily on biographical fact in order to make sense of these poems rather than reading them as rejections of the personal in poetry. Attempts to counter biographical readings of Bishop's work stretch back at least to Lee Edelman's influential account in "The Geography of Gender: Elizabeth Bishop's 'In the Waiting Room'" (1985), in which Edelman argues that Bishop's most seemingly personal poems often contain blatant untruths.¹⁰ More recently, Bonnie Costello has criticized scholarship that takes at face value "the allegory [Bishop] abhorred" in the Confessional work of her peers, that is, the collapse of writer and lyric speaker.¹¹ Similarly, White suggests that Bishop uses voice as a figure, drawing attention to the poet to mark the artifice of the poem-as-object. White thus attempts to rescue Bishop from the shame of being a lyric poet, linking her to avant-garde movements like LANGUAGE poetry that are skeptical of static subjectivity and lyric personhood. White's reading—like Costello's—seeks to release Bishop's poems from current models of criticism so that they may be understood as more than "merely" personal, often suggesting that they deftly subvert lyric form by emphasizing the artificiality of the poet's voice and figures.

When Bishop's poems are read as something other than lyric—that is, not grounded in the coherent voice of one speaking subject—they are often read as exemplary meditations and examples of what David Jarraway terms a “spectral lesbian subjectivity.”¹² Thus, two readings of Bishop's sparingly autobiographical poems emerge: one reads the personal into Bishop's poetry based on her biography, and the other reads the poems as personal only to the extent that the absence of a coherent lyric speaker reminds us that lesbian subjectivity by definition “eludes symbolic articulation.”¹³ I argue, however, that we need not rescue Bishop's poems from embarrassment and “shame” by dissociating them from the lyric or rejecting their basis in autobiography. Nor do I think they present a subjectivity that is groundless, spectral, or impossible to articulate. Rather, I argue that the shame Bishop feels about being a poet in the Confessional era is essential to understanding the role that personal experience plays in her work. Lived experience is, for Bishop, not narrowly defined as subjective experience: her poems expand the definition of both lived experience and of autobiography. In her autobiographical poetry, Bishop's subjecthood is opened up, called into question, and expanded by her encounters with the natural world, but it does not disappear.

Detailed description of the natural world is omnipresent in all of Bishop's poetry, including her most personal, and this inclusion is best understood as extending the scope of autobiography *beyond* the personal, questioning what it is that constitutes “a life” in writing.¹⁴ . Bishop's poems have been read through the lens of her life for several decades, and it is all but impossible to dissociate the two in reading them. However, the practice of biographical reading has settled on a particular narrative of Bishop's career: that her work moves from keen observation of the natural world in *North & South* and *A*

Cold Spring, and becomes more personal in *Questions of Travel* and *Geography III*. I argue that observation is a feature of all of Bishop's poetry, and that Bishop's environmental encounters are importantly linked to her interest in autobiography. Bishop's interest in the nonhuman—in maps, animals, and networks of human intimacy with the nonhuman—is pervasive. Across her oeuvre, there are a number of poems named after animals—"The Man-Moth," "The Armadillo," "The Fish," "The Sandpiper," and "The Moose." Many others contain encounters with plants and animals, and still more describe landscapes, journeys, and maps. In what follows, I link Bishop's interest in nonhuman encounters to Jacques Derrida's theorization of human-animal relations in *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, which he wrote as a series of lectures given during a 10 day conference on "The Autobiographical Animal."¹⁵ Derrida argues that all modern autobiographical practices are rooted in shame: not only the Christian shame that requires confession, but also the broadly human shame derived from our unconscious knowledge that "autobiography" narrows the definition of *bios* in auto-biography to human life alone, consequently erasing and violating the animal that, Derrida insists, we are. Derrida's deconstructive reading seeks to open up autobiography to "a life" beyond the human. Bishop, a queer woman writing at the height of the Confessional era, takes a special interest in the natural world in a project similar to Derrida's; her autobiographical writings theorize intimacy and community in ways that extend beyond the confessional limits of the human subject.

Bishop's desire to make literary sense of the world through one's experience without falling into the trap of writing from an "awful core of ego" locates her autobiography in a nonhuman or other-than-human practice that I call "autobiographical

shame.” Bishop’s most personal pieces repeatedly turn to explorations of the nonhuman. In explicating Bishop’s re-imagining of autobiographical form, I first turn to her relationship with Lowell to further explicate the term “autobiographical shame.” Next, I look at an early example of Bishop’s nature writing in “Questions of Travel,” a poem that exemplifies the way in which naturalist description opens up the possibility of re-thinking lyric subjectivity. In order to further explicate Bishop’s embrace of nontraditional autobiography, I locate her work in a history of queer shame as proposed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick; further, I compare her autobiographical shame to Derrida’s as explicated in “The Autobiographical Animal.” I argue that the appearance of human-animal relationships in Bishop’s most “personal” work is no coincidence: Bishop uses animal encounters to expand the scope of her “autobiography,” avoiding the egoism of the Confessional era and acknowledging the intimate power of “improper” relations. Bishop continues the tradition I have identified as queer self-writing, further destabilizing the meaning of autobiography’s *bios* in her poetry and prose. Following this reading of Derrida and Sedgwick, I turn to poems from Bishop’s late career including “Crusoe in England” and “The Moose,” arguing that they are meditations on the way that communities of human and nonhuman inhabitants form and thrive. I conclude with Bishop’s earlier poems, arguing that these poems, with their keen interest in description and human-animal relationships, can be seen as part of Bishop’s larger project of naturalist self-writing.

II. Autobiographical Shame in the Confessional Era

Bishop's relationship with Lowell is a useful starting place for unpacking her relationship to autobiographical shame. Bishop's exchanges with Lowell between the publication of *Life Studies* in 1959 and *The Dolphin* in 1973 show her increasing ambivalence and even disdain for the school of Confessional poetry at the height of the confessional era. At the same time that Bishop was carefully considering the role of personal disclosure in her friend's work—as well as the work of her students and her contemporaries—Bishop underwent a significant change in her life, and, arguably, her style. From 1951 to 1967, she lived in Brazil and travelled extensively throughout South America; the oblique style of her earlier volumes gave way to poems based on her travel in *Questions of Travel* (1965). I argue that Bishop's poetry during this time shows her moving away from a definition of autobiography as *personal history*. The title poem of this volume shows Bishop rejecting the Confessional mode while forging her own kind of autobiographical poetry: although based on personal experience, this poem suggests that the pressures of the external world—and especially the natural world—open the lyric subject up to incoherence. However, this is a rich, productive incoherence; the two speaking subjects in "Questions of Travel" are able to hold open questions about the ethics of poetry, and of travel and tourism.

While Bishop praised Lowell's first confessional volume, *Life Studies* (1959), she became increasingly uncomfortable as his writing became more insistently drawn from life.¹⁶ In March of 1971, after the publication of Lowell's *The Dolphin*, which famously contained letters from his ex-wife Elizabeth Lowell, Bishop wrote to him,

In general, I deplore the 'Confessional'—however, when you wrote LIFE STUDIES it was perhaps a necessary movement, it helped make poetry

more real, fresh, and immediate. But now—ye gods—anything goes, and I am so sick of poems about the students’ mothers & fathers and sex-lives and so on. All that *can* be done—but at the same time one surely should have a feeling that one can trust the writer—not to distort, tell lies, etc.... I just hate the level we seem to live and think and feel on at present—but I DO give a damn what you write!¹⁷

Bishop demonstrates her displeasure in reading *The Dolphin*. Whereas she admired *Life Studies* for its quality of the “real,” she has come to “deplore” the genre he has birthed, feels “sick” reading her students’ work, and “hates” the climate of poetry generally. She is nonetheless passionately interested in what Lowell writes. This mixture of revulsion and interest display Bishop’s deep ambivalence about the use of autobiography in poetry. A few years before, Bishop had famously stated that she wished Confessional poets would “keep something to themselves.”¹⁸ Bishop would seem to accord with M. L. Rosenthal’s famous definition of Confessional poetry as “a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is honor-bound not to reveal.”¹⁹ As we have seen, Bishop identifies poetry as always “embarrassing” for its egotism, its focus on the writer’s voice and experience; by the 1960s, she seemed to find the Confessional mode in particular *shameful* for its unabashed focus on autobiographical detail. Indeed, Bishop’s letter can be seen to express the shame *she* feels reading Lowell’s draft of *The Dolphin*, and she strongly advised him against publishing it.

While other critics have suggested that Bishop is nonetheless invested in personal disclosure through more veiled means, I want to suggest that her main interest in autobiography is in changing the level on which poets “think and live and feel” by

expanding autobiography *beyond* confession, and indeed beyond the self. Bishop is interested in her literal geographical position, as well as the environment, animals, and individuals in her proximity. In *Geography III*, Bishop includes “Objects & Apparitions,” a translation of Octavio Paz’s poem in praise of Joseph Cornell. She translates Paz:

Minimal, incoherent fragments
the opposite of History, creator of ruins,
out of your ruins you have made creations.²⁰

Cornell’s boxes take up dead objects and create lively, still moments that strive to exist outside of the framework of historical meaning. They manifest encounters between disparate objects and preserve life. Paz’s boxes and “History” are figured in chiasmic relationship to one another; History creates ruins, and Paz’s boxes create *out of these ruins*. These ruins, untold stories and incoherent fragments to the side of history, are repurposed in boxes that make possible a new way of understanding those fragments in new configurations—and, it follows, perhaps the history that created these ruins in the first place.

Following this translation, Bishop’s poems—personal and impersonal—might be read as striving towards “the opposite of History,” presenting encounters between objects and entities in neatly constructed poems that act much like Cornell’s boxes. Whereas Lowell’s poems focus on his family, his marriage, and larger historical events including the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam war, Bishop’s poems focus on proximity, encounters and relationships forced by geography and chance. I wish to read her late poems not through the lens of closeted confession, but as a rejection of the Confessional that nonetheless re-thinks the use of autobiography. The works that contain details clearly

drawn from Bishop's life thus display her interest in a broader definition of autobiography most strongly: poems in *Questions of Travel* and *Geography III* include pictures of community, intimacy, and subjectivity that depend on proximity and include lives beyond the human, as well as forms of lyric voice that embrace nonhuman perspectives.

I turn to the title poem of her 1965 volume *Questions of Travel* to illustrate the relationship between Bishop's experimentation with lyric voice, her interest in naturalist description, and autobiographical shame. This volume focuses on Bishop's first trips to Brazil, during which she met de Macedo Soares, and from a certain perspective constitutes her first "personal" volume of poetry, containing a short story "In the Village" that closely aligns with the details of her own childhood in Nova Scotia along with a poem about her visit to Ezra Pound at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. However, to the extent that it is autobiographical it is also oblique; it includes persona poems from an Amazonian "river man" and Anthony Trollope, blurring the line between author and lyric speaker. In one of the poems most clearly drawn from personal experience, "Questions of Travel," Bishop uses at least two different lyric voices as she questions the ethics of tourism and travel, thus problematizing the stability of the lyric speaker in a world crowded with nonhuman entities who exert an ethical pressure on the speaker.

A longer critical history ties Bishop's "ungrounded" subjectivity to her lesbian subjectivity, and her status as a queer expatriate, growing up between Nova Scotia and New England before settling in Brazil.²¹ This line of thinking provides one explanation for the split subjectivity in "Questions of Travel"; expanding on this reading, I wish to think about the ways in which the places to which the subject travels—and the nonhuman

encounters she has on these travels—go further, expanding “queer autobiography” to include entities beyond the human subject. “Questions of Travel” asks about the ethics and value of travel for the artist in particular. Its split subjectivity raises the possibility that affective encounters with the nonhuman—especially in strange and new environments encountered in the context of travel— intensify the instability of subjective experience. The poem pursues two lines of questioning, one explicit and one implicit. Explicitly, it asks if it is “right” to travel to other places and observe strangers, seeking out excitement; the poem worries that travel and observation only appeal to those who lack imagination:

Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?

Where should we be today?

Is it right to be watching strangers in a play

in this strangest of theatres?²²

Implicitly, it asks if it is “right” to record the details of other places, persons, and landscapes in poetry—and in its rich description, seems to answer *both* questions in the affirmative. The value of travel is this: to enter into relationship with a larger world through the process of observation and description. Indeed, the pressure exerted on the writer by the environment itself, the enormity she encounters and the difficulty of describing it, seems to be what makes her question her travel in the first place. The poem begins:

There are too many waterfalls here; the crowded streams

hurry too rapidly down to the sea,

and the pressure of so many clouds on the mountaintops

makes them spill over the sides in soft slow-motion,
turning to waterfalls under our very eyes.²³

The poet describes a landscape that is overcrowded and exerting pressure. Immediately, the observer of these waterfalls and mountaintops becomes a “we,” suggesting that the traveling “I” is always in relationship with another: a travel companion, a group of travelers, those who have gazed at the waterfalls before. Nonetheless, on this occasion, the speaker rises to the challenge posed by the enormity of the landscape before her: she describes clouds spilling so slowly that they become liquid, and then fall becoming “mile-long, shiny, tearstains.” And, as the poem continues, the speaker’s self-doubt is gradually resolved as she continues to describe what she has seen.

