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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LITERATURE: PERVERSION, RACISM AND
LANGUAGE OF DIFFERENCE

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“Psychoanalysis and Literature: Perversion, Racism and Language of Difference” considers the intersection of racism and perversion. Through offering a close reading of literary characters’ fantasies of racial subjugation, I offer a way to introduce Sigmund Freud’s drive theory in the field of literary studies. I approach this task by a close reading of the theory of the Oedipus complex, the psychosexual stage in which the notion of difference is installed through the recognition of the existence of sexual difference, which simultaneously influences the successful development of the superego structure.

Perversion is a term often used to describe abnormal interests and practices of human sexuality. However, for Freud, human sexuality is always polymorphously perverse. One of the ways in which polymorphous expression of sexuality manifests is in the externalization of one’s own sexual and aggressive impulse onto the Other. This dissertation demonstrates that racism is a form of perversion because it is an expression of resistance to difference. As a result of the difficulty going through the Oedipal phase, a pervert will seek to get rid of his or her awareness of sexual difference by remaining in fantasy; this form of choosing fantasy over reality also speaks to the wish of a racist, who

tries to disavow the knowledge that discharging elevated tension onto the Other is not acceptable in reality.

My introductory chapter examines the intersection between two forms of psychoanalytic practice: reading literature and conducting clinical work. Chapter one discusses Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in which he argues that psychoanalysis can effectively articulate the reason racism will not dissipate in the West. I offer a way to critically approach this claim so as to further integrate issues of race into psychoanalytic theoretical work. In the second chapter, I examine the relationship between language and perversion in Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*. My third chapter offers a close reading of James Baldwin's short story, "Going to Meet the Man." I demonstrate that castration of black men, which often accompanied lynching, has been escaping the attention of American psychoanalysts; therefore, I argue that the theory of the Oedipus complex has been taught and utilized perversely. And, in my concluding chapter, I offer my reading of J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* in order to examine the link between writing and perversion.

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Introduction

‘You Don’t Have What It Takes to be a Psychoanalyst:’ Psychoanalysis and Racism

From its inception, psychoanalysis has always dealt with issues of race.¹ This is because racism is the answer to a person’s primary response when encountering another who triggers his or her intrapsychic resistance to difference. Freud consistently engaged in the examination of this primary response from the critique of ideology and hegemony and the theorization of meta-psychology. In other words, psychoanalysis in its theoretical frame has always emphasized the influence the external environment has on the development of the mind, the subject’s internal reality, and his or her psychosexual development.² Therefore, Freudian theory has always aimed to offer a theory of

¹ In the following, through describing Fanon’s work Christopher Lane illustrates how Freud’s work offers an important tool in understanding issues of race:

Like Fanon, psychoanalysis adds to theories of “race” an emphasis on structure of fantasy and identification that often haunt us in contemporary life (for a remarkable account of this haunting, see James). In particular, psychoanalysis insists that we cannot treat subjects and politics as entirely rational categories (Rose, “Thatcher” 45). Such emphasis helps us unpack the psychohistorical deadlock that Fanon called a “Manicheism delirium” (184), in which whiteness seems identical to virtue and harmony.... Fanon did not simply indict psychoanalysis for causing or reproducing racism, as some critics of psychoanalysis now claim. Nor did he reject the idea of the unconscious as pernicious element of Eurocentrism. Rather, Fanon tried to indicate why the unconscious, in occidental cultures, came to represent a “depository” for racial and sexual difficulty. To this extent, Fanon was quite willing to distinguish Freud from his cultural apparatus: He considered Freud not a perpetrator of myths about savagery, but a figure able to show why these myths so often have reoccurred (14).

Christopher Lane. “The Psychoanalysis of Race: An Introduction.” *Psychoanalysis of Race*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

² Being Jewish and experiencing anti-Semitism, Freud saw the world through the eye of the Other. His theoretical interests often included the elaboration of the need that demanded the creation of the Other, as well as the justification for the usage of aggression against the Other as a form of tension-release. See “Obsessive Acts and Religious Practice” (1907). Vol. 9 of *The Standard Edition*. Trans. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press; “Character and Anal Erotism” (1908). *S.E.* 9; “Thoughts for the Time on War and Death” (1915). *S.E.* 14; *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). *S.E.* 18; *Civilization and its Discontent* (1920). *S.E.* 21; “Why War?” (1933). *S.E.* 22; and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939). *S.E.* 23.

difference. Or, more specifically, Freudian theory is a theory that illustrates how the mind responds to difference.³

In my dissertation I will offer a close reading of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*; James Baldwin's short story, "Going to Meet the Man"; Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*; and J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*. My decision to choose these works was influenced by my experience of being a part of psychoanalytic institute training in order to become a clinical practitioner of psychoanalysis, which I began soon after I started reading Freudian theory in graduate school. When I entered clinical training, I saw a discrepancy between a psychoanalytic theoretical emphasis, which proposed that psychoanalysis was a theory of difference, and the clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis I encountered who, without being consciously aware, had persistently practiced psychoanalysis with resistance towards difference.

What I mean by "clinical field of psychoanalysis" is the field composed of clinicians who employ Freudian and post-Freudian theory and technique to treat patients in psychotherapy, or see them on the couch at least 4 times a week. These clinicians receive training from psychoanalytic training institutes, where Freudian and post-Freudian theory and technique are taught in classes and supervision.⁴ The International

³ This is where Jacques Derrida saw an important link between psychoanalysis and deconstruction. If psychoanalysis can be thought of as a theory that attempts to articulate what the mind does when encountering difference, then deconstruction can be described as what the mind does when it encounters that which does not get articulated in binary, meaning, how does the mind respond to *différance*.

⁴ Most people who enter the field of psychoanalytic clinical training received their initial clinical training in psychology, psychiatry, or social work. However, there is a long history of non-medical professionals in psychoanalysis. In 1909 at the twelfth anniversary of Clark University, Freud was invited to give a lecture on the history of psychoanalysis. He then received the degree of LL.D. Two years later, in February of 1911, the New York Psychoanalytic Society was organized, which became the first of the so-called American Psychoanalytic Association, the APA. The members of the APA were then able to become the members of the International Psychoanalytical Association (IPA), the society that Freud founded in 1910.

The IPA started as a small group of four individuals Stekel, Adler, Kahane, and Reitler in 1902. Freud invited them to meet him in order to discuss his work, and the group was soon named as the Psychological Wednesday Society. By 1908 there were 14 members and the name was changed to the

Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), the organization Freud created in 1910 in Vienna, is responsible for setting the by-laws and standards of the method of psychoanalytic practice. The IPA consists of international societies that exist, covering Europe, North

Vienna Psychoanalytical Society; it was in this year that Ferenczi joined the group. The Vienna Psychoanalytical Society became the IPA in 1910; its official center was moved from Vienna to Zürich, and Jung became the first President. The APA, from its inception, restricted its membership to only physicians who are interested in psychoanalysis. The APA instructed MDs not to train non-medical professionals in the practice of psychoanalysis; otherwise, they would lose their membership and privileges in their institutes. Non-medical students who were interested in psychoanalysis were able to approach the analysts within the APA, but they were asked to sign a disclaimer that they would only be doing research; therefore, they were only allowed to attend classes as auditors.

Although the APA only opened its door to medical doctors, one of Freud's closest colleagues, Otto Rank, who became the member of his inner circle (the ones who wore the infamous ring, symbolizing their commitment to the advancement of psychoanalytic teaching and research), was not a physician. Despite the APA's favoritism towards medical professionals in the United States, defining psychoanalysis as a medical practice was against the European tradition. Between 1938 to 1946, with the end of the World War II, non-medically trained European analysts, who were fleeing from Europe and the aftermath of the War, started arriving in New York and other major cities in the United States. Theodore Reik, who was the first psychologist to write his dissertation on psychoanalysis, was one of the analysts who sought affiliation within the APA; however, when he was asked to sign the "disclaimer," that he would not practice psychoanalysis, he disagreed with this procedure, and instead of joining the APA, founded his own organization which opened its door to non-medical professionals who are seeking psychoanalytic training. Reik's institute, The National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) was created in 1947 in New York City, and still, to this day, remains separate from the International Psychoanalytical Association.