The rhetorical questions embedded within the poem increasingly describe the natural world which the speaker encounters, moving from abstract questions of ethics to concrete questions as to whether these particular marvels were worth seeing. The poem continues:

What childishness is it that while there's a breath of life
in our bodies, we are determined to rush
to see the sun the other way around?
The tiniest green hummingbird in the world?
To stare at some inexplicable old stonework,
inexplicable and impenetrable,
at any view,
instantly seen and always, always delightful?²⁴

The “childishness” and “determination” of the speaker is not without its reward; woven into this series of questioning is a beautiful bird and stonework that is twice emphasized as “inexplicable,” impossible to understand but for this very reason worth observing, worth noting, worth delighting in. And, as the speaker’s observations remind her of the delights of travel, the poem moves from a series of questions to strong anaphora, observing that it would have “been a pity” not to have seen, heard, and observed a variety of other natural wonders. Each of these wonders is strongly anthropomorphized. They include trees “gesturing / like noble pantomimists, robed in pink”, “the sad, two-noted, wooden tune / of disparate wooden clogs /carelessly clacking”, and “the weak calligraphy of songbirds' cages.” Trees become actors, dressed by the sunset; a pair of shoes makes a sad music, and birds are capable of weaving nests into their own kind of writing. In this, each nonhuman actor becomes an artist, and each artist’s craft is observed by the traveler and then represented within the poem. It is *their* art, and its ability to shape the poet’s verse, that makes travel worthwhile: travel locates the lyric subject in an ad-hoc community of artists sharing their craft. This community, comprised of human and nonhuman actors, is a source of inspiration and intimate, ephemeral connection for the traveler who is far from home.

This point is strongly re-iterated in the final three stanzas, which state that rain is the inspiration for *a* traveler and poet, but not necessarily the traveler and poet who has voiced the first three stanzas of “Questions of Travel.” The poem concludes with a substantial shift in voice and form that exemplifies the instability of lyric voice in Bishop’s poetry. It ends

- And never to have had to listen to rain
so much like politicians' speeches:
two hours of unrelenting oratory
and then a sudden golden silence
in which the traveller takes a notebook, writes:

*“Is it lack of imagination that makes us come
to imagined places, not just stay at home?
Or could Pascal have been not entirely right
about just sitting quietly in one's room?”*

*Continent, city, country, society:
the choice is never wide and never free.
And here, or there... No. Should we have stayed at home,
wherever that may be?”²⁵*

The rain, like a politician, is didactic, demanding the traveler's attention. When its speech ends, it becomes possible for the traveler to write. However, the voice of the traveler that emerges in the final two stanzas is clearly distinct from the voice of the poet thus far. The first three stanzas of the poem are in free verse, with rhymeless lines of irregular length. The final two stanzas, framed by quotations and in italics, present two quatrains that have a regular rhyme scheme, aaba, progressing from assonance and slant rhyme in the first stanza to true rhyme in the second stanza. The clear shift in form and voice suggests that a second perspective has entered the poem, a perspective distinct from the “I” and “we”

explicit and implicit throughout the poem. *This* traveler seems more uncertain about the value of travel, writing in the moment of golden silence after the rain—and more constrained by the conventions of poetic form.

In contrasting these two voices—the free-verse observer of nature’s art, and the fixed-stanza philosopher who interrogates questions of travel alongside Blaise Pascal—the poem oscillates between two perspectives on the value of travel, observation, and naturalist description. Rather than definitively answering the questions it poses about travel, it expands its conception of lyric subjectivity, holding open each of the questions of travel. The primary speaker seems to affirm that it “would have been a pity” to miss the birds, weather, and trees seen along her journey. However, the secondary speaker suggests that “the choice is never wide and never free”: to choose a particular national affiliation, dwelling place, or travel destination is not necessarily the free, exploratory experience that the first speaker, connecting ideas and observations with dashes, presents it as. To put it another way, the first speaker asks seemingly rhetorical questions that are not so rhetorical; as they progress further into description, the skepticism and exhaustion with which the poem begins give way to an affirmation of natural beauty. The rhetorical questions in the second stanza, though, are truly rhetorical, expressing a genuine ambivalence regarding the value of travel. Oscillating between these two voices, Bishop stresses the incoherence of any subject, but especially a travelling subject whose perceptions are continuously flooded with new information in such a way that they would presumably not be “at home.” In Bishop’s poetry, it is the natural world that both inspires art and expands the artist’s sense of self. The “autobiography” contained in “Questions of Travel” is not the story of one life, but of many—that of at least two human speakers, as

well as that of the trees, birds, and rain contained within. This poem thus illuminates Bishop's consistent interest in the way the larger realm of "life" makes possible an autobiographical lyric that extends beyond the boundaries of a single subject—a project that develops in *Geography III*, in which a newly imagined form of autobiography presents the possibility for nonhuman intimacies.

III. The Autobiographical Animal

Bishop thus locates encounters with the natural world as the impetus for exploring the fissures in lyric subjectivity, especially as they relate to encounters with the nonhuman. In looking at the queerly autobiographical poems of Bishop's late career, it will be helpful to think more about the relationships I have identified between Bishop's autobiographical shame, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's writing on shame, and Derrida's lectures on "The Autobiographical Animal." Looking at Sedgwick's writing on shame and reparative reading, I wish first to trace a history of queer autobiography that embraces shame, one that includes both Derrida and Bishop. In "The Autobiographical Animal," Derrida discusses autobiography and confession, suggesting that it is impossible to write autobiography that is fully distinguished from confession because of a particularly human wrongdoing: the erasure of the animal from discourse. He writes that confession is an author's revelation of truth, an attempt to rid him or herself of a wrongdoing; it is written from a moral imperative. As long as humans continue to consider "autobiography" the writing of a particularly *human* life, animals are erased from the realm of human life (*bios*), leaving the writer (all writers) susceptible to the affect of shame that Derrida's theorizes in relation to the animal gaze. Reading Derrida

alongside de Man, I argue that the stability of the autobiographical subject is under threat in writing not only because its tropes inevitably unravel, but also because *actual animals*, phenomenological encounters, reveal the instability of the human as a general category. It follows that Bishop's skepticism of confession but persistent interest in writing about her life—and her encounters with nonhuman others—is a form of queer shame that, rather than turning away from autobiography, expands the limits of the genre.

In *Touching Feeling*, Sedgwick seeks to define shame as a productive affect, a feeling that might enable autobiographical writing and intimate relationships rather than serving as a mechanism for repression. In her writing on Henry James' late introduction to his collected works, Sedgwick argues that James' queer shame enables a performance *of that shame*. For Sedgwick, shame is not something hidden, repressed, and unknown; it is an affect that continually turns itself inside-out, making itself visible. She writes:

As best described by Tomkins, shame effaces itself; shame points and projects, shame turns itself skin side out; shame and pride; shame and dignity, shame and self-display; shame and exhibitionism are different interlinings of the same glove. Shame, it might be said, transformational shame, *is performance*. I mean theatrical performance.²⁶

Sedgwick's definition of shame does not suggest that shame is something that needs to be confessed, expunged, or otherwise gotten rid of; it is integral to identity formation and cannot be gotten rid of. Rather, shame is, by definition, a productive affect. Sedgwick's writings (with Adam Frank) on Silvan Tomkins further elucidates this point.

Sedgwick is particularly interested in the distinction between Freud's account of shame—where shame is a mechanism that enables the repression of drives that led to that

shame—and Tomkins’ account of shame as an affect strongly correlated with *interest in the world*.²⁷ In his model, the affects shame and interest/excitement are linked. If we experience shame, then, we have not removed our interest in its object. The downcast eyes and blush associated with shame are the result of interest that attached to an object, and has been partially, but not fully, removed. This pairing between shame and interest always opens up the possibility for re-engaging interest in the object. Following Sedgwick, we might say that Derrida and Bishop’s oddly autobiographical works are part of a longer history of texts that use shame as the impetuous for autobiographical exploration. Derrida’s purported “shame” is not only a productive affect, but also a “reparative” affect, one that motivates an intensified interest in autobiography, the genre of shameful confessions. In including animals in “The Autobiographical Animal,” he seeks to push against a history of philosophy that effaces animal others. Likewise, we might see Bishop’s lyric shame not as something that is repressed in her reticent work, but as something that links lyric autobiography to her intense *interest* in human-animal relations.

Derrida begins his lecture on “The Autobiographical Animal” with a confession: that he is *ashamed* when caught naked in his cat’s gaze: this shame is the impetus for a lecture that is as autobiographical as it is theoretical in its exploration of the animal. Derrida questions the root of his shame: “Ashamed of what and naked before whom? Ashamed of being as naked as a beast.”²⁸ The feeling of shame writ large is, for Derrida, an impetus to question the erasure of animals from Western philosophy—why would he feel ashamed unless he saw his cat as capable of understanding his nudity? While the shame that spurs confession might be attributed to Christian morality, Derrida traces the

history of confession and shame back even further, suggesting that western philosophy excludes animals from its definition of “life” as a foundational exercise; it is this exclusion, which he sees as foundational not only to our definition of “life” but also of the “human,” that links autobiography and confession as modes of expressing shame *for* our “original sin,” a sin that “we”—autobiographical animals—refuse to acknowledge.

Writing of the confessional act, Derrida asks:

Why *would one owe* truth? Why would it belong to the essence of truth to be due, and nude? And therefore confessed? Why this duty to pay off truth if hiding the truth, feigning truth, were not already the experience of evil and of ill, of a potential fault, of a culpability, of a sufferance, of a debt—of deception and lying?²⁹

The deceit and lie at the heart of western philosophy—really, western history—is that man and animal are distinct. Derrida’s own shame under the gaze of his cat is metonymically linked to the greater shame of philosophers who have written a history that erases the animals who inhabit their world. Thus, the question of human/animal relationships and the impulse towards autobiography are intimately intertwined. Derrida suggests that history and human exceptionality are linked: “the age of an anthropocentric subjectivity that is recounted or allows a history to be recounted about it, autobiographically, the history of its life, and that it therefore calls *History*.”³⁰ The largest “autobiography”—the history of life in general as written by humans in particular—depends on the restricting of the definition of “life” or “bios” to human life alone. Shame is bound up with the genre of autobiography insofar as it bears the trace of man’s erasure of animals.

Bishop's turn towards human/animal encounters thus might be seen to be motivated by a similar force to Derrida's: she is ashamed at the realization that the "level of thinking" at her historical moment focuses on personal confession that wrongly erases the lives beyond its scope. To further elucidate this comparison, I propose that Bishop's autobiographical shame exists between Derrida and Paul de Man's accounts of autobiographical instability. In "Autobiography as Defacement," de Man argues that autobiography is not a "genre," insofar as its referent, "I," can never refer to a human subject or voice once it is made textual. Instead, it reveals that the understanding of any "I" is primarily tropological—constructed through figures. De Man writes, "The interest of autobiography, then, is not that it reveals reliable self-knowledge—it does not—but that it demonstrates in a striking way the impossibility of closure and of totalization of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions."³¹ Derrida's statement about autobiography reaches a similar conclusion, through different means. As he says at the beginning of his lecture, "I must immediately make it clear, the cat I am talking about is a real cat, truly, believe me, *a little cat*. It isn't the *figure* of a cat. It doesn't silently enter the bedroom as an allegory for all the cats on the earth, the felines that traverse our myths and religions, literatures and fables."³² Bishop, in including nonhuman figures and especially animals in her poetry, engages in a project that both reveals the instability of all autobiographical subjects (like de Man's), as well as seeks to expand "autobiography" to accommodate these animal others (like Derrida's).

While I have sought to trace a literary history of queer autobiographical shame, it bears acknowledgement that Sedgwick and Derrida differ in their account of shame, especially as it relates to animal others. Derrida feels shame under the gaze of his cat

because he is confronted with the anti-relationality between humans and animals; Sedgwick, in contrast, suggest that shame occurs where the possibility of relationality is unexpectedly frustrated. To return to Derrida: he suggests that autobiography, in defining “bios” as a uniquely human realm, locates animals outside our concept of life. Including them in his autobiography does not bring him closer to knowing or relating to his cat — our structures of knowledge preclude this. The inclusion of his cat’s trace in his auto-analysis, however, is a starting place for undoing the ethical and literary violence against animals. Sedgwick’s account of shame, by contrast, presupposes the possibility of relationality. It is a decidedly anthropocentric account of shame. However, she too includes a cat in her discussion, relaying an anecdote in which Tomkins holds a frightened kitten until his fear has passed and he moves into trust. Sedgwick goes on to compare Tomkins’s hold of the kitten to his writing: “This would as well describe Tomkins’s writing: a potentially terrifying and terrified idea or image is taken up and held for as many paragraphs as are necessary to ‘burn out the fear response.’”³³ The same method, she suggests, quells fear in human readers and in kittens. Here, she posits a continuity between human and animal affective experience, and suggests the possibility that the two species may indeed relate.

How, then, do we think of Bishop’s shame, and especially her discussion of animal others? Bishop’s animal encounters, although figurative, hold as much potential as Derrida’s actual ones for revealing the fragile boundary of the human, constructed in “History” writ large. We have seen that Derrida’s shame under his cat’s gaze and his intense interest in the cat are two sides of the same coin, and we might view “The Autobiographical Animal,” especially in its first appearance as a lecture, as a

performance of shame. However, it is more than a performance; it is also a theoretical text that gives us the tools to expand the boundaries of the genre “autobiography.” If, for de Man and Derrida, autobiography has seemed something that is always about an “I” attempting to stabilize itself within a field of others (figurative or literal), Derrida here opens up the possibility that autobiography, in the sense of life-writing, might be—even *should be*—opened up to include a broader definition of life. I write that it “should be,” and note that, for Derrida, this imperative is two sided. Opening up autobiography to include animals would first be both a form of shame-management, as well as a real attempt to undo the erasure of animals, to depart from philosophies and autobiographies of the past. I read Bishop’s poems as both acknowledging that animals are inassimilable to frameworks of human understand, but nonetheless actors with whom humans can have intimacy and even community—her attempts to include them in her autobiography stem from shame, but also from a belief that nonhuman relationality is possible. Bishop’s autobiographical work is thus part of a tradition of queer life writing that includes Derrida’s lectures, distinct in its theorization of animal encounters as events that both trouble and sustain the human.

IV. “Crusoe in England”

Bishop’s “Crusoe in England” is an essential poem for further interrogating the limits of autobiography in Bishop’s oeuvre, as well as illuminating the extent to which her naturalist description suggests the possibility for intimacy and community between human and nonhuman actors. The poem, written after the death of de Macedo Soares and Bishop’s return to the United States, considers the relationship between Crusoe and

Friday, but also between Crusoe and the island's other inhabitants, especially goats. Bishop places her work in a tradition of naturalist description, including a partial fragment of Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" in her speaker's musings. Read through Bishop's biography, the poem is an allegory for Bishop's loss of her partner, as well as her anxiety over her newfound fame upon return to the United States. Lorraine Goldensohn writes that if the poem is *not* read through the lens of biography, "we will not hear a numbed Elizabeth Bishop after her return to her home land, reacting to the traumatic death of Lota de Macedo Soares. But to fail to hear the pressure of particular experience behind and within the poem is to deny it its fullest vocal range."³⁴ Most criticism of the poem has followed Goldensohn's entreaty to hear Bishop's voice beneath Crusoe's. My reading builds upon these, while also considering the queer shame behind the encoded autobiography, as well as its relationship to Bishop's description of flora and fauna—especially goats—that upsets the boundaries of the human in this poem.

Although the queer desire in "Crusoe in England" may be obvious to readers acquainted with Bishop's biography, its encoding in a historically located, cross-gender poem is important to consider in order to understand the role of natural description and animal encounter. Whereas other poets of the period, especially Anne Sexton, increasingly dramatized their confessions, Bishop preserved a public reticence around her lesbianism despite changing social mores. However, this poem, written by a woman but featuring a male lyric speaker, simultaneously reveals and obscures of her lesbian desire, and is thus legible as what Sedgwick identifies as a queer performance of shame.³⁵ This performativity can be found in the text itself outside of any public performance. The eighth stanza reads:

Just when I thought I couldn't stand it
another minute longer, Friday came.
(Accounts of that have everything all wrong.)
Friday was nice.
Friday was nice, and we were friends.
If only he had been a woman!
I wanted to propagate my kind,
and so did he, I think, poor boy.
He'd pet the baby goats sometimes,
and race with them, or carry one around.
—Pretty to watch; he had a pretty body.³⁶

The double emphasis on “pretty,” the failure of the lyric speaker to find another word, emphasizes physical desire: the beauty of Friday’s body is all that comes to mind when the speaker thinks of him. Furthermore, the assertion that their relationship has been understood “all wrong” raises the question of how it should be understood. However, the speaker provides no explanation in a way that has struck a number of her readers as willfully evasive; James Merrill wrote to Bishop asking her to clarify what makes Friday “Dear” to Crusoe, but she never took him up on this challenge.³⁷ While I am in agreement with others on the queer eroticism of this poem, I want to further interrogate Bishop’s autobiographical performance by thinking about the other prominent figure in this passage and this poem: the figure of the goat.³⁸ Friday carries baby goats around, presumably because he and Crusoe cannot “propagate [their] kind”—the kids become

their children. But even before Friday's arrival, the goats play a larger role in the poem and in Crusoe's understanding of his life on the island.

The first goat appears in a moment as Crusoe considers the size of the "small, miserable" volcanoes on the island. He imagines that, if they were the size of normal volcanoes, he must be a giant, and adds, "if I had become a giant, / I couldn't bear to think what size / the goats and turtles were."³⁹ The goats, then, are a potential rubric against which Crusoe can judge his own scale—as well as his lucidity and humanity. Bishop writes,

The island smelled of goat and guano.

The goats were white, so were the gulls,

and both too tame, or else they thought

I was a goat, too, or a gull.⁴⁰

The strong alliteration of the constant "g" emphasizes the ubiquity of white animals, and begins to suggest Crusoe's confusion over his status on the island; everything looks and sounds the same. He imagines that the animals' acceptance of him can be explained if they think he is one of the two species on the island. However, enjambment places the statement "I was a goat, too, or a gull" on a line by itself, suggesting that the speaker rather than the animals is the true proprietor of this thought. Amongst the animals, he has begun to question his own ontological status. This situation is deeply unpleasant for the speaker; the whole unfolding of the poem, then, performs the shame (often mixed with delight, ambivalent and mutable) of his behavior on the island as his separation from the natural world erodes.

Crusoe attempts to change the monotone landscape of the island, but only further confuses the divide between human and animal for himself as well as the island's goats. He dyes a baby goat "bright red" with "red berries" with dire consequences—"then his mother wouldn't recognize him." The color red makes a kid unrecognizable to its mother. It soon follows, though, that the lyric speaker, having seen so many goat kids and no actual children, is as confused as the mother, at least in his dreams:

But then I'd dream of things
like slitting a baby's throat, mistaking it
for a baby goat.⁴¹

The speaker begins to fear that he cannot distinguish between a goat and a child anymore, and might as soon kill a child as a kid. In the source text, Robinson Crusoe does kill goats. Both those he encounters in the wild and those he eventually domesticates are put to myriad use: he eats them, he makes candles with their tallow, and makes garments out of them. Upon Friday's arrival, he begins to share his wares. But the speaker in Bishop's poem is more ambivalent about animal life than is the original Crusoe—living among the goats, gulls, and volcanoes, he does not set about on a domesticating mission; rather, he is caught up in a project of observation that threatens to take away his human difference, to make him one with the world around him.

Critics have noted that the rest of the stanza concerning dreams might be read as an allegory for Bishop's poetic project:

for a baby goat. I'd have
nightmares of other islands
stretching away from mine, infinities

of islands, islands spawning islands,
like frogs' eggs turning into polliwogs
of islands, knowing that I had to live
on each and every one, eventually,
for ages, registering their flora,
their fauna, their geography.⁴²

The speaker's nightmare is to travel from isolated place to isolated place describing its nonhuman inhabitants; this might serve as a description for what Bishop herself had already accomplished in describing scenes from Nova Scotia and Brazil in *Questions of Travel*. Continuing to read Bishop's autobiographical allegory alongside her animal encounters, the lyric speaker finds it is *imperative* to travel to different islands, to record their inhabitants, and, in the process, to risk losing a sense of human separation from the environment. However, in "Crusoe in England," this fate is forestalled by Friday's arrival; re-encountering the human saves the speaker from the confused boundaries. But as noted, although Friday and the speaker have each other, Friday too begins to "carry [a goat] around" as if it were a baby. The island then becomes a human-animal family helmed by queer parents with goats for children. This sense of community, as unconventional as it may be, brings the lyric speaker a sense of happiness—even if this happiness is only hinted at in the penultimate line, when Crusoe refers to Fridays as "my dear Friday."

I emphasize the interactions between the humans and goats in this poem at length to argue that this poem, as autobiographical as it may be, is not chiefly a description of the relationship between Crusoe and Friday (or Bishop and de Macedo Soares), nor is it

exactly a meditation on loneliness. It is a long description on how one makes a life for oneself *without* human relationships. And the speaker does make a life for himself. It is one in which his sense of human particularity becomes fuzzy, but one in which real connection, joy, and affection are nonetheless accessible: Crusoe “whoop[s] and dance[s] among the goats” and states, “I felt a deep affection for / the smallest of my island industries.”⁴³ If this is a poem of loss, a large part of what the speaker loses upon return to England is not Friday, but the intense, ambivalent connections he had with the other inhabitants of the island. At the end of the poem, Crusoe returns a final time to Friday, and also to the island’s goats:

The local museum’s asked me to
leave everything to them:
the flute, the knife, the shrivelled shoes,
my shedding goatskin trousers
(moths have got in the fur)
[...]
How can anyone want such things?
—And Friday, my dear Friday, died of measles
seventeen years ago come March.⁴⁴

“How can anyone want such things?” the speaker asks. Of course, he wanted them—so much that he made them, carving a flute and killing a goat. His collection of things provided him with the “deepest affection.” But his connection to them is gone now that he is on another island; the boundaries between the human and natural world render the

objects not only useless but also somewhat grotesque—the trousers are moth-eaten and shedding.

The speaker's reference to Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" helps to differentiate Bishop's preoccupation with nature from that of Romantic poetry. While Bishop did refer to herself as a "minor female Wordsworth," her poetry has for the most part been understood as a rejection of the lyric authority associated with Wordsworth and other Romantic poets.⁴⁵ "Crusoe in England" importantly refers to this tradition. The reference appears:

— well, I tried
reciting to my iris-beds,
"They flash upon that inward eye,
which is the bliss ..." The bliss of what?⁴⁶

The lyric speaker forgets that the bliss in Wordsworth's poem is "the bliss of solitude," the bliss of observing the natural world. Wordsworth's speaker is able to recall his impressions of daffodils "when on [his] couch," suffusing his solitude with joyful recollections. Bishop's speaker parodies this model of nature at several points, referring to the island as a "cloud-dump" and evacuating the wandering cloud of its lightness, its power to hover above and observe in tranquility. And the speaker attempts to recite poetry to a bed of irises, suggesting that his relationship with flowers is more relational than the one in the poem he can only partially remember: he speaks to his irises. This island is not one on which the speaker can close his eyes and enjoy the natural world; it surrounds him, becomes part of him, and features in his dreams. Nature's invasive quality, however, is what keeps the speaker alive, what keeps him from an intense

solitude. Life on the island is joyful and rich—as well as nightmarish—because of these blurred boundaries. The connections to this project of observation and description are what make it possible to live *without* Friday. The natural world, then, is not something to simply be observed. Rather, it demands attention, and gives in return not “the bliss of solitude” but rather the mixed pleasures of company.

To read this poem as autobiographical, then, is to acknowledge the way in which Bishop conceals and reveals her lesbianism, as well as the way in which she uses descriptions of Crusoe’s island as an analog for her own poetic practice. We might draw from this two conclusions: first, Bishop’s descriptions of nature are not, like those of Wordsworth, acts of mastery that capture scenes of the natural world so that the poet might find pleasure in remembering them. Rather, they are records of fraught experiences, of both desire and revulsion for the animals and plants that make their own undecidable impact on the writer who enters into relationship with them. They reveal both the shame and the instability of the autobiographical subject under the pressure of animality, as in Derrida’s “The Autobiographical Animal.”

In this, these relationships—especially the improper relationships with goats—are not *unlike* Crusoe and Friday’s—or Bishop and de Macedo Soares’—queer relationship. This has been read as a poem of mourning, and it seems to suggest that the loss of a lover entails not just the loss of that person, but the loss of the entire world they inhabited. In this case, Crusoe’s island is a figure for Brazil, a geographical place and set of flora and fauna that are forever changed after de Macedo Soares was removed from it. The loss of a person is the loss of an entire ecosystem, here as in Bishop’s “One Art,” in which the speaker loses “a continent,” as well as her beloved.

V. Self-transcendence and the Actual Animal

Autobiographical readings of Bishop depend on the assertion that the personal is both suggested and concealed in her poetry. There is a promise of autobiographical disclosure that is never quite fulfilled, but that can be searched out through archival materials. *Geography III*, in which “Crusoe in England” appears, is Bishop’s most personal volume. Poems address Bishop’s childhood in Nova Scotia (“In the Waiting Room,” “Poem”), the loss of de Macedo Soares (“One Art,” “Crusoe in England,” “Five Flights Up”), and describe experiences in the first person (“The Moose”). It is also in some ways Bishop’s most surreal volume of poetry, playing with perspective in poems like “Night City” and “12 O’Clock News,” imagining the landscape from a plane and the landscape of a desk from a decidedly non-human perspective. These poems, along with “Objects & Apparitions,” suggest that *Geography III* is indeed illuminated by re-focusing on the book’s persistent interest in geography, from the disorienting wave in “In the Waiting Room,” to the profusion of islands in “Crusoe in England,” to the journey in “The Moose.” The poems in this volume are not connected by a delving “further into the interior” of the poet’s loss, but rather by an exploration of the way proximity, geography, and encounter shape her poetics. While “Crusoe in England” performs the autobiographical shame that is the impetus for Bishop’s unconventionally personal poetry, it also opens up the possibility for celebrating human/animal intimacies. Other poems in this volume move away from the performance of shame, and further explore the possibility for nonhuman intimacy and community in her re-configured autobiography. “The Moose” is perhaps Bishop’s clearest articulation of the relationship between

descriptive practice, animal encounter, and personal disclosure; using it as a model, we can trace a history of animal encounters from Bishop's earliest volume to her last poems, thus locating Bishop's descriptive practice as a sustained autobiographical practice.

"The Moose" is a poem that clearly enough puts personal experience and animal encounters into conversation. This 28-stanza ballad describes a bus trip from Nova Scotia to Boston, describing the landscape at various locales, the passengers who board the bus and their hushed conversations. The titular moose only appears in the last six stanzas, but when she arrives, significantly changes the tenor of activity:

Some of the passengers
exclaim in whispers,
childishly, softly,
"Sure are big creatures."
"It's awful plain."
"Look! It's a she!"

Taking her time,
she looks the bus over,
grand, otherworldly.
Why, why do we feel
(we all feel) this sweet
sensation of joy?⁴⁷

The moose is female, and creates a feeling of "joy" in the passengers. This dramatic monologue fits fairly neatly into the trajectory of poems I have been discussing,

suggesting the possibility of animal encounters to transform affective experience and create new models for intimacy. That the moose is “a she” is also notable in this poem. This is Bishop’s longest first person poem; if read as autobiographical disclosure, we might infer that Bishop’s decision to reveal (more of) herself in *Geography III* is allegorized in the female moose’s appearance, which interrupts a poem that is largely descriptive. However, I wish to argue that the moose is not a figure for Bishop or the lyric poet, but a figure for the potential of nonhuman intimacies—an antidote to autobiographical shame. The moose arrives in the poem and crystallizes an already-extant sense of intimacy and community between the bus’s passengers and their natural surroundings.