There are two other non-medical training institutes in New York that were formed in reaction against the tradition of the APA. They are both now a part of the IPA. See "History of the American Psychoanalytic Association: Charter Members Former Officers, and Previous Meetings" in *Bulletin of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. 1: (1938), 12-17. *Fifty Years: 1948 -1988. The National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis* (Published in limited edition of 1000 copies by the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis), May, 1998. Salman Akhtar. "Tradition and Innovation in Psychoanalytic Education: Clark Conference on Psychoanalytic Training for Psychologists. Ed. By Murray Meisels and Ester R. Shappiro" in *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. 43:(1995), pp. 909-914.

The APA did not alter its bylaws, which required all of its members to be physicians, until 1990. Now, non-medical professionals, psychologists, and social workers were admitted to the APA. Salman Akhtar describes such climate in the following way:

Besides Anna Freud, Otto Rank, and Hans Saches, a number of "pioneers" of our discipline were nonphysicians. Some names that readily come to mind are August Aichorn, Ronald Fairbairn, Lou Andreas-Salome, Melanie Klein, Theodore Reik, Ella Freeman Sharp, and James Strachey. Psychoanalysis in Europe never became strongly identified with academic medicine.

Consequently, nonphysicians have continued to form a sizable group among analysts practicing there. Even within the mainstream American psychoanalysis with its strong medical identity, psychologists have played prominent roles in all three "generations" of psychoanalysis... Despite this, the fact is that organized psychoanalysis in the United States has largely remained in the hands of physicians. Psychoanalytic institutes under the American, until recently, have had quite restrictive admission policies for nonphysician applicants. This resulted in a painful dilemma for such professionals. They had to risk rejection and, even when accepted, procedural roadblocks from an institute of the American, or they had to look for training opportunities outside the American and risk getting less rigorous training.

Salman Akhtar, *Ibid.*, pp. 909-910.

America, Latin America, and Asia and the Pacific Rim. Entering into the “clinical scene” of psychoanalysis has made me realize that psychoanalysis can be practiced perversely, meaning clinicians demonstrate their intolerance towards difference while practicing. Specifically, they communicated a strong resistance to incorporating issues of race into the scenes of theory-making and clinical practice.⁵ In order to offer an example of this tendency, I will describe my own encounter with racism; in doing so, I hope to strategically uncover the problematic practice of racializing the Other, the practice that often takes place within the clinical scene of psychoanalysis. Many psychoanalysts are unaware that they are engaged in racism because they are not exposed to theoretical works from various academic fields.

My dissertation is written from a perspective of a reader of academic literature who is also a clinical practitioner of psychoanalysis. This dual position invites resistance within two fields of psychoanalysis: academia and clinical practice. Both groups of psychoanalysts, especially clinical practitioners, tend to view my position as an indication of transgression from psychoanalytic tradition and discipline. For example, many clinical practitioners believe that psychoanalysts can only develop their skills by not engaging in reading, but strictly by working with patients in a clinical setting. Some members of the analytic institutes to which I belonged indicated their disapproval of my knowledge of Freudian theory, which was derived from my academic training in literature. Many

⁵ Historically speaking, the clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis welcomed women who seeking to become psychoanalysts. However, they are also resistant towards admitting gay and lesbian candidates who are seeking training. Feminism and queer theory are not being integrated into psychoanalytic training for the reasons that some analysts who are in the position of power do not see the need to expand their view, to widen the scope of psychoanalysis by accepting difference or different point of views that are brought forward by scholars who study psychoanalysis in academia. See Nancy J. Chodorow. “Psychoanalysis and Women: A Personal Thirty-Five-Year Retrospect” in *Annual of Psychoanalysis* (2004): 32: 101-129. Notman, Malkah. “Being a Woman Analyst from the 1960s into the Next Century: Some Reflections” in *Ibid*: 161-165.

clinical practitioners believe that Freudian theory cannot be understood without clinical practice; thus, my reading of Freud in graduate school was not considered training in psychoanalysis.⁶

Needless to say, this tradition of keeping the academic field away from the clinical field has been escaping critical attention. In order to articulate the reason behind this split, I ask the following questions: why is such tradition not articulated as perverse since it delineates intolerance towards the difference that exists in the two fields of psychoanalysis? Why are psychoanalysts having difficulty understanding that there are different kinds of psychoanalytic practice? Is this difficulty fortified by the belief that there must be a hierarchy within the different fields of psychoanalysis, and if so, what are the reasons for its existence and who is benefiting from it? Why does the dual position become the subject of scrutiny, but not the consistent trend of anti-intellectualism, which has prevented psychoanalysts from widening the scope of their practice? While keeping these questions in mind, I want to explore the question of how to integrate issues of race, gender, and sexuality using psychoanalysis, because I believe, undoubtedly, such a project cannot be accomplished without the integration of the academic and clinical fields of psychoanalysis.

Within current feminist scholarship, as well as literary theory, there has been lacking theory that aims to further integrate issues of race, gender, and sexuality using

⁶ In speaking of the link between Nietzsche and Freud, specifically on the subject of whether or not psychoanalytic theory can be understood without clinical training, Bass expresses the following:

How did Nietzsche anticipate fundamental psychoanalytic concepts without clinical experience? Freud speculated that Nietzsche's own pathology gave him access to unconscious process (Nunberg and Federn, 1962-1967, I: 30-31). But there is another possible answer to this question, an answer that psychoanalysts tend to overlook. Nietzsche's "insights" were the result of his critique of metaphysics. He could elaborate basic psychoanalytic ideas because, like Freud, he was trying to think beyond the philosophical equation of mind and consciousness.

Alan Bass. *Interpretation and Difference: The Strangeness of Care*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006), p.2.

psychoanalysis. For example, when issues of race are introduced to the scene of theory-making in these fields, the rhetoric of respect to difference often emerges. The Civil Rights movement unequivocally influenced the need for the establishment of academic departments such as Ethnic Studies and Gender and Women's Studies, which later helped to theorize the notion of difference with regard to issues of ethnicity, race, nation, gender, and sexuality. However, the theoretical works from these fields were then gradually translated into the more "popular" language of cultural difference. The language of culture or cultural difference produced multiculturalism, which ended up inadvertently forming and maintaining its affinity to essentialism. Although cultural studies and critical race theory aim to remedy some of the injuries produced by multiculturalism, multiculturalism has successfully found its stable homes in many disciplines and university campuses today; certainly, it has found home in psychoanalytic training institutes. And, because of multiculturalism's strong tie to essentialism, many analysts have not had the opportunity to attain the theoretical knowledge that articulates the crucial difference between unveiling the problem of racism and racializing people of color.

A theory that attempts to integrate race, gender, and sexual difference using psychoanalysis will look significantly different from multiculturalism, which has consistently enforced the idea of respect towards the Other's different cultural beliefs and behavioral traits by engaging in essentialism. In my view, this rhetoric of respect is not only derived from anthropology, but also linked subtly to a Eurocentric Judeo-Christian perspective. What I demonstrate in my dissertation is not only a critique of this trend, but also an exploration of a theoretical frame in order to effectively analyze the resistance to

difference through paying attention to Freudian and post-Freudian theorizations of perversion.

According to Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic points of view, perversion results from the disavowal of difference, specifically of sexual difference. This theoretical frame offers a critical tool in analyzing the construction of not only gender difference but also racial difference. It also offers much needed critique within many scenes of psychoanalytic practice, some of which have shown and maintained strong resistance to difference.

The resistance to difference is first facilitated not by memory, but by perception, and perception is formed based on one's own unique intrapsychic phenomenon.⁷ Racism is a symptom of perversion since it is the defense utilized by a subject who cannot tolerate experiencing and encountering difference. Freud articulated the phenomenon of symptom formation as that which results from the subject's sensing of the conflict between external and internal demands, and the subject responds to facing two forms of demands as not only encountering conflict but also discovering difference.⁸ What the

⁷ Perception often replaces reality, which is an important psychic phenomenon for understanding racism. It is because in reality one understands that all individuals are created as equal. See Barry Opatow. "The Real Unconscious: Psychoanalysis as a Theory of Consciousness." In *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. (1997): 45: 865-890.

Freud demonstrates the intrinsic link between the experiencing of unpleasure and perception in the following way:

Most of the unpleasure that we experience is perceptual unpleasure. It may be perception of pressure by unsatisfied instincts; or it may be external perception which is either distressing in itself or which excites unpleasurable expectations in the mental apparatus – that is, which is recognized as 'danger' (11).

Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920) S.E.18.