In examining the first twenty-two stanzas of “The Moose,” I revisit the larger role of precise description and geographical movement in this poem in particular, and Bishop’s work more generally. In an earlier Bishop poem, “Arrival at Santos,” a boat travelling from the U.S. to Brazil serves as an ad hoc community; the lyric “I” becomes a “we” that includes inconsequential characters like “Miss Breen” for several stanzas. The boat is an obvious figure for Bishop’s sense of an expatriate community. The bus in “The Moose,” though, creates a community both more strangely and more steadily. Passengers arrive and disembark at different stops, but for the duration of the trip enter a space that exists slightly outside of the normal laws of kinship, and of time: passengers begin “talking, in Eternity.” Bishop details several of the passengers, anonymous yet vivid: one “gives kisses and embraces/ to seven relatives”; another woman “climbs in/ with two market bags,/ brisk, freckled, elderly.” Soon, they are immersed in a shared experience:

A dreamy divagation

begins in the night,
a gentle, auditory,
slow hallucination.⁴⁸

The passengers are part of a shared dream, a shared wandering, made possible by the soft voice of “talking, in Eternity” about common experience: “what he said, what she said, / who got pensioned; // deaths, deaths, and sicknesses....”⁴⁹ It is in this state that the passengers, all participants in a collective, hushed experience, encounter the moose.

Before returning to the moose, however, it is worth returning to the parts of the poem that do not obviously concern the community created on the bus. As we have seen, “Crusoe in England” contains the nightmare that the lyric speaker will spend his whole life travelling to a different island and “registering their flora, / their fauna, their geography.” If this is Bishop’s practice, it begins in Nova Scotia, and the bus journey in “The Moose” is a repetition of her first journey to a new locale, taken at the age of seven when she moved from Nova Scotia to Boston. And the attention that goes to the flora and fauna of the Northeast is intense; the first six stanzas (36 lines) of the poem describe the landscape in a run-on sentence, emphasizing the “silted red” sun, the “lavender, rich mud / in burning rivulets,” and the bus itself, “the windshield flashing pink, / pink glancing off of metal, / brushing the dented flank.” The poem continues to detail the landscape—its cabbages, peas, and moonlight—for the first fourteen stanzas of the poem before turning exclusively into the bus for the next seven before the moose’s arrival. To put it another way, the journey into the human community of the bus is not merely a journey *in*, away from the landscape. It is a journey *through*. The lyric speaker is attentive to places that would appear on a map: Lower Economy, Middle Economy, and Five Islands in Nova

Scotia; the Tantramar Marshes near Maine; the woods of New Brunswick. She is equally attentive to cabbages, hen, sweet peas, and the scents in the air. These places and their features are joined together in regular ballad stanzas, the same stanzas that will contain the shared dream of the bus riders. The joining of these two experiences in a regular stanzaic form emphasizes their continuity; it is almost as if the sense of community on the bus is the next stop after New Brunswick.

With this in mind, the moose could be a figure for the poet: she turns a quotidian experience—the bus ride—into a moment of transcendent feeling. The poet’s work is to perform a moment of self-transcendence, to make the descriptive details in the poem progress towards meaning. The moose, drawing the attention of the passengers and the speaker back to the external world, serves to solidify the connections already extant between the bus riders and the landscape they travel through. Put otherwise, she is not exactly the impetus for the formation of community so much as an arbitrary sign linked to a preexistent feeling. The passengers are already part of a “dreamy divagation,” a surreal wandering on the bus in which they are hyper-attuned to their natural surroundings. This is further emphasized by the vague identity of the lyric speaker; without a clear lyric subject, the voice of the poems seems to be a “we” observing the natural world, picking up on its beauty and descending into a state of deep, shared calm. The moment that the moose arrives crystallizes or heightens this feeling. The moose is thus not a figure for the poet, but perhaps of poetry: its potential for revealing the extant intimacy between human figures and the large realm of natural life they encounter. With this made clear, joy settles in. Further, the preponderance of transformative animal encounters throughout Bishop’s oeuvre provides further support to the claim that the

moose is part of a long line of Bishop's animal teachers, entities who transform her understanding of the world around her. In the case of the moose, the bus ride becomes a shared experience.

Using "The Moose" as a model, earlier poems that link animal encounters to self-transcendent experience can be tied to Bishop's larger autobiographical process. In "At the Fishhouses," the speaker sings Baptist hymns to a seal. This seal has a special relationship to water—the symbol of knowledge—and to the speaker.

Cold dark and absolutely clear,
elemental bearable to no mortal,
to fish and to seals...One seal particularly
I have seen here evening after evening.⁵⁰

The speaker sings this seal's hymns, and, at the end of the poem, is rewarded for her labor in a new understanding of the ocean: "It is like what we imagine knowledge to be: / dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free," "our knowledge is historical, flowing, and flown." Knowledge itself is associated with both the seal's habitat and with the flight of birds. Similarly, in "The Fish," Bishop "stare[s] and stare[s]" into the eyes of a "tremendous fish" "until everything/ was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!/And I let the fish go."⁵¹ The fish colors the rest of the world anew, and the speaker, possessed with a new perspective, throws the fish back into the ocean. Of course, the *kind* of self-knowledge made accessible to Bishop through these animal encounters is ambiguous. The statement that everything is "rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!"—that is, that everything can now be seen in a full spectrum of vivid colors—suggests that for Bishop more knowledge means clearer vision. In this moment, she does not describe any particular facet of the natural world

with the palate of colors she uses so liberally elsewhere. Rather, she thrice emphasizes that the fish makes it possible for her to see all these colors at once. Everything around the poet becomes part of the rainbow—including the poet herself.

VI. Conclusion

To return to where I began: Bishop, during her lifetime, described herself as a “minor female Wordsworth,” suggesting that her gender, coupled with her interest in describing the natural world, set her apart from her mid-century peers. The model of female subjectivity available in her poetry differed significantly from that of poets like Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton who performed the confessional of “shameful” personal details in well-attended readings and in their verse. Bishop differentiated herself from the Confessional poets in private and in public. However, as revealed by her long correspondence and friendship with Robert Lowell, her feelings towards the era’s autobiographical poetry were more ambivalent than is popularly believed—as was her own relationship to autobiographical disclosure. While Bishop expressed embarrassment at the confessional poet’s unwillingness to “keep some of these things to themselves,” she also expressed embarrassment at poetry in general. As White argues, Bishop’s shame clearly extended beyond embarrassment felt on behalf of others, or even embarrassment and shame over her own sexuality, substance abuse issues, and body. Her shame extends to the form of lyric in general for its “awful core of ego,” its persistence in the development a coherent “I.” But it is precisely this shame that leads to her exploration and expansion of autobiographical verse.

As I have noted, psychoanalytic and deconstructive frameworks have allowed readers from Edeleman to Jarraway to White to read Bishop's verse as being in some sense anti-subjective, interested in the spectral self that became of great interest in late 20th century avant-garde poetics, from LANGUAGE poetry, to John Ashbery's early surreal verse, to James Merrill's camp epic *The Changing Light at Sandover*. I have, however, demonstrated that Bishop's inclusion of personal material, ranging from her childhood trauma to the loss of her long-term partner, cannot be dismissed out of hand. Rather than seeking to align Bishop with later avant-garde movements, we can further dissect the differences between her autobiographical verse and that of her mid-century peers. My claim is that Bishop's most clearly personal work is strongly characterized not only by the revelation of personal detail, but also by a descriptive impulse that links affective encounters with animals and environments with the central relationships in poems like "Questions of Travel" and "Crusoe in England." While these encounters could be understood through a psychoanalytic model of displacement, Bishop's naturalism is by no means relegated to her personal poems. And, while her numerous references to seals, sandpipers, stones, and flowers might be interpreted as a vast catalog of personal symbols, I argue that we should take her descriptions of the external world as descriptions rather than as human figures.

Bishop thus contributes to a history of queer autobiography that takes shame as its starting point, and goes on to reconsider the "bios" of autobiography. Sedgwick reads shame as a reparative affect, one that motivates renewed interest in the world; Henry James, for example, takes his shame as the starting point for an intensified engagement with his younger self—an engagement that transforms shame into self-love. In a history

of queer autobiography, James' project clearly qualifies as self-writing. Bishop and Derrida's inclusion in this history is more vexed. I have argued that Derrida's project insists that his autobiography cannot bring humans and animals into relationship. In his account, autobiography might be a tool to begin the process of acknowledging animals, their marks and traces on human history and their inclusion in the sphere of life. Bishop's animal figures function differently than Derrida's. Animals are for Bishop, as for Derrida, other—ultimately unassimilable to our frameworks of thought and understanding. But for Bishop, this does not mean that human/animal relations are impossible. The strange intimacies between human and animal call into question the boundaries of the human, and what it means to experience or understanding our lives. At this site of potential confusion and rupture, however, lies a corresponding potential for nonhuman intimacies. Experienced individually, as in "Crusoe in England," or collectively, as in "The Moose," this nonhuman intimacy opens up the possibility for the creation of new communities and new ways of life.

By situating Bishop's descriptive poetics and animal encounters as inextricably linked to her autobiographical impulse, we see that the trajectory of her career is not one of gradually turning inward and revealing more. Rather, what Bishop strives to reveal in her early poems as well as her later, more "personal" verse is a lyric subjectivity defined not in terms of its relationship to a human addressee or by its legibility by a reader, but by its enmeshment in the natural world it describes. In this sense, Bishop participates in a tradition of autobiography as "life writing" that has an open, capacious relationship to life itself.

¹ Elizabeth Bishop and Elizabeth Spires, "The Art of Poetry No. 27," *The Paris Review* 80 (Summer 1981).

² Ibid.

³ Bishop famously said of the Confessional poets, "The tendency is to overdo the morbidity... You just wish they'd keep some of these things to themselves." Qtd. in Chris Cory and Alwn Lee, "Poets: The Second Chance" *Time* 89.2 (2 June 1967): 67-74.

⁴ Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell, *Words in Air: The Complete Correspondence Between Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell*, Ed. Saskia Hamilton and Thomas Travisano (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 222.

⁵ Robert Lowell, "Thomas, Bishop, and Williams," *The Sewanee Review*, 55.3 (Jul. - Sep., 1947).

⁶ Adrienne Rich, "The Eye of the Outsider," *Boston Review* (April 1983).

⁷ The volume *Elizabeth Bishop: The Geography of Gender* takes as its starting place Lee Edelman's influential essay on autobiographical untruths on Bishop's "In the Waiting Room." However, critics including Lorrie Goldensohn and Joanne Feit Diehl take an approach less influenced by deconstruction than Edelman's, and engage in a kind of speculative biographical criticism, imagining what her poetry might have been based on drafts of poems that thematize lesbian desire. See: *Elizabeth Bishop: The Geography of Gender*, Ed. Marilyn May Lombard (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993); Lee Edelman, "The Geography of Gender: Elizabeth Bishop's 'In the Waiting Room'," *Contemporary Literature* 26.2 (Summer 1985): 179-196.

⁸ Kamran Javadizadeh writes of Bishop, "Her rapid occupation of a position of centrality has seemed, paradoxically, a function of the various way in which, throughout her life, Bishop could have been described as a marginal, minor poet." See: Kamran Javadizadeh, "Elizabeth Bishop's Closet Drama," *Arizona Quarterly* 67.3 (Autumn 2011): 120.

⁹ Gillian White, *Lyric Shame: The "Lyric" Subject of Contemporary American Poetry* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 85.

¹⁰ Lee Edelman, "The Geography of Gender: Elizabeth Bishop's 'In the Waiting Room': 179.

¹¹ Bonnie Costello, "Elizabeth Bishop's Impersonal Personal," *American Literary History* 15.2 (Summer 2003): 334.

¹² David R. Jarraway, "'O Canada!': The Spectral Lesbian Poetics of Elizabeth Bishop," *PMLA* 113.2 (March 1998): 243-257.

¹³ Ibid., 247. Of course, some critics may outright reject that Bishop's biography have any utility in explaining her poetic practice (i.e. Costello). These readings, while astute in their treatment of Bishop's figures, often openly reject the idea that Bishop was in any way an "autobiographical" poet—this, of course, is my central contention.

¹⁴ Significant work has been done on the role of maps in Bishop's poetry, as maps mediate between geographical knowledge and historical knowledge, and also offer an inhuman scale for thinking about the world. Mutlu Konuk Blasing links Bishop's interest in maps to the changing scale of details observed in Bishop's poems, and thus the changing perspective (and perhaps identity of) the lyric speaker. Susannah L. Hollister builds on this research, suggestion that Bishop's changing scales reflect her interest on understanding her relationality to others—visa via class, race, and gender—at a variety of scales. My work builds on this interest in Bishop's relationality, focusing, however, on

intersubjective exchanges with animals rather than shifts in observational scale. See Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Politics and Form in Postmodern Poetry: O'Hara, Bishop, Ashbery & Merrill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Susannah L. Hollister, "Elizabeth Bishop's Geographic Feeling," *Twentieth-Century Literature* 58.3 (Fall 2012): 399-438.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, Trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ Bishop and Lowell, *Words in Air*, 188.

¹⁷ Ibid., 708-709.

¹⁸ Qtd. in Chris Cory and Alwyn Lee, "Poets: The Second Chance": 67.

¹⁹ M.L Rosenthal, "Poetry as Confession," *The Nation*, September 19, 1959: 154.

²⁰ Elizabeth Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose, and Letters*, Ed. Robert Giroux and Llyod Schwartz (New York: The Library of America, 2008), 170.

²¹ For a psychoanalytic perspective, see:

David R. Jarraway, "'O Canada!': The Spectral Lesbian Poetics of Elizabeth Bishop": 243-257. For a historicist account of queer citizenship, see: Henry Abelove, "New York City Gay Liberation and the Queer Commuters," *Deep Gossip* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2005), 70-88.

²² Elizabeth Bishop, "Questions of Travel," *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose, and Letters*, 74.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 75.

²⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Shame, Theatricality, and Queer Performativity: Henry James' *The Art of the Novel*," *Touching Feeling* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 38.

²⁷ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank, "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tompkins," *Touching Feeling*, 97.

²⁸ Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 21

³⁰ Ibid., 31

³¹ Paul de Man, "Autobiography as De-Facement," *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1984), 71.

³² Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 6.

³³ Sedgwick and Frank, *Touching Feeling*, 95.

³⁴ Lorraine Goldensohn, "The Body's Roses," *Elizabeth Bishop: The Geography of Gender*, 77.

³⁵ Javadizadeh suggests that Bishop's public readings of "Crusoe in England" in the 1970s her lesbianism with what he identifies as coyness; the female poet, speaking lines like "If only he had been a woman!" in reference to Crusoe's Friday expresses a lesbian desire even in a poem ostensibly about a male speaker.

Javadizadeh, "Elizabeth Bishop's Closet Drama," 140.

³⁶ Elizabeth Bishop, "Crusoe in England," *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose, and Letters*, 155.

³⁷ Qtd. in Javadizadeh, 142.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Bishop, "Crusoe in England," 152.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 155.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁴⁵ Mutlu Konuk Blasing argues that Bishop's poetry situates itself between the patriarchal figure of the Romantic poet and the model of the Organicist experimental poet (i.e. Charles Olson) by using and subverting traditional verse forms, often playing with the gendering of the lyric speaker. See Blasing, *Politics and Form in Postmodern Poetry*.

⁴⁶ Bishop, "Crusoe in England," 154.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Bishop, "The Moose," *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose, and Letters*, 162.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 160.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 161.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Bishop, "At the Fishhouses," *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose, and Letters*, 51.

⁵¹ Ibid., 34.

CHAPTER 4

H.D.'S "REAL DREAMS": SPIRITUALITY AND AUTO-ANALYSIS IN *TRIBUTE TO FREUD AND HERMIONE*

I. Introduction

At the beginning of *Tribute to Freud*, H.D.'s 1944 tribute to her mentor Sigmund Freud, H.D. reveals her reasons for returning to Vienna for a second series of psychoanalytic sessions in the autumn of 1934. By then, World War II was on the horizon; her analysis took place after the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, and she was tormented by fear of what was to come. However, she writes that she came back not just to prepare herself, but also to provide support to Freud. She returned having heard of the death of his student Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw. H.D. describes him:

He had come to study with the Professor with the idea of the application of the principles of psychoanalysis to general education...He owned vast plantations in the Dutch East Indies and had travelled in India for the purpose of occult investigation. He had...been influenced by the Eastern teaching, but that had not satisfied him. He wanted to apply the laws of spiritual being to the acute problems of today. It seemed to me that he was the perfect man for the job.¹

In H.D.'s eyes, van der Leeuw, or as she calls him "the Flying Dutchmen," was the perfect individual to carry on Freud's legacy. Having studied Eastern and Western thought, he could see what H.D. considers the spiritual dimension of psychoanalysis, and was uniquely equipped to implement Freud's thought not in treating individuals suffering from neuroses, but in education and society more generally. Like all of Freud's analysands at that time, van der Leeuw was a student more than a patient. As the most promising of Freud's students, H.D. saw his death as a loss both for Freud and for the world. Upon returning to comfort her mentor, H.D. reports that Freud told her, "You have come to take his place."²

This anecdote, nestled in a text that is as much autobiography as it is tribute, establishes H.D. as Freud's heir—albeit one like van der Leeuw who would bring a decidedly non-Western, non-scientific framework to bear on the questions of psychoanalysis. By the time of her sessions, H.D. had studied yoga philosophy, tarot archetypes, and astrology; she had also had a number of mystical experiences including dreams and visions that confirmed to her the existence of God, and of a dimension beyond reality. Furthermore, in writing that would later be published as *Notes on Thought and Vision* (1919), H.D. had explored the interconnection between such mystical experiences and psychoanalytic thought. The original title of her tribute to Freud, "Writing on the Wall," was taken from one such experience: her vision of pictures written in light on a wall in Corfu in 1920. As a mystic, as well as a feminist and bisexual, it may seem improbable that H.D. sought out Freud, who rejected religion and saw homosexuality as a state of arrested development. It may seem equally improbable that he saw her as a successor. Stanford Friedman asks,

Of all people, how could it be Freud who helped restore the lava flow of [H.D.'s] creativity?...what does their collaboration teach us about the endurance, agency, and creativity of women working within paradigms of thought and relations that appear to be dead set against women's independence and achievement?³

The work of *Tribute to Freud* is to explain this collaboration, to suggest that H.D. and Freud share a special, even supernatural connection, and to assert that Freud's thought is indeed uniquely suited to making sense of H.D.'s strange experiences as something other than symptomatic or neurotic.

Scholarship dedicated to H.D. and psychoanalysis often treats her critique of Freudian models regarding female sexuality and homosexuality. Stanford Friedman, Rachel Blau du Plessis, Dianne Chisholm, and Claire Buck read her poetry and prose as an ongoing revision of Freud and other psychoanalysts.⁴ These studies importantly assert that H.D. substantially disagrees with Freud, and overtly challenges him in texts like the unpublished poem "The Master" as well as in published long poems like *Trilogy* (1946) and *Helen in Egypt* (1961).⁵ Drawing on these readings, Georgia Johnston's study of H.D.'s autobiographies contributes significantly to an understanding of H.D.'s revision of Freud, especially as it relates to spirituality. Johnston argues that H.D. views her own visions as a primary source of psychological insight—comparable to Freud's view of dreams. She expands: "Doolittle identifies vision as a mean of individual and cultural knowledge—a psychological system taking precedence over a Freudian heterosexual plot."⁶ While I agree that mysticism marks a significant different between Freud and H.D., I do not take H.D.'s autobiographical writing as an attempt to develop a system that

rejects or supersedes Freud's. In texts published during her lifetime, H.D. embraced Freud, at least as a rhetorical strategy to advance her own ideas, especially as they relate to her own lived experience. H.D.'s mysticism—her interest in occult philosophy, religious tradition, and in accessing realms of experience that can only be described as supernatural—is an extension of her interest in psychoanalysis. *Tribute to Freud* as well as other autobiographical texts can therefore be understood as a type of auto-analysis that directly applies psychoanalytic thought to H.D.'s lived experience with the goal of creating connections between Freud's ideas and her own. In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. suggests that her mystical experiences *only* make sense in relationship to Freud. That is, she ultimately interprets many of her visions as visions that were always about Freud. They reveal her special relationship to him, and also endorse her desire to extend the purview of psychoanalysis within her autobiographical texts. In claiming that Freud's ideas help explain H.D.'s experiences, H.D. also suggests these experiences, retold in poetry and prose, illuminate and elucidate psychoanalytic thought.

I read H.D.'s autobiographical project as an effort to harness Freud's authority in service of her own ideas—especially her unique theory of mind, which connects sexuality to spiritual insight. H.D.'s autobiographical prose, beginning with *Notes on Thought and Vision*, returns again and again to similar images, objects, and experiences in order to form a narrative of her psychic life.⁷ *Notes on Thought and Vision* is at once H.D.'s earliest example of autobiographical prose, her earliest revelation of a mystical experience, and her first clear engagement with Freudian concepts. H.D. writes of her “jelly-fish experience,” a sensation of a cap over her head that allows her to see and think with greater clarity than normally accessible through the sensory organs. In this text, she

builds on Freud's topography of the mind, proposing a sub-conscious mind, a conscious mind, and finally an over-mind. H.D.'s work in this text is to describe the over-mind, a source of creative energy and clear vision that transcends the individual and connects to a collective super-consciousness. H.D. would later discuss her jellyfish experience in Vienna with Freud, and write about it in *Tribute to Freud* as well as in her other autobiographical texts. This early text, then, begins to reveal the co-imbrications of psychoanalysis and mystical experience in H.D.'s thinking and writing.

Before further discussing H.D.'s autobiographical texts, it is helpful to further define what I mean when I call H.D.'s experiences "mystical." H.D. describes her dreams and visions as "actual psychic or occult experiences."⁸ These super-normal experiences are radically unlike the kinds of awareness detailed by Auden, Bishop, and Stein; the new modes of consciousness and relationality proposed in these authors' texts are theoretical. For example, Stein's transpersonal thinking is framed as the explanation of an idea more than a record of fully realized co-consciousness with Toklas. H.D., in contrast, actually purports to record states of consciousness that transcend individual experience. Her autobiographies trouble "bios," as H.D. sometimes renders her experience as reaching well beyond her body's field of perception, into the past and future. Her mystical experience is also explicitly queer. The self-transcendent states that one achieves through lesbian sex reveal the level of reality just beyond the human—the super-conscious plane in which individuals are part of a collective whole. This experience might seem to embrace or describe queer *jouissance* in its positive sense. In mystical moments of ecstatic pleasure and heightened awareness, the ego is not shattered; rather, H.D. claims an awareness of self that extends beyond the ego into infinity.

Furthermore, these mystical experiences confirm to her that queer desire is healthy and normal; to feel desire based not on sexual difference but on sameness is to reach towards the unity of experience available on a higher plane.

Over the course of her career, H.D. seeks to situate these mystical experiences within the purview of psychoanalysis through shifting strategies. Access to a supernormal state of consciousness is first explored in *Notes on Thought and Vision*, in which H.D. begins to explain the importance of the over-mind to creativity. In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. harnesses Freud's authority to argue that her mystical experiences—including her vision of the over-mind—are decidedly not neurotic, and are a productive extension of Freud's own theories. In this text, she goes on to suggest that individual acts of auto-analysis hold the capacity to reveal a universal principle. She thus holds up autobiography as a genre with the capacity to give readers direct access to spiritual and religious insights, a point she expands on in "The Master." Read through the lens of these three texts, H.D.'s autobiographical novel *HERmione* (1927) can be seen as a narrative that more fully represents the over-mind consciousness, an experience narratively bound up in H.D.'s first introduction to Eastern philosophy as well as her first lesbian experience. In this novel, the character Hermione has moments of access to both the sound and syllable "Aum" (more commonly transliterated in English as "Om") and the pronoun "her," both of which provide access to an expanded consciousness, one that dissolves the boundaries of the individual and gives access to a new reservoir of creative energy. Over the course of these three texts and her career, H.D. thus proposes autobiography as the source of Freud's knowledge, and her own spiritual knowledge—as well as a resource for giving readers direct access to insights gained through that auto-analysis.

II. *Notes on Thought and Vision*

H.D.'s unique place as Freud's analysand and biographer has led to numerous studies of her work's relationship to Freudian thought; her early concept of the over-mind, however, is often left out of these discussions. Scholarship focusing on *Notes on Thought and Vision* often stresses the text's departure from Freud, particularly its focus on the body as a source of knowledge. However, *Notes* is written in dialogue with Freud's theory of mind as developed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), and proposes a psychological model that H.D. returns to in her later autobiographical texts. *Notes* is decidedly non-scientific, and may seem difficult to square with psychoanalytic thinking. The essay builds on psychoanalytic thought through the lens of personal experience that appears neurotic: H.D. reports an experience of higher consciousness or awareness that gives her the feeling of being underwater and engulfed by another organism. However, the text is not rigorous in its establishment of concepts precisely because it seeks to directly relay over-mind experience to the reader; its central concept and its method can thus be tracked in H.D.'s later autobiographies.

In *Notes*, she reframes this experience as both supernormal as well as productive and real. According to H.D., over-mind consciousness is a state of higher awareness as well as the source of creative energy. It first becomes accessible to her in pregnancy, and she posits it is also available to those who pursue their sexual desires; thus, embodied experience—especially in the union of two or more bodies—is an essential prerequisite to higher awareness. Critics including Johnston have focused on the foregrounding of bodily awareness in this essay; Johnston argues that the body and sexuality are a gateway to

vision in the text.⁹ While I agree with this reading, I follow Matthew Kibble in investigating the text's dispensation with the body and turns towards psychological structure as the text unfolds.¹⁰ As the essay progresses, H.D. distinguishes the over-mind from the Freudian superego and from the unconscious. She proposes a state of awareness that is self-transcendent, but emphatically not subconscious: the over-mind gives access to a realm of universal truths and creative energy. Harnessed properly, that creative energy can produce art that gives the beholder direct access to the artist's over-mind experience.

Notes describes over-mind consciousness, once achieved, as the state of awareness that makes artistic creation possible. H.D. moves between her own personal, physical experience of this state, as well as fictional retellings of how historical figures from Leonardo da Vinci to Lo Fu experienced it. In her own experience, the over-mind is an organism that floats above and within her:

...it seems to me that a cap is over my head, a cap of consciousness over my head, my forehead, affecting a little my eyes. Sometimes when I am in that state of consciousness, things about me appear slightly blurred as if seen under water.... That over-mind seems like a cap, like water, transparent, fluid yet with definite body, contained in a definite space. It is like a closed sea-plant, jelly-fish or anemone. Into that over-mind, thoughts pass and are visible like fish swimming under clear water.¹¹

The over-mind as represented here seems emphatically *outside* H.D.'s body. The description of it as a separate living organism, a plant or jelly-fish, suggests that it has a life of its own. Furthermore, that it blurs her field-of-vision suggests that it is not just

separate, but material. And its operations are complex: outside of the writer's body and before her eyes, the over-mind seems to refract her thoughts in a way that make them especially clear. That the over-mind is outside the regular field of the body *or* mind is important: the over-mind gives access to a way of thinking and seeing beyond what the senses normally make possible. This special kind of vision can, moreover, be directly transposed into art objects. H.D. writes, of da Vinci, "*The Madonna of the Rocks* is not a picture. It is a window. We look through a window into the world of pure over-mind."¹² It erases the boundary between observer and observed, and, furthermore, erases all boundaries between creator and audience—even the boundary of time. The reality that da Vinci accessed with his over-mind awareness is made available to anyone who looks at his painting. Thus, in seeking to represent the over-mind in *Notes on Thought and Vision*, H.D. aims to directly open up this level of consciousness to her reader. If it is possible to see da Vinci's over-mind experience through his paintings, it is possible to see H.D.'s through her prose. She writes, "My sign posts are not yours, but if I blaze my own trail, it may help to give you the confidence you need to get out of the murky dead, old, thousand times explored world, the dead world of overworked emotions and thoughts."¹³

The over-mind is one component of H.D.'s three-part theory of mind, a theory directly in dialogue with Freud. Although she does not explicitly mention Freud's model of the id, ego, and superego, her model builds on his, both replacing the superego with the over-mind and moving away from a topography that rigidly separates these mental functions. H.D. wrote *Notes* after James Strachey's 1913 translation of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and early drafts of the manuscript reveal her familiarity with Strachey's terms. In these drafts, H.D. posits a sub-conscious mind, a conscious mind, and a "super-

conscious” mind. It is only in her final draft that she replaces the super-conscious mind with the “over-mind,” removing Freudian terminology to distinguish its function from that of the superego. Kibble notes that H.D.’s text, in its establishment of the over-mind as the state of consciousness achieved by great lovers and great artists, is explicit in its revision of the superego as the agent of sublimation.¹⁴ While Freud’s superego redirects unconscious desire, particularly sexual desire, towards more socially acceptable activities—i.e. the creation of art—the over-mind encourages the pursuit of sexual activity *and* the pursuit of artistic creation. This heightened state of sexual and creative activity opens the potential for heightened awareness of the exterior world as well as higher truths (like those represented in da Vinci’s art). Kibble’s analysis of the over-mind helpfully distinguishes it from the superego. However, the over-mind is not exactly a way to manage sexual impulses as it is an effect of sexual impulses already pursued.