Alan Bass argues that perception is utilized to build knowledge based on what he calls, "seeing is believing." He says, "[P]erception guarantees objectivity. As Freud emphasized, perception can only be linked to objectivity if the distinction between perception and memory is maintained."

Alan Bass. *Difference and Disavowal: The Trauma of Eros*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 37.

⁸ According to Freudian theory, the notion of difference can be examined from two perspectives. First, from the view of the pre-Oedipal stage, where the infant will experience the difference between the

subject seeks to do then is an important question for Freudians and post-Freudians.

Would the subject begin tolerating the tension that arises from encountering difference and seek to attain tension reduction in a way that both internal and external demands are more or less met sufficiently? Or, would he or she begin to split the internal and external demands so as to attend to one versus the other? For Freud, experiencing the conflict between the internal and external stimuli is what produces psychic structure; thus, the subject's way of handling the conflict, whether to tolerate it or seek to eliminate it, will create two possible results. If the subject tolerates the conflict, he or she is engaged in both external and internal demands, which means he or she is engaged in reality.

However, if he or she takes the latter approach and splits off the internal and external demands, then the emergence of neurosis and psychosis will be expected. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud argues that neurosis is formed when the subject, being overwhelmed by the internal libidinal needs, begins to split the ego libido away from sexual libido in order to repress the latter. Freud writes the following:

Almost all the energy with which the apparatus is filled arises from its innate instinctual impulses....In the course of things it happens again and again that individual instincts or parts of instincts turn out to be incompatible in their aims or demands with the remaining ones, which are able to combine into the inclusive unit of the ego. The former are then split off from this unity by the process of repression, held back at the lower level of psychical development and cut off, to begin with, from the possibility of satisfaction. If they succeed subsequently, as can so easily happen with repressed sexual instincts, in struggling through, by roundabout paths, to a direct or to substitutive satisfaction, that event, which would in other cases have been an opportunity for pleasure, is felt by the ego as unpleasure. As a consequence of the old conflict which

unpleasure-pleasure principle (hunger will be experienced as unpleasure and the arrival of milk will be experienced as pleasure) and the reality principle (the availability or unavailability of the caretaker figure who is attentive to the infant's needs), which will foster the development of primary narcissism then secondary narcissism. Second, the pre-Oedipal structure will influence the installment of the superego structure during the Oedipal phase where the child will understand sexual difference and the difference between reality and fantasy.

ended in repression, a new breach has occurred in the pleasure principle at the very time when certain instincts were endeavoring, in accordance with the principle, to obtain fresh pleasure (10-11).⁹

Freud demonstrates that the repression of the sexual impulse takes place when the subject experiences an internal tension-raising sexual stimulus as the arrival of trauma.¹⁰ Alan Bass mentions that some patients experience this reality, the recognition of the difference between the two demands, as “unwelcome tension-raising knowledge” to which they respond as a traumatic experience. And in order not to experience the knowledge, the subject proceeds to ward it off by “primary wish fulfillment,” the wish to replace pain and discomfort by engaging in hallucination. Bass conceptualizes primary wish fulfillment as the “primary defense” against reality.¹¹

Freud’s original theoretical frame was developed based on the observation of neurotic patients; according to his original theoretical model, anxiety was conceptualized as the expression of repressed sexual tension.¹² However, Freud revised his theory of anxiety in *Inhibition, Anxiety, Symptom*. In this new theory he no longer viewed anxiety as the expression of repressed sexual tension; instead he argued that anxiety should be regarded as the ego’s response to the potential arrival of trauma.¹³ Bass argues that this revision allowed Freud to move his theory further, and with this new theory Freud was

⁹ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

¹⁰ “Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety” (1929). *SE.*, 20.

¹¹ Alan Bass. *Difference and Disavowal* (22-23).

¹² *Studies on Hysteria* (1893-1885). *SE.*, 2.

¹³ Freud revised his previous topographic theory into a structural theory through the completion of his work, *The Ego and Id*. With this new theoretical model, Freud conceptualized the interconnectedness of the three layers of the mind: the id, ego, and superego. In his new theoretical model, Freud argued that some parts of the ego remain unconscious. This revision was significantly different from his previous topographical theory in which the unconscious was conceptualized as inaccessible to the conscious. In other words, even though the preconscious will have occasional access to the unconscious, one will not gain access to what is retained in the unconscious. See Charles Brenner. *The Mind in Conflict*. New York: International University Press, 1982.

able to demonstrate how the mind responds to tension-raising knowledge. Specifically, he was able to postulate the theory of anxiety as a theory of defense. In this new theory, anxiety is viewed as the subject's recognition of tension-raising knowledge, a signal, which alarms the subject at the arrival of pain and discomfort, or to use Bass's word, trauma.¹⁴ In short, anxiety calls for a defense maneuver which then requires the process in which the recognition of the conflict between internal and external demands (which the subject experiences as difference) must be addressed.

When the subject faces conflict, if he or she seeks to eliminate the pain and discomfort that arise, then, from a Freudian point of view, one might say that he or she is being caught up in the libidinal pull facilitated by the death drive.¹⁵ Therefore, if one holds the conviction that the elimination of the conflict is possible, he or she is engaging in a fantasmatic thought process that locks him or her in a place of oblivion where progress or movement toward the future become an impossibility. Thus, the elimination of conflict is the elimination of difference, and the elimination of difference is to engage in the elimination of reality. Freud argues that this type of defense is not unique to psychosis – it happens to the subject who is suffering from neurosis. Ironically, as I have already argued, the resistance to tension-raising difference is a trend that exists within the clinical field of psychoanalysis. Some psychoanalysts have hindered the evolution of psychoanalytic theory by resisting different points of view, different theoretical

¹⁴ Bass's argument certainly fits with Freud's conceptualization of trauma, in which trauma is described as the experience of a "conflict in the ego." See *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), p. 33.

¹⁵ In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) the word "beyond" indicates Freud's critical reworking of the dual instinct theory, which focused on the ego and sexual libidos. In this new theoretical work, Freud introduced the death instinct into the mix, with which he began to dive into questions pertaining to the symptom formation of sadomasochism and narcissism.

understandings, and different people entering their institutes so as not to experience anxiety.

The elimination of anxiety is a defense against reality, and the elimination of reality is not possible. A maneuver to get rid of anxiety cannot involve the elimination of reality in its entirety; instead, what the subject might do is to *suspend* reality by pushing it away from the conscious awareness. Bass calls this process disavowal, the registration and repudiation of the tension-raising knowledge of the existence of reality.¹⁶ Therefore, although disavowal involves the suspension of the difference between reality and fantasy, which is characteristic of psychosis, the subject's experiencing of the "loss of reality" as a defensive maneuver is not the same as the inevitable "loss of reality" that describes the ontological existence of patients who are suffering from psychosis.¹⁷ Instead, it involves a process in which the subject seeks to experience loss as a defense against encountering the tension-raising reality.

Disavowal can also be regarded as a process in which the subject recognizes the discomfort that comes in reality; in order not to experience discomfort, he or she seeks to escape to fantasy. This is the moment the subject recognizes the difference between reality and fantasy, and chooses fantasy over reality while disavowing the need for self-preservation.¹⁸ The subject does so with the conviction that escaping into his or her fantasmatic world and seeking to eliminate the anxiety-provoking and tension-raising knowledge will replace the act of self-preservation, which requires the tolerance of pain

¹⁶ *Difference and Disavowal* (49).

¹⁷ Freud became increasingly interested in examining the similarity between neurosis and psychosis towards the end of his career. See "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" (1924). *S.E.*19.

¹⁸ Bass would argue that the act of staying with reality or tolerating the tension that arises when encountering difference is intrinsically connected to self-preservation. See *Interpretation and Difference*.

and discomfort.¹⁹ The fantasmatic world is a place where the notion of difference, exemplified by race, gender and sexuality, does not exist. For Freud, as well as for post-Freudians, if the subject is seeking refuge in that space and refusing to engage in reality, he or she is believed to be suffering from perversion.²⁰ However, for some psychoanalysts, encountering difference is intolerable. And such practitioners of psychoanalysis are engaged in psychoanalytic practice fantasmatically because they are refusing reality, which demands the recognition of the merit of tolerating and incorporating difference in their thinking.

Encountering the Resistance to Difference

I begin my dissertation with a statement made to me: “You do not have what it takes to be a psychoanalyst.” I initially received the statement as the assessment of the oral examination I took in order to move on to my third year of analytic training. The person who said it was my examiner, Dr. L., a female psychoanalyst who was also married to the dean of the school, Dr. K. (In order to move on to the third year of the training, the candidates were supposed to take a written exam on psychoanalytic theory and an oral exam on our understanding of ourselves.) During the oral exam I was asked to speak about the reason I became interested in studying psychoanalysis. I mentioned I started developing my interest in Freudian theory after reading Derrida, and I saw a strong link between Freudian theory and deconstruction, feminism, queer theory, and

¹⁹ Alan Bass. See “Nietzsche: Active Interpretation” in *Ibid.*

²⁰ In addition to Alan Bass, see Joyce McDougall. *Theaters of the Mind*. London: Free Association, 1986; Louise J. Kaplan. *Female Perversions*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991; John Steiner. *Psychic Retreat: Pathological Organizations in Psychotic, Neurotic and Borderline Patients*. New York and London: Routledge, 1993; and Janie Chassequet-Smirgel. *Creativity and Perversion*. London: Free Association Books, 1985.

critical race theory. I said I became interested in exploring how to use Freudian theory and how to link psychoanalysis with these theories. I also wanted to see if I would be able to work not just in an academic setting, but also wished to experience the application of Freudian theory in clinical practice. Aside from Dr. L., there was another female analyst present, Dr. S., who did not say much during the exam. After I gave them my answer, it appeared neither of them understood what I meant by the link between psychoanalysis and these fields.

Although I did not understand it at the time, I have come to believe that their reaction indicated a strong trend of anti-intellectualism in the clinical field of psychoanalysis. Many clinicians do not access the materials I mentioned because - they often say - they do not believe in reading these theoretical works. Some of them even insist that being interested in topics such as feminism, critical race theory, and queer theory is a sign of intellectualization, which is a “detriment” to clinical practice. Some analysts would even go further and argue that reading is an intellectualization, which is a sign of pathology because to engage in it “too much” is a defense against one’s own feelings and internal thought process. During three years of training, I encountered many analysts who were supposed to be teaching psychoanalytic theory, but could not read or teach well. Therefore, when they faced a difficulty, instead of teaching the texts, they switched their focus to talking about “clinical materials” in lieu of focusing on the materials they were supposed to teach. When I was asked to share my thoughts of the training thus far, I shared my concern that the quality of teaching needed to improve so that the educational needs of the candidates would get met. In retrospect, I now

understand that this comment was taken to be an attack, rather than a constructive criticism.

The oral examination was meant to assess the candidate's readiness to begin seeing patients in psychoanalysis, to see whether or not the candidate has worked through his or her internal issues in analysis enough to begin treating a patient who is seeking psychoanalytic treatment. The questions were usually very vague, "Tell me your experience of the training thus far. Were there any concerns or problems during your training? Tell me about your family background," and so forth. These are the questions candidates are normally asked to answer. However, in my oral exam, there was one question no one from my year except me had to answer. Toward the end of the interview, Dr. L. asked the following question: "So, do you think we are all racist?" I then remembered speaking about my experience training at the institute to the dean, Dr. K., her husband, in a private meeting.²¹ Obviously, the two had spoken about me prior to the oral exam. I remember saying to Dr. K. that having to answer questions such as "Where are you from?" and "What language do you speak," followed by comments about food or travel to Japan, China, or Korea was an uncomfortable experience. In graduate school, such questions were regarded as originating from essentialism; thus, they called for a

²¹ Edward Said defines Orientalism in the following way:

There were – and are—cultures and nations whose locations in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly. But the phenomenon of Orientalism as I study it here deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient.... The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony. Edward Said. *Orientalism*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 5.

critical intervention.²² However, I was no longer in graduate school – in the field of clinical psychoanalysis, to resist answering these questions was interpreted as a sign of hostility towards a friendly gesture coming from others who were “curious” to know who I was. I realized that in the clinical field of psychoanalysis, being an immigrant person of color meant to others that I had to allow them to racialize me – I was supposed to invite them to ask whatever questions they had about me. I became a raced subject though being the target of the members’ curiosity, yet simultaneously perceived as challenging the insularity of the institute, which has maintained resistance to inviting people of color to become members and candidates.²³ Although I tried not to let this problematic practice of racialization influence me, I began realizing that the knowledge I held from graduate school was of no use. I could explain my theoretical view, but no one understood what I was trying to explain, and eventually my gesture was regarded as a sign that I was transgressing by making people who were exhibiting friendly gestures towards me feel uncomfortable. This environment became my reality.

²² According to Diana Fuss, essentialists and constructionists are “most polarized around the issue of the relation between the social and the natural.” Fuss continues:

For the essentialist, the natural provides the raw material and determinative starting point for the practice and laws of the social. For example, sexual difference (the division into “male” and “female”) is taken as prior to social differences which are presumed to be mapped onto, *a posteriori*, the biological subject. For constructionist, the natural is itself positioned as a construction of the social. In this view, sexual difference is discursively produced, elaborated as an effect of the social rather than its *tabula rasa*, its prior object. Thus while the essentialist holds that the natural is repressed by the social, the constructionist maintains that the natural is *produced* by the social (3).

Diana Fuss. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*. New York: Routledge, 1989. (Author’s italicization.)

One of the significant differences between academic and clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis is that while academic practitioners of psychoanalysis take a constructionist position, most clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis, approach psychoanalysis from an essentialist position. However, there are many thoughtful clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis who have continued to taken a constructionist position.

²³ There were a few other people of color candidates within the institute at the time I entered training. However, they did not seem to challenge the ongoing problematic practice of racialization. Perhaps, they were trying to “blend in,” as opposed to challenge the members’ familiar practice. Some were able to do so because they see them as not people of color, but white.

While I learned to develop a critique of essentialism in graduate school, I suddenly became an Oriental at the institute. I was regarded as essentially different from others while my understanding clearly informed me that my difference was constructed and produced by the members of the institute. There was a specific hierarchy within the institute, broken into individuals who can say and do whatever they wished and those who become the target of curiosity, which was stemming from essentialism. Obviously, I became the latter, and the biggest “mistake” I made was to speak against my experience. The question, “So, do you think we were all racist?” probably came from one of the moments in which I spoke about the difficulty getting along with some of my classmates and psychoanalysts because they had this essentialist tendency. When I heard Dr. L. ask, “So, do you think we are all racist?” I understood the question to be a rhetorical question. However, my thought was: if I approach this question as a rhetorical question, I will probably fail the exam because they do not know that such a question might be motivated by racism. But, what would be the correct answer to this question? After a brief pause, I answered by saying, “No, I don’t think so.” I was aware of being dishonest; however, I assured myself that it was the best answer I could give at the moment. Dr. L. then asked me the following question: “So, how would you feel if you failed the exam. Would you feel it was because we are all racist?” This was said even after I said, “No, I don’t think so. I trust the Institute’s decision – whichever way the exam committee will decide, I understand it will be in my best interest.”

A week later I received a phone call at home at 11 PM from Dr. L. She said she had just returned from the meeting in which the members discussed my performance on the oral exam. On the phone she said I failed the exam. After a brief pause, I asked the

reason for my not passing the exam. She responded by saying: “We decided that you do not have what it takes to be a psychoanalyst.” Being stunned yet curious to know what the pronoun “it” signified, I asked her, “What do you mean by it? What is it that you are referring to?” She paused for a moment and said, “Psychoanalysis is such that it cannot be defined.” Dr. L. said that if I had more questions, I should contact Dr. K., the dean of training and her husband. The “it” that cannot be defined is the reason I did not pass the exam. Dr. L. was seemingly rushing to hang up the phone; thus, the conversation was ended abruptly. The next day I contacted Dr. K. as I was instructed.

In the following week I met with Dr. K. and one other person, the assistant dean, Dr. S., a different person (also a female analyst) from the one who was at the oral exam. I was asked to sit in front of them and Dr. S. began the meeting by saying that she had to say something very uncomfortable. She said, “Oh, it is so hard to say this, but we are aware that you thought we are all racist.” I was surprised by this comment – I could not understand the reason they were repeating this sentence. I responded by saying that not all analysts at the institute were racist, but I was afraid some did have the problem of not being able to see me beyond racial stereotypes. With such analysts, I found it difficult to develop professional relationships. Immediately after hearing my comment, Dr. K. said angrily that the institute had decided to expel me from the training. He said, “We want you to leave.” He then said that I needed to be in “personal analysis” and recommended that I not seek to become a psychoanalyst. I was asked not to return to my classes; however, if I wished to go one last time to say good-bye to my classmates, he would allow me to do so.