In contrasting H.D. to Freud, and in thinking through her differences with him, especially with regards to female sexuality, it is important to note that her over-mind experience is not something the individual achieves alone; this experience transgresses the boundary of self and is indeed more available to pairs and even groups of lovers. H.D. first experienced over-mind experience while pregnant, and wonders, “Is it easier for a woman to attain this state of consciousness?”¹⁵ The awareness of her womb—filled with a fetus—is what transports her into “jelly-fish consciousness.” The experience of pregnancy is already one that blurs the boundaries of self. And H.D. goes on to argue, as if anticipating queer theorists like Bersani, that sexual pleasure extends experience beyond the ego. However, for H.D., *jouissance* is not exactly self-shattering; rather, it

extends consciousness. She does not use imagery of violent breakage, but rather aquatic, fluid imagery, in which the self seems to extend beyond the container of the body. She describes sex between “two or three people” (not necessarily heterosexual, certainly not monogamous), as the beginning of a unique intersubjective exchange: “We begin with sympathy of thought. The minds of two lovers merge, interact in sympathy of thought. The brain, inflamed and excited by this interchange of ideas, takes on its character of over-mind, becomes a jelly-fish, placed over and about the brain.”¹⁶ It seems, then, that the individual does not reach visionary understanding alone. Multiple bodies and persons come together to provide the individual with clearer vision and understanding.

With the super-normal nature of the over-mind firmly established, we can turn to the ways in which H.D. distinguishes the kinds of visions, dreams, and art the over-mind produces from those produced through sub-conscious mechanisms of sublimation and displacement. H.D. responds to a psychologist who challenges her over the separation of the over-mind from the sub-conscious mind. She writes:

I have thought for a long time about the comparative value of these terms, and I see at last my fault and his. We were both wrong. I was about to cover too much of the field of abnormal consciousness by the term over-mind. He, on the other, would have called it all sub-conscious mind. But the sub-conscious and the over-conscious are entirely different states, entirely different worlds.¹⁷

H.D. acknowledges that the over-mind produces states of consciousness that look neurotic according to existing psychological models—it is characterized by changes in perception. Surreal visions like her own jellyfish experience might seem like hysterical

symptoms rather than perceptions of actual events. From the psychologist's perspective, over-mind experience is thus *the same as* subconscious experience. It is H.D.'s task, then, to differentiate between abnormal experience caused by subconscious mechanisms of displacement and sublimation, and super-normal perception that can be truly characterized as over-mind. By insisting once again on the separation between these two states, H.D. affirms that over-mind experience is an "entirely different state." It is not one that produces symptoms of subconscious operations, but one that makes external reality clearer. H.D. goes on to provide a suggestion for differentiating between these two kinds of experience: the over-mind leads towards the discovery of universal truths.

H.D. is keenly aware that *The Interpretation of Dreams* might suggest that it is the unconscious that reveals the "ocean of universal consciousness;"¹⁸ however, she states that Freud's discoveries can be understood and accessed through the over-mind. The over-mind and subconscious mind stand in different relationship than do Freud's superego and id: they are contiguous with one another. A philosopher suggests to H.D. that the over-mind is the same as what he calls the "Universal Mind," a subconscious connection shared by all persons. In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. writes at length that the language of dreams indeed reveals a "universal language." What defines over-mind awareness, though, is *awareness*—one sees the truths revealed by the over-mind when awake, not asleep. She first defers to the objecting philosopher: "He means by universal mind exactly what I mean by over-mind but certainly my term over-mind is not adequate, if this over-mind state is approached by others through the subconscious."¹⁹ However, she soon arrives at a solution: the over-mind can be *approached* through the sub-conscious or the conscious mind. The three states of mind are distinctly non-hierarchical: she describes

them as more properly structured as a triangle, or even a circle.²⁰ And while the over-mind can be accessed from or through other states of consciousness, it is still the “over”-mind because the truths it gives access to are of a higher order.

In this state of special clarity, the over-mind artist sees the world around her with such accuracy that it enables her to record it in art that does nothing less but give the viewer direct access to that. For H.D., the over-mind is thus a supplement to Freud’s theory-of-mind that makes room for her own mystical experiences. Over-mind awareness is distinguished from neurosis in that it is inherently productive: its result is artistic creation rather than problematic symptoms. While the term over-mind is largely absent from texts after *Notes*, H.D.’s early essay on personal experience and psychoanalysis begins the work that will be taken up in her later memoirs. H.D. presents a continuity between her own mystical vision and Freudian thought; rather than doing away with a Freudian theory-of-mind, she posits something that goes over and beyond it. And although the term over-mind appears, H.D. continues to write about strange states of consciousness that lead to newer, deeper understandings of external reality. In *Tribute to Freud*, she does this by explicitly cloaking herself in Freud’s authority.

III. H.D.’s Apprenticeship in *Tribute to Freud*

H.D.’s *Tribute to Freud*, written in 1944, further develops her theories of mind and artistic inspiration alongside Freud’s. In this tribute, H.D. explains how her interactions with Freud both inform and confirm her own thinking. Unfolded in eighty-five fragments, the text gradually unveils several experiences from H.D.’s childhood up to the death of van der Leeuw that stress her special connection to Freud. These

experiences, scattered across time and seemingly coming into relationship through inexplicable forces, serve to bolster a thesis that H.D. wanted to prove to Freud: that “there is another region of cause and effect, another region of question and answer,”²¹ than the one he understands. She describes these experiences: “Their texture is different, the effect they have on mind and body is different. They are healing. They are real.”²² Looking back to *Notes*, these experiences can be called over-mind experiences. And in turning the tools of psychoanalysis onto both her mystical experiences, as well as her relationship to Freud, H.D. completes an auto-analysis that asserts the true message of her visions. She comes to argue that many of her experiences *only* make sense in the context of her relationship to Freud. In doing so, she suggests that visions including her dream of a thistle and serpent and her experience of writing-on-the-wall are not as Freud thought, symptoms; rather, they are confirmations of her ability to say what Freud could not. As his student and heir, she is able to state what he was too modest, hesitant, or scientific to. Furthermore, in her telling, these experiences reveal that Freud’s theories and her own fit together in such a way that makes it possible to do more than treat individual neuroses: H.D. suggests that with her added insight, Freud’s theories might bridge art, medicine, and religion in service of all of mankind.

The work of *Tribute to Freud*, then, is to re-establish H.D.’s mystical experiences as proof of her unique access to another realm of consciousness rather than “symptoms.” In locating herself as respected student and intellectual heir rather than patient in need of care, H.D. begins this work. And in writing about her working-through of these experiences—with Freud—H.D. begins the work of establishing their relationship to psychoanalysis as well as their reach beyond it. Of all of H.D.’s dreams, visions, and

experiences, there is only one that she says concerns Freud. And, in her telling, this experience turns out to hold a special significance with regards to their relationship. This is H.D.'s vision of the writing on the wall. Freud has a fairly straightforward interpretation of this experience; it is H.D.'s "desire for union with [her] mother."²³ (This is in fact his interpretation of most of her visions and dreams.) In *Tribute to Freud*, though, H.D. seeks her own answer as to the meaning of this experience. As described in this text, the writing-on-the-wall began with the appearance of three pictures written as if by light on the wall: first, the silhouette of a "soldier or airman"; second, a goblet; and third, a "tripod of classic Delphi"—the ritual altar on which sacrifices to the gods would have been placed in ancient Greece.²⁴ Whereas Freud reads these symbols together as a symptom of H.D.'s yearning for her mother, she is convinced that they have a deeper meaning with regards to her purpose and are perhaps even "projected from outside."²⁵

H.D. begins the work of translating these three symbols—and this experience—within the framework of her own understanding, acknowledging that it may represent what Freud calls her desire to "found a new religion." She seeks to understand the tripod as the key to all three images: "Religion, art, and medicine, through the latter ages, became separated; they grow further apart from day to day. These three working together, to form a new vehicle of expression or a new form of thinking or of living, might be symbolized by the tripod."²⁶ (While the text does not venture to interpret the other two symbols overtly, this chapter will interpret them after working through the analysis she does provide.) She suggests that the tripod reflects her wish for art, healing, and spiritual practice to go together once again—"to apply the laws of spiritual being to the acute problems of today," not through psychoanalysis but through poetry and prose. However,

given the uncertain provenance of the writing-on-the-wall, it is left open that the tripod may represent more than deep-seated desire. She presents two interpretive possibilities for understanding her vision: it is either an abnormal state-of-mind, or an over-mind experience. She writes:

We can translate it as...a suppressed desire to be a Prophetess, to be important, megalomania they call it...Or this writing-on-the-wall is merely an extension of the artist's mind, a *picture* or an illustrated poem, taken out of the actual dream of daydream content and projected from within (though apparently from outside), really a high powered *idea*, simply over-stressed, *over-thought*, you might say, an echo of an idea, a reflection of a reflection, a 'freak' thought that had got out of hand, gone too far, a "dangerous symptom."²⁷

The first interpretive option is megalomania. In this case, the vision is a symptom that points to an underlying disorder. However, the second possibility is that the vision is simply a uniquely textured thought. She describes the experiences as one in which a thought is made manifest in the external world—in which writing-on-the-wall is an illustration of an idea in the mind. Although H.D. does not use the term over-mind here, she uses the term "over-thought." In this context, it is unclear whether she uses "overthought" as a noun or verb. This slightly agrammatical use, also italicized, draws attention to itself. Italicized along with *picture* and *idea*, it invites comparison of the "over-thought" to the "over-mind" in which vision and thought become indistinguishable. The experience of the writing-on-the-wall, then, is an experience of a higher, spiritual order that gives H.D. clearer vision into her purpose.

After presenting this possibility, H.D. turns back to Freud's language, acknowledging that this kind of projected, powerful thought would still constitute a "dangerous symptom" for her mentor—but she puts this language in quotations, discounting its connotations. And she goes on to write that this "symptom or inspiration" is comprised of an image that is "common to the whole race and applicable to almost any time."²⁸ As an over-mind experience, it must, as defined by H.D., give access to a universal truth that would not be accessible in a normal state of mind. The possibility of bridging medicine, art, and religion is thus presented as a healthy and useful desire. It is only after this normalization of her vision that H.D. reveals the final two components of her vision in Corfu: the figure of "Niké, Victory" appears, and beneath her an "inverted S-pattern" that looks like "a series of question marks, the questions that have been asked through the ages."²⁹ She goes on to write that "Niké, Victory seemed to be the clue, seemed to be my own especial sign."³⁰

By this point in *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. has both overtly stated she is Freud's favorite apprentice, and has showed her own ability at interpreting symbols and events. With this accomplished, she goes one step further in establishing her bond to Freud: she begins to assert that difficult symbols from dreams and visions across her life actually refer to Freud. Niké and the inverted S of the writing-on-the-wall are two such examples, and also provide a clue to the significance of the silhouette and cup described earlier. In one of their first sessions together, Freud showed H.D. a bronze statue of Pallas Athené, remarking, "She is perfect...*only she has lost her spear*."³¹ Stanford Friedman and Blau du Plessis have written extensively about this as a moment in which Freud sought to remind H.D. of the centrality of penis envy and the castration complex to his

understanding of female sexuality—and of his patient herself.³² While they focus on her response in “The Master,” a poem that repeats the line “woman is perfect,” I focus on her identification of his bronze with her own vision of Niké. Upon seeing the figurine, H.D. does not focus on what Freud means to imply; she writes,

I stood looking at Pallas Athené, she whose winged attribute was Niké,
Victory, or she stood wingless, Niké A-pteros in the old days, in the little
temple to your right as you climb the steps to Propylaea on the Acropolis
at Athens. He too had climbed these steps once.³³

In her telling, one goddess becomes another. But this is not simply free-association. H.D. suggests through parataxis that Freud’s bronze directly corresponds to the symbol from her vision. And the assertion that Freud, like H.D., had climbed to her temple in Athens, means not only that he had literally visited, but that he too had direct experience of that ancient journey to the goddess. After the appearance of her special sign in Freud’s personal collection, H.D. begins to surmise that their connection stretches back further than their acquaintance.