Although I do not know what Dr. L. meant when she said, “You don’t have what it takes to be a psychoanalyst,” the implicit message was that the members of the institute wished to expel me because they might have perceived my difference and different point of view as a sign of pathology. I also spoke about the need to incorporate the discussion and theorization of race into the teaching materials, which was taken as a threat, instead of a constructive criticism. The “it” in the sentence functions both as absence, concealing the reason for their decision to expel me, and surplus, allowing the reason to emerge among the members without having to describe it using language. The representatives from the institute saw me as the aggressive Other, who, through acting out, brought in a set of demands that they were unwilling to tolerate. They have viewed their institute as the space in which they can maintain their close-knit memberships while disavowing the reality that, as psychoanalysis grows, there will be others seeking psychoanalytic training, and those others will be different from them.²⁴

What I came to understand is that some members of this institute are ambivalent about this change – they see the need to expand their community yet act resistant toward it because for some, psychoanalysis and Jewish cultural tradition cannot be differentiated; thus, they see the need to keep their space as insular as possible. At the annual meeting of American Psychoanalytic Association on February 7th, 2006, Donald Moss presented a paper called, “Mapping Racism.” Moss argued that psychoanalysis has been indicating the “discipline-wide neglect of racism.” He argued that this tendency is equal to Freud’s “blunders regarding feminine psychology and the equation of homosexuality with

²⁴ This trend is not true for all institutes; however, what is true is that the majority of psychoanalysts are Jewish. Some institutes show tolerance and acceptance toward candidates who are non-Jewish and are people of color. After this experience, I was admitted to another IPA-affiliated institute where the members genuinely try to create an educational environment that is inclusive not only to people of color, but also to queer clinicians.

psychopathology.” Moss argued that this error has doomed psychoanalysis to a “hunkered down” and “parochial” institution of the “insider club,” in which white patients and analysts collude to deny the historical and racial facts, which are intrinsic to their own psychic reality.²⁵ His paper was received with much resistance. As a result, Dionne Powell, a discussant who was sitting on the panel with Moss, decided to write the following passage in order to validate his view:

Based on the questions and subsequent comments shared with me, what seems most thought provoking were my comments about race, racial stereotypes and implicit assumptions when the analyst and patient are of the same race. Some in the audience say that race is never a factor within their analysis where both analyst and patient are white. That it hasn’t and doesn’t come up. My question is how it could not? And I find myself puzzling over this question (57-58).

Although taking a sympathetic position with Moss, Powell produces a rather problematic assumption. What Powell means by white is Jewishness. She seems troubled by her patient’s automatic view that she sees Jewishness as whiteness, but she does not specifically say that. This dismissal suggests an assumption that the audience or reader will understand what she means by the statement because she is unconsciously aware that she is speaking to readers, of whom the majority are Jewish. In a subtle way, Powell is asking for sympathy from the audience or reader by expressing that unlike others, Jews should not be regarded as members of a white majority who are capable of racially discriminating against people of color. This is because they, too, have suffered religious persecution, which was another kind of racialization, and this experience makes them sensitive to the struggle of people of color who face racism every day.

²⁵ See, *Bulletin of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine: The Society of the Columbia Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research*. 39: (Spring 2006), 57-58.

Powell then immediately links racial difference with blackness, even though Moss's presentation includes the clinical example of a patient who is an Asian American. Her thought process suggests that one who is perceived as racially different or one who is going to be viewed as raced must be black. In other words, she is unable to regard that the perception of racial difference, as well as its negative effects, influence not just all people of color, but everyone. In the following, she is able to speak about the existence of "assumptions" her patients might make of her whiteness.

Especially in my work with African American patients, I've discovered that there are implicit assumptions often considered 'shared' cultural norms regarding race, family dynamics, perception of cultural events, and these are often regarded as 'facts,' known between the two of us. Subtle and active attempts to pressure me into colluding or agreeing with my patient's leitmotif become a part of the analytic dialogue. What I'm describing is that which is most familiar to my culture where the tendency is to regard this as 'conflict free' material.... Perhaps I wonder if we as analysts continue to carry the yoke of our Austrian past, in that our founders did not actively work with different races. I worry that our struggle to stay relevant within this multicultural society is hampered by our failure to embrace a widening scope not only in terms of the patients we treat but in how we view the entire practice (19).

While being troubled by the assumption her patients might make of her, she is unable to speak about the kind of assumptions she as a Jewish and white (not non-white) analyst might make of her African American patients. In other words, she is suggesting that the trouble she sees is not coming from herself, but from the assumptions her patients would make of her. Unfortunately, her reaction is a typical response from an analyst who cannot examine issues of race critically.²⁶ Powell's assumption is one of the ways in which racism within the clinical field of psychoanalysis manifests. She invites clinicians to widen their view on issues of racial difference through engaging in essentialism, but not

²⁶ Dionne R. Powell. "Re-Examining the Map: Afterthoughts from the Panel "Mapping Racism" Presented on February 7th, 2006" in *Bulletin of the Association for Psychoanalytic Medicine: The Society of the Columbia Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research*. 40: (Fall 2006), 19-20.

through understanding whiteness. With regard to psychoanalysts' resistance to treat people of color patients RoseMarie Pérez Foster says the following:

As psychoanalytically trained clinicians, we carry a secret shame. While being members of a field that prizes the value of all human life, and people's effort to realize their fullest potentials, analysts also know that they, in fact, touch a very narrow range of people.... Our hidden shame is that psychoanalysis has a very defined view of life and how it should be lived, and it is this perspective that determines who is to be treated, who is analyzable, who has adequate ego strength, who can meaningfully relate to objects, and who is capable of exploring his or her deep inner self. We see those who do not fit into our life program as "simple people" who have limited or narrow life goals, "poor people" who are too consumed with the reality-based problems of daily survival, or "foreign people" who come from alien cultures or alien neighborhoods and simply do not fit the picture of self-actualization as we define it in our psychoanalytic culture. The bold fact is that for the most part, we work best with those people who are most like us, the middle class and educated, who basically think and live the way we do....

In the last two decades, the American mental health field as a whole has been engaged in a great deal of self-criticism over the effectiveness of therapeutic services for poor and ethnically diverse groups (Abramowitz and Murray 1982, Atkinson 1985, Sue 1988). Criticism has focused on discriminatory practices directed towards the poor, therapists' lack of knowledge and understanding of the cultural contexts of their *ethnic patients*, and the inaccessibility of services available to the non-middle class. As a result, studies have uncovered therapist prejudice, clinical bias in diagnosis, and premature termination rates among non-middle-class patients (Sue 1988). Questions have been raised about the value of using psychodynamically oriented therapies with minority patients clinically described in some literature as lacking the ability to explore the meaning of their experiences.²⁷

Pérez Foster then calls for effective changes within the clinical field of psychoanalysis because the discussion of race and racism are still largely remaining a form of taboo. How can we promote effective changes within the clinical field of psychoanalysis in order to open up the discussion of race and racism? What kinds of discussion should we be having in order to transform psychoanalytic clinical practice to become more inclusive

²⁷ RoseMarie Pérez Foster. "What is a Multicultural Perspective for Psychoanalysis?" in *Reaching Across Boundaries of Culture and Class: Widening the Scope of Psychotherapy*. (New Jersey and London: Jason Aronson, Inc, 1996), pp. 3-4. (Italicization is mine.)

towards people of color? Although Pérez Foster accurately describes the climate of the clinical field and its resistance to inclusivity, her suggestion results in promoting essentialism, to engage in the discourse of cultural difference so as to attain further understanding of “ethnic patients,” but not to problematize the strong tendency towards essentialism inherent in the clinical practice.

Many psychoanalysts are unaware of the difference between engaging in essentialism and being attentive to difference that their patients will articulate. The former results in objectifying people of color so as to fit them into their fantasies, whereas the latter demands they become aware of their own prejudice so as to effectively work with the different points of view presented by their patients whose external environments may differ from their own. The analysts who are unaware of the difference between the two theoretical and clinical positions often use their “ethnic patients” and exoticize their narratives so as to engage in their fantasies while disregarding their patients’ reality for which they are seeking help. Such analysts often express that they regard the experience of working with patients of color gratifying because their patients can teach them about the exotic and foreign cultures that they are unable to “experience” otherwise. One of the most well regarded practitioners of this trend is Alan Roland, a Jewish psychoanalyst, who wrote a book based on his interest in the East and used his status as a Western psychoanalyst as the justification to define the specific culturally determined pathology from which Japanese and Indian patients are suffering.