The writing-on-the-wall and Niké can be further understood through their relationship to another one of H.D.’s visions: that of her signet, the thistle and serpent. An important assertion appears after her interpretation of the writing-on-the-wall: “I did not know exactly *who* [Freud] was and yet it seems very obvious now.”³⁴ Although H.D. had studied Freud’s work for decades before meeting him, she did not know who he was *to her*, in spite of signs and symbols she believes should have made it obvious. One such symbol is the thistle and serpent. In this “peculiar dream” H.D. saw a brick engraved with a thistle and a serpent.³⁵ She has difficulty interpreting this signet throughout her life, and

it only becomes clear in the context of the writing-on-the-wall and Freud's office. Along with the bronze Niké, Freud shows her an "ivory Vishnu" surrounded by snake heads: "these snake-heads suggested, each, a half-S, which might have recalled the scroll pattern of the inverted *S* or incomplete question mark in the picture series on the wall..."³⁶ The snake, the inverted *S*, and Sigmund Freud himself are suddenly a series of intertwined images. So it is her analysis with Freud that reveals to her that the goddess Niké is supported by the *S*, Sigmund, the Professor. And, although H.D. does not interpret the two other symbols from her dream, she provides the tools for her readers to do so. The silhouette of a man in a cap, the first image to appear and the one that opens the door to the others, is van der Leeuw. H.D. begins her tribute with him, just as her vision began. However, his departure makes way for the goblet and tripod. The goblet must refer to the sacrament which H.D. will receive from her mentor, Freud—his teachings. H.D.'s analysis and auto-analysis thus show her the meaning of her vision from 1920—and the meaning is that her work with Freud in 1933 will support her in her quest.

IV. Clearing the River: Spirituality and Auto-analysis

Having established the connection between herself and Freud, H.D. continues in *Tribute to Freud* to forward autobiography as the vehicle for connecting art, religion, and medicine. She interprets Freud's oeuvre as an act of auto-analysis, and argues that one of his main contributions to contemporary thought has been his willingness to examine his own unconscious life and come to terms with it. Through this self-exploration, he acquires the tools to understand more universal principles. Following this line of argument, H.D. also suggests that her auto-analysis builds on Freud's discoveries as well

as allows her to depart from his more flawed theses. Her insights extend past Freud's, into that "other realm of cause and effect." H.D. compares Freud's claim that he "struck oil" with her view that he gained access to a "great stream or ocean underground." She thus takes the emphasis away from the profit-fueled industry of oil drilling and redirects it towards the life-giving force of water. While the spiritual dimension of Freud's labor is clear in *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. goes even further in "The Master," suggesting that the insights both Freud and herself gain ultimately open onto divine truths about female sexuality and its relationship to religious experience.

H.D. critiques Freud's statement that he "'struck oil'" as an understatement of his discoveries, one that avoids the spiritual consequences of his thinking.³⁷ She reflects on this phrasing: "He used the idiom of slang of the counting-house, of Wall Street, a businessman's concrete definitive image for a successful run of luck or hope of success."³⁸ He frames his discoveries as productive within a capitalist framework—as insights that primarily contribute to the functioning of the economy rather than the development of the individual. This metaphor concentrates on luck, and thus fails to stress the personal labor required by Freud, or the deep and universal import of its result. H.D. thus seeks another metaphor that emphasizes his insights are not a chance discovery, but a daring thesis on the interconnection of all humans. And so she reimagines what he might have said:

It is difficult to imagine the Professor saying solemnly, 'I drew by the right of inheritance from the great source of inspiration of Israel and the Psalmist—Jeremiah, some might call me. I stumbled on a well of living water, the river of life. It ran muddy or bright. It was blocked by fallen

logs...I saw the course of the river and how it wan, and I, personally, cleared away a bit of the rubbish, so that at least a small section of the river should run clear...³⁹

This is not Freud's way of thinking through his contributions, nor his way of talking. But it is H.D.'s, and by establishing their special connection, she licenses herself to say what her mentor could or would not. In her telling, Freud is not a businessman, but a prophet like Jeremiah: his discoveries work to reveal and clear the "river of life" itself.

Importantly, in framing him as a prophet she removes some of his agency: he becomes someone who is destined to access deeper truths. However, even though it is his birthright to see deeply, this vision requires work. The work that he does is not only discovering this river, but also clearing a portion of it through self-reflection.

H.D. suggests that both her work and her mentor's do the work of self-discovery in service of both themselves and their readers. H.D. writes of Freud's task: "He himself must clear away his own rubbish, before his particular stream, his personal life, could run clear of obstruction into the great river of humanity, hence to the sea of superhuman perfection."⁴⁰ Freud's work in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, working through his own unconscious life, serves to clear his personal stream. This auto-analysis allows his stream to run *into* the great river: it allows him to contribute to something greater than himself. The flow of water in this metaphor is however not one-way; by clearing his own stream Freud also seems to have made it possible for deeper universal knowledge to flow back towards him. Freud comes to see the interconnectedness and shared experience of all persons through his own experience. He achieves a supernormal clarity: his own mind is visible to him, and his mind serves as a synecdoche for broader experiences. In equating

Freud's insights to spiritual inheritance rather than chance discovery, H.D. suggests that their application may also be spiritual. And, in aiding H.D. to clear her own stream of experience, her own portion of the river, he gives her the tools to contribute to the "great sea" as well. H.D. combines Freud's metaphor with her own in describing their relationship: "*Thou anointed my head with oil—the oil of understanding—and, indeed, my cup runneth over.*"⁴¹ She here quotes from Psalm 23, the psalm that begins "The Lord is my Shepard." Freud's worldly oil is fully transformed into the oil of religious initiation. She is thus not only his disciple, but the disciple who sees the spiritual import of his findings. And with this knowledge, she can contribute to the project he began: in clearing her own patch of river publically in texts like *Tribute to Freud*, she will give her readers direct access to the truths she discovers.

For all of H.D.'s praise of Freud, it is worth turning to "The Master" to look more closely at what she left out of the works published during her lifetime: her full estimation of Freud's status as a prophet, and her intent to reject his more closed-minded thinking. In this poem, she states that Freud is "beyond all-men" and "nearer to God," due to his age but also his ability.⁴² As she revisits the scene of her analysis in this poem, she does not talk about herself as Freud's disciple, but rather as someone seeking answers, and especially answers about her sexuality. H.D. writes

I had two loves separate;
God who loves all mountains,
alone knew why
and understood
and told the old man

to explain

the impossible,

which he did.⁴³

The poem, filled with descriptions of female genitalia and sexuality as flowers and crystals, seems clear in the meaning of “two loves”: H.D. seeks answers about her bisexuality. However, rather than viewing this as a psychological question, she views it as a religious question. That Freud can answer seems to her a confirmation that he was indeed a prophet, chosen by God to reveal truths to mankind. Of course, what he reveals to H.D.—the validity of both her loves, and the perfection of woman—runs counter to his own thinking. This is perhaps to her further evidence that his ideas come not only from a process of scientific inquiry or his own mind; they are divinely implanted, or made possible through over-mind experiences like her own, stranger and more mystical than he would care to admit.

However, despite H.D.’s reverence for her mentor, “The Master” is also a clear indication of her intention to depart strongly from his teaching. She writes:

they will found temples in his name,

his fame

will be so great

that anyone who has known him

will also be hailed as master,

seer,

interpreter;

only I,

I will escape.⁴⁴

Here, H.D. suggests that Freud is not the only “master.” All those who follow his teachings to the letter will become a part of his legacy, one that builds its own temples. However, H.D. will escape: awake to the implications of Freud’s teaching, she will worship in her own temple. “The Master” provides a clearer picture both of H.D.’s faith in Freud than does her public tribute, as well as her faith in that “other realm of cause and effect.” And while the autobiographies she published in her lifetime rarely rejected Freud’s teachings or explored her sexuality as clearly as does this poem, her unpublished works continue to think through her experiences with Freud and with the otherworldly and spiritual.

V. Over-Mind Experience and Lesbian Desire in *HERmione*

H.D.’s autobiographical novel *HERmione* shows its protagonist gaining access to a self-transcendent state of consciousness through lesbian experience. In the context of *Tribute to Freud* and *Notes*, this autobiography is one that intends to give the reader direct insight into the states of (over-mind) consciousness of its author. The novel details the period during which H.D. became engaged and disengaged from Ezra Pound, and involved with Frances Gregg. The text condenses five years of events to a shorter period, and gives the characters pseudonyms: H.D. is Hermione Gart, Pound is George Lowndes,

and Gregg is Fayne Rabb. The text thus sheds considerable light on one of H. D.'s earliest lesbian experiences and its enormously creative potential; the narrator is enthralled with the possibility of deeper self-understanding through her relationship with Fayne. The text's central lesbian relationship is importantly related to the three-letter word that repeatedly appears alongside the narrator's name "HER," that is, "AUM," the Sanskrit word or sound for the creation of the universe. The phrase "I am the word Aum, I am the word Her" appears a number of times throughout the novel in an escalating reverie; the repetition of both words intensify as the novel progresses, and, at some points, the statement "I am the word TREE" becomes part of what I will call Hermione's mantra, the phrase that she repeats and modifies again and again as she moves towards self-understanding. The self-transcendent state that Hermione builds toward is thus discovered alongside lesbian desire, and described in mystical terms drawn from Eastern philosophy. *HERmione* thus elucidates the relationship between sexuality and self-transcendent consciousness in H.D.'s thinking.

HERmione starts out with its titular character in a state of cloudiness and listlessness after leaving Bryn Mawr without a degree; Hermione is described as "nebulous." However, she gains greater personal insight over the course of the narrative, as is indicated by the text's shifting mode for referring to her. Hermione, called "Her" for short, has an object pronoun for a name. Over the course of the narrative and her turn from a heterosexual relationship to a homosexual relationship with Fayne, Her emerges more fully as a subject, identified as "She" and "I" rather than as "her." In her influential study of the novel, Stanford Friedman writes that H.D. thus "suggests that the 'pathway to self' is self-love discovered in the love of the other who physically and spiritually mirrors

the self.”⁴⁵ Hermione also seeks more than self-love: she looks for a poetic language different than the one given to her by George. The discovery of her own queer sexuality in this narrative builds towards a state of consciousness that leads her in this direction. Although the character Hermione doesn’t succeed in discovering this new language when her relationship with Fayne ends, the writer H.D. perhaps does: *HERmione* features a lush and descriptive narrative voice, as well as building refrains that gradually clarify its titular character’s ascension to new modes of perception and consciousness.

Hermione’s transition from heterosexual object choice to lesbian desire can be fruitfully understood in conjunction with H.D.’s mysticism. Recent scholarship on H.D.’s occultism, including the work of Stanford Friedman, Demetres Tyrphonopoulos, and Matte Robinson emphasizes the influence of an eclectic range of occult and religious traditions on H.D.’s poetry and prose.⁴⁶ Building on this work, I suggest that *HERmione* is one of the earliest texts in which H. D. turns towards religious sources to further explore the heightened state of self-awareness known as the over-mind in *Notes on Thought and Vision*. The importance of yoga philosophy—however filtered through Western sources and writers—is signaled early on in the book. H.D. writes:

There was a small red Temple Shakespeare one side of Eugenia’s picture, the other side was a blue book matching it. The *Mahabharata*? One of those translations anyway. Temple Shakespeare. I am out of the Temple Shakespeare. I am out of *The Winter’s Tale*...She picked up the other book. It has a like effect upon her but more potently. Water lying filled with weeds and lily-pads...lilies of all kinds...became even more fluid, was being taken up and up, element (out of chemistry) became vapor. The

water lying so pure became vapor, she would be lifted up, drunk up,
vanished...I am the word AUM.⁴⁷

H.D. thus establishes a binary opposition between the blue book and the red book: one is a collection of the great works of a British playwright, the other an ancient Indian epic, and they “match” each other. Hermione, looking at the Temple Shakespeare, imagines herself as a product of Western thought and history: she is a character out of a classic drama, specifically, *The Winter’s Tale*. The *Mahabharata* provides a symbolic alternative for self-understanding. In turning to this book, Hermione imagines herself as one lily among many, blossoming in the water, and then transcending even her state of full bloom, becoming air itself, at one with the environment around her and entirely untethered to earthly ideals. As this image comes to her, she thinks to herself for the first time, “I am the word AUM.” The word “Om” appears in yoga philosophy including Patanjali’s yoga sutras (400 CE) as the sound or seed that represents both the creation of the universe, and God.⁴⁸ In identifying herself with this word, Hermione indicates that she has transcended the boundaries of the self and is one with the universe.

However, the first time Hermione feels the pull of Eastern thought in the form of the blue book, she is not elated, but frightened. The passage continues:

Hermione dropped the volume. This frightened her. God is in a word. God is in a word. God is in HER. She said, 'HER, HER, HER. I am Her, I am Hermione...I am the word AUM.' This frightened her.”⁴⁹

Hermione’s statement, “I am HER,” is *secondary* to her statement “I am the word AUM,” a kind of amendment to her initial impulse to identify wholly with an unfamiliar religious tradition, or with a single sound. She does not want to completely dissolve into the

universe, but to have a more specific place in it, to be both HER and AUM. Here, then, Hermione's nickname becomes crucial. In differentiating herself as "HER," the narrator perhaps indicates both that she wants to remain an individual, *Hermione*, within the context of a larger spiritual—even divine—experience. But it is possible, too, that she identifies herself not as an individual; the female pronoun "HER" may be a sound as specific and transcendent as "AUM," embodying a universal female principle. Further investigating the significance of this mantra—"I am the word Her, I am the word Aum,"—as it evolves throughout the text, will help to provide a clearer understanding of the text's deployment of Eastern philosophy as a lens through which to understand the relationship between lesbian experience and over-mind experience.