Throughout his work he mentions the similarity between his Jewish background and that of Indian patients whom he met in his consultation rooms and while traveling to India (he speaks less about similarities with his Japanese patients and colleagues). This

attempt to equate his upbringing and those of his patients has largely to do with his wish to dedifferentiate Indian socio-cultural imagery so as to make it fit into his fantasy.

I realized that being Jewish was central to my understanding of the emotionality and relationships of the Indian extended family in Brooklyn, where innumerable relatives were living in close proximity to each other. I experienced from frequent visits a joint household and intimate, interdependent, extended family relationships, although my parents had already opted for the more individualized American mode of the nuclear family. I felt my Jewish roots have enabled me to be psychologically half way to India; nor was I surprised to learn that many of my Indian friends and colleagues, when they had studied in the United States, had mostly Jews as their close friends. The emotionality and intellectuality are at times strikingly similar (xv).²⁸

Elsewhere in his work, Roland questions the similarity between Indians and Jews as stemming from India's colonial history, which influenced the development of the so-called "Indian self" to closely resemble that of Western subjectivity. Roland argues that India's colonial past, which inevitably produced Westernization/modernization, made it easier for him to work with the patients and colleagues.²⁹

My access to the world of the Indian patients was particularly helped by the fact that of all Asian groups – far more than the urban Japanese I worked with – urban Indians such as these have been the most exposed to Westernizing influences through two centuries of British colonial rule, and since Independence through relatives in one Western country or another who visit home at least every other year. Although rooted within their Indian milieu and culture, these urban Indians have assimilated Western culture to a great extent both socially and psychologically. Firmly grounded in at least two Indian languages, they also speak and write fluent English – an English that has evolved along distinctly Indian lines. It was thus possible for an English-speaking Western psychoanalyst such as myself to conduct psychoanalytic therapy with them with only a minimum of language difficulties (xix).

²⁸ *In Search of Self in India and Japan: Toward a Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

²⁹ However, in mentioning this, Roland never questions whether or not his patients might have experienced difficulty working with him, a Westerner who is there to observe and analyze their difference.

While Roland's wish to dedifferentiate his Jewish upbringing and that of his Indian patients highlights the perverse nature of his practice, his approach towards Japanese patients appears as a classic case of Orientalism.³⁰ Throughout his work, as compared to his experience in India, Japan remains inaccessible to Roland due to the nation's monolingual educational system and the distinct socio-cultural expression, which regard the English language and Western lifestyle as foreign and unfamiliar. Roland perceives Japan's unique socio-cultural status or distance toward Westernization as difficult because it triggers his resistance to difference. For him Orientals are distant and useless, whereas colonized people are close, thus, useable and friendly. When working with Indian patients he was able to dedifferentiate the "Indian psyche" from his own, but he encounters difficulty doing so when working with Japanese patients; and faced with this "difficulty" he seeks to find a solution. His answer is to introduce the understanding of the "India psyche," which he attained from working with Indian patients while doing clinical work with Japanese patients.

I was relatively quickly attuned to the Japanese familial-group self, the psychosocial dimensions of Japanese hierarchical relationships, and the Japanese reactions to Westernization/modernization thanks to my prior work in India. The Indian experience also enabled me to see the Japanese from a perspective different from the usual comparison with Westerners (xxiii).

³⁰ In *Orientalism* Edward Said sees Orientalist in the following way:

For if it is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main circumstances of his actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second. And to be a European or an American in such a situation is by no means an inert fact. It meant and means being aware, however dimly, that one belongs to a power with definite interests in the Orient, and more important, that one belongs to a part of the earth with a definite history of involvement in the Orient almost since the time of Homer (11).

Roland's approach is largely founded on a problematic sociological and anthropological exploration based on Orientalism, not based on psychoanalytic theorization. However, in hoping to engage in psychoanalytic theory, he switches back and forth from his socio-historical observation to psychoanalytic inquiry. Due to his deep-rooted investment in Orientalism he does not see that the juxtaposition of India and Japan results in fetishizing his Indian and Japanese patients by turning them into the thing in order to fulfill his desire and that of his Western readers.

Roland's work exemplifies the attempt to incorporate the Other into the scene of psychoanalytic clinical work; however, ironically, it indicates his struggle with encountering difference. It is possible to regard that some psychoanalysts' resistance to difference and their wish to keep their environment insular speaks about the expression of unresolved past experience of trauma – the unresolved and haunting memories of anti-Semitism. Some psychoanalytic institutes, like the one to which I once belonged, have become an insular club into which only certain members are allowed to enter, and once admitted, they are the ones who hold the key to their club. Once the dean, Dr. K., said at a meeting that his job was to function as “the gate keeper” of the institute. This expression describes the moment when psychoanalysis meets ideology – some psychoanalysts cannot appreciate that Freud's work expresses the point of view of the Other, and such psychoanalysts have utilized and will keep utilizing psychoanalysis as a way to transform their status of being the Other to non-Other, while continuing to exclude those individuals who trigger their resistance to difference.

The comment, “So you think we are all racist” can also be interpreted in a number of ways. First of all, it is a vehemently enraged reaction of some analysts like Powell

because they believe Jews cannot be racist because they have experienced anti-Semitism. I have repeatedly heard this statement throughout my analytic training. This belief precludes any critical intervention of their behavior, keeping them forever locked in the fantasmatic space where their words, action, and behavior can never be examined from the perspective of the critique of hegemonic practices. (They/we are the majority within psychoanalytic practice, and such status guarantees certain privileges that refuse articulation.) Second of all, the pronoun “we” in the comment expresses the speaker’s attachment to whiteness, and the attachment is expressed in such a way that while marking it as a unique opinion, almost interchangeable to the first pronoun, “I,” the “we” delineates the presence of the community within which a belief, such as that Jews cannot be racist, is widely shared, and thus becomes powerful. In this sense, the pronoun, “we” functions in multiple problematic ways: it aims to conceal the presence of other members who do not share the same belief; it discredits and erases the existence of the members who openly speak against such belief; and it allows the manipulation of the belief, which most likely originated from one person’s point of view, by claiming it to be a commonly shared one in order to seek validation.

Seeking to maintain any the homogeneity of any particular educational space and holding the conviction that there is no need for the examination of racism are both found in perversion, because this view indicates the decision maker’s resistance to reality, in which all of us encounter and struggle with difference. The nature of racism is such that when we struggle with difference, the racist registers it with aggression and/or sexual impulses. Racism is put into practice because although we all experience aggressive and sexual impulses, some are allowed to externalize such libidinal expression against others,

and this privilege is attached to whiteness. In my case, the members of the institute have utilized the pronoun “it” to express their aggression and fulfill their wish to maintain their environment as insular, and by expelling me they have successfully demonstrated their power, which is attached to whiteness. Needless to say, while uttering the sentence, “You don’t have what it takes to be an analyst,” or the comment, “So you think we are all racist,” the members of the institute stopped acting like psychoanalysts, because these two statements suggest that they are unable to tolerate difference, or the different point of view that I articulated.

In a very odd way the way I was expelled was similar to the way I was admitted to the institute. For example, when I entered the institute, my name was omitted from the list of candidates; an Asian student who was doing the externship for her Ph.D. in clinical psychology and I often became one person rather than two different people according to the secretary and the clinic director; I was told I was smart because I was Asian, as compared to other minorities; and when I was finally expelled from the institute, my name and history were entirely erased out of the history of the institute. My thoughts about the practice of racism within the institute were accurate: the members of the institute did not even think of describing a definitive reason as to why they came to such a conclusion. To them I did not deserve one – just “it” would suffice. When Dr. L. said the word “it,” she was aware that its meaning had been collectively decided; however, while using the word to me, she conveniently concealed the collective meaning of the word. Dr. L. did not describe the definition of the word “it” to me because she was aware that doing so, or articulating how the members of the exam committee defined the word,

“it,” was not acceptable according to academic integrity and ethical standard. I never received a formal letter describing the reason the institute decided to expel me.

What I have described thus far is one example of the resistance to difference, manifesting in the educational space governed by one of the psychoanalytic clinical training institutes; however, such practice has always been a part of psychoanalysis.³¹ For example, until recently not only the non-medical practitioners of psychoanalysis were excluded from the membership in the IPA, but also women and gay/lesbian analysts have been made to suffer scrutiny due to ongoing gender discrimination. Ironically, the statement, “You don’t have what it takes to be a psychoanalyst” was uttered by a female analyst, which indicates the presence of unresolved past trauma associated with having to survive ongoing gender discrimination; the “it” in the statement can also be read as the lack associated with not having masculine gender (and not having a medical degree). The statement is an indication of her past unresolved trauma precisely because there is repetition of the anger and frustration associated with being treated as one suffering from lack. However, this time Dr. L. was no longer the one lacking – she transformed herself into the one who had the power in the presence of the Other, a woman of color.

The clinical field of psychoanalysis neglects not only the analysis of race, but also the ongoing rigorous analysis of gender and sexuality. In order for psychoanalysis to be a theory that encompasses difference, the analysis of race, gender, and sexuality must be fully integrated into the scene of psychoanalytic theory making. The practice of disavowing difference frequently emerges at the moment when the analysis of race, gender, and sexuality is most needed. And, this is the moment psychoanalysts have to

³¹ On this subject, see Jacques Lacan. “Excommunication” in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981 and Elisabeth Roudinesco: *Jacques Lacan*. Trans. by Barbara Bray. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

make a choice to analyze their own resistance. Dr. L. did not wish to describe her resistance to difference explicitly, but implicitly she has succeeded in doing so quite well. Not only did she demonstrate that the resistance is not only her unique personal struggle, but her husband also indicated that such difficulty exists within the institute as a form of collective pathology by utilizing the pronoun “we.”³²

The Split between Clinical and Academic Practices of Psychoanalysis

American psychoanalysis often conceptualizes the notion of what is internal in two ways, one is biological and the other is the result of the maternal care. And for some, the examination of the subject’s struggle with the external or social environment is superfluous because it does not address occurrences within the primary environment.

³²When the 9-11 attacks took place, New York City’s immigrant communities became the target of some New Yorkers who blamed what happened largely on Muslim religion. Many people of color who were “perceived” as Muslim or whose native lands were assumed to be the Middle East were attacked on the street, their stores were broken into and trashed, and their homes were spray-painted. While these incidents were taking place, the institute put together a conference in which to discuss the terrorism, not in the domestic context, meaning not focusing on what was happening in New York at the time, but to discuss terrorism in an international context. The discussions also focused on the clinical phenomena that addressed the patient’s experience of pain, but those discussions had very little to do with the aftermath of 9-11. The discussions often led to an agreement to increase awareness of the conflict between Israeli settlers and Palestinians. In other words, the organizers of the conference used 9-11 as an opportunity to speak about Israeli-Palestinian conflict and were very reluctant to engage in discussions that addressed the need that many people of color in New York were experiencing. See Muneer Ahmad, “Rage Shared by Law: Post-September 11 Racial Violence as Crime of Passion” *California Law Review*, October 2004; “In the Aftermath of the World Trade Center: Anti-Asian Backlash” by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York and New Jersey, 2002; and Deepa Iyer, “Community on the Front Lines: Pushing Back the Rising Tide of Anti-Immigrant Policy Since September 11th” in *The Subcontinental*, Issue 1:3 Autumn 2003.

The institute’s insensitivity towards issues of difference was again clearly pronounced in various other conferences that its members put together. In one of them, in 2003, one speaker was called to speak about Japanese and Korean mythologies in order to argue that such mythologies can become the bases for understanding the behavioral traits of Korean and Japanese peoples. This desire to speak for Japanese and Korean individuals is stemming from Orientalism, which is linked to the fantasy that in the “Orient” ethnic difference does not exist, or that the imagination of the desiring Western subject and the reality of the Asian Pacific Islanders are the same. At the conference no one challenged the speaker’s Orientalism. Furthermore, no one saw the problematic nature of equating the two nations, particularly due to the existing history of Japanese occupation period from 1910 to 1945 during which Japan colonized Korea. It is possible to argue that this attitude has the potential to prevent Asian Americans from entering into psychoanalytic treatment. And certainly Orientalism is an indication of an unexamined prejudice and stereotypes that exist in analysts who claim they have completed their own personal analysis.

They often regard that when the subject is unable to manage his or her external environment, it is often a sign that there was a failure in his or her primary environment. As Pérez Foster suggests, this argument often gets linked to the practice of pathologizing people of color, meaning, it is not their external environment that is making them ill, and what is making them ill is originating from within their primary environment. Or, if their primary environment is secure, they will not fall ill.³³ In other words, if people of color claim that their experiences are stemming from having to face racism, psychoanalysts often regard such statements as a sign of pathology. This is because they universalize the external environment and regard it as harsh for everyone regardless of their racial differences.

Despite the traditional psychoanalytic view of the environment, recent research that focuses on the correlation between racial discrimination and stress consistently demonstrates the finding that people of color and whites view the external environment differently based on their experience of racial discrimination. The research also adds one more interesting factor: when encountering racism and other stressors from the external environment, people of color handle it much better than whites.³⁴ For example, David R. Williams et al. suggest that although blacks are more exposed to adverse risk factors, the stress from the external environment affects the health of whites more. Williams et al. conclude that blacks handle stress with greater emotional flexibility, which may create an opportunity for more rapid recovery. They indicate that this finding sheds light on an important question: if stress has an adverse effect on health and blacks cope with stress

³³ This argument simultaneously links itself to the message that there is no racism. If one is delineating the existence of racism, he or she will be perceived as suffering from his or her internal issues.

³⁴ For example, see Arline T. Geronimus "The Weathering Hypothesis and the Health of African-American Women and Infants" in *Ethnicity and Disease*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp, 207-221 and Ronald. C. Kessler. "Stress, Social Status, and Psychological Distress" (1979). *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 20, 259-273.

better than whites, then why is the health status of blacks worse than whites? Williams et al. argue that although blacks handle stress better, their coping mechanism only functions as a temporary measure. In fact, the cumulative effects of high exposure to racism, and the stress that comes with it will create a heavy physical toll and make them more vulnerable to a wide range of illnesses.³⁵

It does not require further explanation that the traditional psychoanalytic view of the external environment, which suggests that it is equally stressful to everyone, not only has created a negative effect on people of color, but has also adversely influenced the view of women. This view of equally stressful environment leads to women being described as susceptible to illness because their biology prevents them from developing an adequate superego.³⁶ This argument has now long been debated and remedied.³⁷ And in the same way that the view of women has been challenged, the negative assumptions towards people of color and their expression of struggle must be deconstructed and depathologized. A step in this direction is the research finding suggesting that blacks tolerate stress better than whites. What this means is that when they (and also other people of color) speak about the experience of racial discrimination, their words and actions must be taken into account because they are not sharing their fantasmatic and paranoid view, but they are speaking about their realistic experience. To prove sexism in Freud's work is obvious and explicit. On the other hand, racism, and the racist tendencies that exist within psychoanalytic practice are more implicit and covert. When an argument

³⁵ David R. Williams et al. "Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socio-economic Status, Stress and Discrimination" in *Journal of Health Psychology*. Vol. 2(3) 335-351.

³⁶ "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924), *SE.*, 19.

³⁷ With the work of Judith Butler, Nancy Chodorow, Helen Cixous, Diana Fuss, Luce Irigaray, Juliet Mitchell, and Jacqueline Rose to name a few, Freud's sexism was articulated and his lack of understanding the effect of feminization –what makes women susceptible to illness is the assignment of feminine gender, which sends the message of prohibition and consequences of transgressing from hegemonic order.

is explicit, then one can proceed to illustrate the damage such a statement will create.

However, when an argument is only implicit and covert, then one has the added burden of proving and demonstrating its existence, then arguing why it needs to be regarded as harmful. The articulation of the practice of racism falls under this task, and often the work will encounter resistance because the practitioners do not want to give up their familiar pattern of using people of color as the thing to attain gratification.