At the beginning of the text, Hermione recites her mantra within the context of her heterosexual relationship with George. The first half of the novel focuses on her ambivalence towards George, and her attempts to make sense of her desire. The mantra thus expresses a wish for self-understanding more than it states a fact. However, as the novel progresses, she meets Fayne and finds herself fascinated. As she moves from heterosexual to lesbian desire, the use of the mantra becomes more frequent. The repetition of "I am her" may seem to have a double meaning in this context: if it at first refers to Hermione herself ("I am Her"), it may later indicate that Hermione begins to identify with Fayne ("I am her"). Stanford Friedman argues that this double meaning suggests H.D. has embedded Freud's theory of homosexuality as narcissistic desire within her text.⁵⁰ In erasing the boundary between the self and the loved object, Hermione reveals herself to be in a state of arrested development, able to love only herself. While I agree that H.D. explicitly and intentionally includes Freud's model of

homosexuality as self-love in his depiction of Hermione and Fayne, the relationship of lesbian desire to the other phrases in this mantra—"I am the word Aum" and "I am the word tree"—demands further investigation. How do spirituality, sexuality, and the natural world combine to inform Hermione's rapturous experience?

The context of H.D.'s "Aum" is not strictly Eastern; rather, it comes out of early 20th century occult, mystical thought that drew eclectically on Sanskrit source texts. Both Tyrphonopoulus and Robinson note that most of H.D.'s first introduction to (at least purportedly) Eastern philosophy came from the books of Yogi Ramacharaka—a pseudonym for the English writer William Walker Atkinson. These books were given to H.D. by Pound before 1911, and Robinson speculates that H.D. did not realize their true, non-Eastern origin.⁵¹ The manuscript for *Hermione*, written around 1927, acknowledges that H.D.'s younger double, Hermione, did not have the vocabulary that would later become available to H.D. For example, throughout, the narrator notes that terms from Freudian psychoanalysis weren't available to aid in her self-understanding. She writes, "Words that had not (in Philadelphia) been invented, beat about them: Oedipus complex, inferiority complex, claustrophobia."⁵² Although H.D. had perhaps only been acquainted with Eastern philosophy through Pound's "yogi books" until 1911, her understanding of yoga philosophy may have grown between the events detailed in *Hermione* and her draft of the manuscript. She refers not to the texts of Yogi Ramacharaka, but to the *Mahabharata*; in her reaction to the mysterious blue book, she uses the image of a lily growing out of weeds, strikingly similar to the image of a lotus growing out of mud—an image used to describe Krishna in the *Mahabharata*. While I do not mean to argue that yoga philosophy is one of the most important or developed sources for H.D.'s occult and

religious beliefs—I assert that her knowledge of it, even as a metaphor or sign for non-Western thought, resonates strongly in *HERmione* through the use of repetition as a narrative device, and represents an early attempt at self-understanding through intellectual and spiritual frameworks that acknowledge the possibility of experiences that transcend both the self and “normal” patterns of intersubjectivity and relationality.

It is well-known that H.D. read Atkinson’s *Fourteen Lessons in Yogi Philosophy*, a text that suggests there is a third mind distinct from the “Ego” and the “Instinctive” mind—Atkinson calls this the spiritual mind.⁵³ By 1927, H.D. had of course proposed her own theory of mind in *Notes on Thought and Vision*, and would have recognized the Freudian influences of Atkinson’s writing. The spiritual mind as described by Atkinson has clear similarities to H.D.’s over-mind, as it exists above the normal plane of consciousness and gives access to universal truths. Atkinson writes,

The ego is in a transition stage of consciousness, and the struggle is quite painful at times, but the growing man in time rises above the attraction of the lower nature, and dawning Spiritual Consciousness enables him to understand the true state of affairs...The Spiritual Mind is also the source of ‘inspiration’ which certain poets, painters...and others have received in all times and which they receive today.⁵⁴

For Atkinson, the plane of self-understanding beyond the ego enables the individual not just to understand herself, but also to access the source of inspiration itself. This is exactly the function of the over-mind. And Atkinson’s fragments of the Upanishads, *The Spirit of the Upanishads: The Aphorisms of the Wise*, mixes many passages including and defining “om” with his own philosophy and thinking, including passages that suggest one

“Meditate on this thy Self as the syllable Aum” in order to attain greater spiritual understanding. H.D. might thus use “aum” as a shorthand for yoga-inspired philosophy that corresponds to her own thinking.

The use of the mantra “I am the word Aum” intensifies alongside Hermione’s relationship with Fayne. It is after her first kiss with Fayne that she adds the phrase “I am a tree,” further adapting source material to the specifics of Hermione’s embodied, spiritual, and creative experience. As I have noted, Stanford Friedman suggests that the depiction of lesbian desire on display in *HERmione* in particular represents narcissistic love as creative rather than regressive; when H.D. writes, “She is Her. I am Her. Her is Fayne. Fayne is her. I will not let them hurt HER.,” “Her” refers to both women, and gives Hermione, now an “I,” the strength to defend herself (or them both) from the threat George poses—and George does pose a threat in his condemnation of Hermione’s new self-understanding.

The first and only person whom Hermione tries to share her deeper understanding with is George. He doesn’t understand the substance of what she is saying, and in fact asks her to stop speaking. Hermione says to George, when he asks what she has been reading, “I don’t know, George. I am the word AUM.” Their conversation continues: “‘What?’ ‘Those little Wisdom of the East books, they seem to be the only thing that fits here....George turned facing Her, rubbed cheek against a tree trunk. ‘Don’t talk,’ he now said.’”⁵⁵ Although George gives Hermione Yogi Ramacharaka’s books, he doesn’t understand her recitation of mantra, and makes no attempt to. Instead, he pushes her against a tree, and he asks her to be mute *like* the trees. At this moment, Hermione expands her mantra further: she says to herself, “I am in the word TREE. I am TREE

exactly.”⁵⁶ After George’s rejection, Hermione seems to find another piece of the puzzle that might give her access to a higher awareness. H.D. writes, “...I am the word Aum and I am Tree. I am TreeNow she saw Tree and I am Tree and I am the word Aum and I am Her exactly.”⁵⁷ It is after this encounter that Eastern philosophy, connection to nature, and lesbian desire are all part of the same experience, as is repeated throughout the text. These three words—“Her,” “Aum,” “Tree,” form the pillar of an identity that is specifically female yet universal and transcendent; universal yet very much of earthly, embodied experience.

To further explicate the significance of this collection of terms –Aum, Her, Tree—I turn to another passage, one in which Fayne and Hermione share an intimate experience. H.D. writes:

A face bends towards me and a curtain opens. There is a swish and swirl
as of heavy parting curtains. Almost along the floor with its strip of carpet,
almost across me I feel the fringe of some fantastic wine-coloured parting
curtains.... Curtains fell, curtains parted, curtains filled the air with heavy
swooping purple. Lips long since half kissed away. Curled lips long since
half kissed away. In Roman gold. Long ere they coined in Roman gold
your face—your face—your face—your face—your face—Faustine.⁵⁸

In this erotic, labial passage, the women’s lips blur together, “half kissed away” and thus almost erased, or “smudged out,” as Hermione fears she may be George. The repetition of “your face” indicates that the two women are looking at each other, with the referent of “you” rapidly changing and blurring in this scene of lesbian love as love as the same, a productively narcissistic love.

This passage about curtains suggests that lesbian sexual experience eliminates the difference between subject and object, knower and known, as the two women's lips and faces fade into each other's. The figure of the curtain is also significant: the two women's sexual experience is the opening and closing of curtains over a window, a window that presumably opens out onto the sunlight and trees of the Pennsylvania woods that are so important to the narrative of *Hermione*. Hermione's experience with Fayne opens her up to an understanding of the world through a gendered perspective ("I am Her"), but also a perspective that clarifies perception, and gives access to spiritual experience. This perspective is embodied in the phrase "I am the word Aum," in which H.D. identifies with a philosophy in which all individuals are part of a transcendental whole. The utopia H.D. seeks is thus not a strictly lesbian utopia, but a state of intensified awareness of both the self and the external world. Lesbian desire is a gateway to seeing the universal connection between women, individuals, and the world around them, but it is not necessarily the only access point for higher reality.

HERmione, then, serves as a piece of auto-analysis that blends H.D.'s interest in Freud with her own ideas about the relationship between over-mind experience, sexuality, and creativity. The novelistic retelling of her own life reveals part of her thinking about her own sexuality: her "two loves" each serve a purpose, and it is lesbian desire that helps open her eyes to the fundamental connectedness of all persons. Hermione's loss of self in her relationship to Fayne is a productive loss: she gains access to a world of interconnection, to the feeling of "Aum." Although H.D. does not explicitly compare over-mind experience with the experience of *HERmione*'s titular character, the immersion in natural substances—water in *Notes* and trees in *HERmione*—is a clear

parallel. And in both of these experiences, the world becomes clearer and more interconnected. In short, both are profoundly spiritual experiences. H.D.'s autobiography, unpublished during her lifetime, richly expresses this experience as both religious and sexual, personal and self-transcendent.

VI. Conclusion

H.D.'s career flourished shortly after the end of her analysis with Freud: after publishing *Trilogy* (1946) and *Helen in Egypt* (1961), her fame reached new heights in America and Europe, and she became the first woman to receive an American Academy of Arts and Letters medal. These long poems, difficult and densely symbolic, tell the story of H.D.'s spiritual journey through the lens of history and myth. However, her explicitly autobiographical texts—"The Master," *End to Torment*, *HERmione*, *The Gift*, and *Majic Ring*—were published posthumously, after a resurgence of critical interest in the 1970's. These texts are more explicit about H.D.'s sexuality than were those published during her lifetime. They are also more explicit about her mystical and occult interests. *Majic Ring*, for example, details another one of H.D.'s visions, and also records her attempts to interpret it through séances.

While H.D.'s sexuality and mysticism may seem like separate threads of her autobiographical practice, they are importantly related in her theory of mind as it evolves over the course of her career. *Notes on Thought and Vision* argues that the over-mind, a state of higher consciousness and spiritual awareness, becomes accessible only to those who pursue sexual pleasure. It is no coincidence that H.D. first achieves this state while pregnant. Over-mind experience, once achieved, makes *creation* possible. Her

heterosexual experience creates life, but any sexual experience has the potential to create art. In both cases, insight into the world as well as into higher truths becomes more available when two (or more) bodies come together. In *Tribute to Freud*, H.D. builds on this thinking. Although her relationship with Freud is not sexual, their collaboration gives her new insight into herself, and into the possibilities of art. Freud's auto-analysis as well as her own are forwarded as the beginnings of a practice that could have curative properties, uniting psychoanalysis, art, and religion. According to H.D., her own and Freud's auto-analysis thus reveal to readers the shared nature of all human consciousness. *HERmione* goes further, providing the portrait of a woman entering universal consciousness. Hermione's lesbian sexuality opens the door for her to dissolve the boundaries of the self with all others. Although Hermione/H.D. ultimately breaks with her lover Fayne/Frances Gregg, H.D.'s deeper understanding remains available to her—and to her readers. This autobiographical novel thus serves as a revelation of H.D.'s mystical experience as well as an attempt to give her readers direct access to that state of experience through art.

¹ H.D., *Tribute to Freud* (New York: New Directions, 2012), 5.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

³ *Analyzing Freud: Letters of H.D., Bryher, and Their Circle*, Ed. Susan Stanford Friedman (New York: New Directions, 2002), xvii.

⁴ See: Susan Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, HD's Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Rachel Blau du Plessis, *The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice* (Tuscaloo, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2006); Dianne Chisholm, *H.D.'s Freudian Poetics: Psychoanalysis in Translation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Claire Buck, *H.D. and Freud: Bisexuality and Feminine Discourse* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

⁵ H.D., "The Master," *Feminist Studies* 7.3 (Autumn 1981): 407-416.

⁶ Johnston, *The Formation of 20th Century Queer Autobiography*, 113.

⁷ H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1982).

⁸ H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 39.

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- ⁹ Johnston, *The Formation of 20th Century Queer Autobiography*, 100-105.
- ¹⁰ Matthew Kibble, "Sublimation and the Over-Mind in H.D.'s 'Notes on Thought and Vision,'" *English Literature in Translation*, 1880-1920 41.1 (Nov. 1, 1998): 49.
- ¹¹ H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision*, 18-19.
- ¹² Ibid., 18.
- ¹³ Ibid., 24.
- ¹⁴ Kibble, "Sublimation and the Over-Mind in H.D.'s 'Notes on Thought and Vision'": 42-57.
- ¹⁵ H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision*, 20.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 22.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 49.
- ¹⁸ H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 71.
- ¹⁹ H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision*, 46.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 46.
- ²¹ Ibid., 99.
- ²² Ibid., 35.
- ²³ Ibid., 44.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 46-47.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 50.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 51.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 54.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid., 69.
- ³² Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau du Plessis, "Woman is Perfect: H.D.'s Debate With Freud," *Feminist Studies* 7.3 (Autumn 1981): 421.
- ³³ H.D., *Tribute to Freud*, 69.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 64.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 67.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 18.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 83.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid..
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 93.
- ⁴² H.D., "The Master," 408.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 409.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 413.
- ⁴⁵ Stanford Friedman, *Penelope's Web*, 134.
- ⁴⁶ Matte Robinson, *The Astral H.D.: Occult and Religious Sources and Contexts for H.D.'s Poetry and Prose* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016); Demetres Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition : A Study of Ezra Pound's The Cantos* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992).
- ⁴⁷ H.D., *HERmione* (New York: New Directions, 1981), 32.

⁴⁸ Yoga sutra 1.27 is translated by Sri Swami Satchidananda: “OM is God’s name as well as form.” *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, Trans. Sri Swami Satchidananda (Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications, 2012), 40.

⁴⁹ H.D., *HERmione*, 32.

⁵⁰ Stanford Friedman, *Penelope’s Web*, 124.

⁵¹ Matte Robinson, *The Astral H.D.*, 5.

⁵² H.D., *HERmione*, 15

⁵³ Yogi Ramacharaka, *Fourteen Lessons in Yogi Philosophy* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2005).

⁵⁴ H.D., *HERmione*, 32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 163.