In the United States, psychoanalysis has been taught and practiced in two different ways. The academic field utilized psychoanalysis for an investigative method to critique the demands of the external environment in order to examine the effect of ideology and hegemony upon the body and mind, and what connects the two, according to Freudian theory, is sexuality. In other words, the academic field of psychoanalysis has consistently demonstrated that both ideology and hegemony affect psychosexual development. On the other hand, as I have argued thus far, the clinical field of psychoanalysis defines the notion of external environment to be wholly deriving from that of the primary environment, the dyadic space between the mother and child, while ignoring the influence of ideology upon the creation and maintenance of such space, which will inevitably create an impact on psychosexual development. What needs to be articulated is the rationale behind the existence and maintenance of this split. In other words, what can we discover if we are to analyze the nature of the splitting, what has taken place in the field of psychoanalysis in the United States, using psychoanalysis? The clinical practitioner's reluctance to engage in the examination of ideology and hegemony stems from the theoretical stance which questions what kind of "environment" is worthy of psychoanalytic examination. For example, this debate invokes the question of whether

or not the examination of the societal environment should be regarded as an important subject for a psychoanalytic inquiry. Within humanities and the social sciences, the answer to this debate is definitively yes; however, in the clinical field of psychoanalysis, the question is almost always foreclosed upon.³⁸ Some analysts recognize it as an important task for the future, and others disregard it completely by arguing that the work does not have clinical relevance.

The split between academic and clinical practices of psychoanalysis was created so as to privilege the clinical practice of psychoanalysis. In the United States, Freudian theory was originally taught in medical schools. It was a discipline that was only available to physicians, although Freud spoke about the importance of making his theory available to everyone who was interested. This trend limits the future development of psychoanalytic theory since it excludes many theoreticians who are not interested in becoming physicians. In the end, the academic field largely accommodated the need for those theorists interested in learning about Freudian theory and found their method of practice in reading, writing, and teaching about psychoanalysis. Therefore, it is possible to say that in the United States, the privilege to practice psychoanalysis was given to a certain group of people, and the members of such a group, largely physicians, defined the notions of normalcy and abnormality according to their own socio/cultural imaginary.

³⁸ Although clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis are resistant to engage with the works coming from academic fields of psychoanalysis, the attempt to link psychoanalysis with theories of gender, sexuality, and race has consistently been made in the humanities and social sciences, as well as in interdisciplinary departments. See for example, Gwen Bergner. *Taboo Subject: Race, Sex, and Psychoanalysis*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005; Simon Clarke. *Social Theory, Psychoanalysis and Racism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; Ranjana Khanna. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003; Joel Kovel. *White Racism: A Psychohistory*. New York: Pantheon, 1971. *Psychoanalysis of Race*. Ed. by Christopher Lane. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998; *Psychoanalysis in Context: Path Between Theory and Modern Culture*. Ed. by Anthony Elliott and Stephen Frosh. New York and London: Routledge, 1995; and Jean Walton. *Race, Psychoanalysis, Sexual Difference: Fair Sex, Savage Dreams*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002.

This is one of the reasons examinations of race, gender, and sexuality have not been carried out from a critical point of view. The ones who are interested in carrying out such examinations are often regarded as transgressing the psychoanalytic tradition, since to do so would require the clinician to pay attention to issues that exist outside the familiar discourse of the primary environment. By not doing something that is unfamiliar, or by not paying attention to the effect of ideology and hegemony, clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis sought to limit the membership to their group to mostly white, upper-middle class physicians. As a result, psychoanalysis has become a treatment method for those who are able to afford it, and, with few exceptions, one in which people of color rarely enter psychoanalysts' consultation rooms.³⁹

If clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis are not trained to understand the impact of ideology and hegemony, how are they able to understand the struggle of people of color? People of color's day-to-day existences consist of encountering a different set of difficulties that are not experienced by white psychoanalysts. If they are refusing to engage in feminism, critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and queer theory, how are white psychoanalysts able to understand what their patients of color communicate in their consultation rooms? The answer to this question is not always approached from the perspective shared by the notion of widening the scope of psychoanalytic practice.⁴⁰ The

³⁹ The tendency is to try to limit their hour to those patients who are not difficult, meaning some analysts openly discuss their reluctance to take patients who require additional work and are unable to pay their regular fee. Psychoanalysis is expensive and time consuming. Some analysts charge over \$200 per session, which means the patient will be required to pay at least \$800 a week. Who is able to afford such expensive treatment? Often psychoanalysts regard the subject's insufficient financial circumstances as a sign of symptoms. For example if he or she is unable to make money or complains about his or her external environment as hindering him or her from doing so, then it is a sign that he or she has not developed sufficient ego.

⁴⁰ Leo Stone first introduced the concept of the widening scope of psychoanalysis in 1954. In his paper, "The Widening Scope of Indications for Psychoanalysis," Stone argues that, although Freudian theory and technique emphasized the treatment of neurotic patients and the presence of the reliable ego as the measure

clinical practitioners cannot be resistant towards engaging in theoretical works that are coming from the academic fields.

To go back to the “it,” in the statement that I did not have what it takes to be a psychoanalyst, the “it” also refers to the idea that the ways in which I formulated my interests were not “clinical” in nature since I spoke about the importance of utilizing psychoanalysis to critique the negative effect of ideology and hegemony. It is my conviction that psychoanalytic examination of race and racism is one of the ways in which the split that has existed in the two fields of psychoanalysis can be brought together, because it demands the articulation of the effect of ideology and hegemony upon psychosexual development. The examination of race will have an important role in the evolution of psychoanalytic theory, which requires the theorization of the resistance to difference. Therefore, to link issues of race with psychoanalytic theorization is one way of returning to Freud’s work or reconnecting with the principle of psychoanalytic theory, which suggests that tolerance towards difference not only constructs the mind, it is the expression of the life instinct against the perpetual pull towards inertia instigated by the death instinct. Perversion is a failed attempt to answer the question of how to avoid the conflict between the internal and external demands. However, the conflict (or difference) cannot be avoided in reality; thus, if the subject seeks to do so, the result will be to respond to the pull towards deadening inertia where the concept of self-preservation will no longer prevail. Although psychoanalysts are supposed to help patients who are suffering as a result of their automatic tendency to split the internal and external

of the development of transference, he was not rigid about the type of patients who would benefit from psychoanalytic treatment. Stone argues that as psychoanalytic research progresses, it is important to carry out Freud’s mission so as to expand his theory, which will hopefully benefit those patients who are traditionally regarded unsuitable for psychoanalytic treatment in the past. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. (1954): 2: 567-594.

demands, some of them also have the tendency to move towards this inertia by resisting the tension arising from encountering difference. Therefore, in order to avoid this perverse practice, psychoanalysis must accept the theoretical challenges that exist in the twenty-first century, instead of remaining in their familiar theoretical practice and retreating into their insular space where they maintain their fantasmatic belief that encountering difference can be avoided.

My dissertation is an attempt to offer a way to bring together the split between academic and clinical fields of psychoanalysis through reading literature. The first chapter of my dissertation is devoted to Franz Fanon, who treats psychoanalysis as a theory that can articulate the reason racism does not dissipate. When I offered my personal experience, I was working closely with Fanon's approach to use his personal encounter with racism as the basis to articulate psychoanalytic theory. Although Fanon read Freud and Lacan closely, he did not receive formal psychoanalytic training. In writing the chapter and with my experience in mind, I often wondered which institute he would have attended if he had chosen to seek psychoanalytic training. I also caught myself thinking whether or not he would experience the same struggle I encountered when seeking to regard psychoanalysis as a tool that could articulate the meaning and maintenance of the practice of racism. Racism, for Fanon, is the specific practice of transforming people of color from being the subject, with unique demands, needs, and desires, to the object, the thing. And as a result of being treated as the thing, people of color often experience abjection. Racism allows whites to attach the perception of otherness to people of color and use it as the basis from which to differentiate themselves. Fanon demonstrates that racism is needed in order for the white subject to carry out the

self-other differentiation process; more specifically, racism is what completes the process by which a person in the West becomes the white subject. Fanon argues that it is because of this reason racism does not dissipate.

The second and fourth chapters will examine the phenomenon of female perversion, which is a critical stance against the traditional Freudian claim that women do not experience castration fear because they do not have a penis, and since they do not experience castration fear they cannot develop perversion. The second chapter offers my reading of Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*, in which I will regard Orientalism as a form of perversion. The main character, Henry, is a second-generation Korean American, who is married to a white woman, Lelia. Through their marriage both Henry and Lelia try to use each other as a defense against encountering painful reality. For Henry such reality is encountering Orientalism, whereas for Lelia it is her fantasmatic conviction that she is suffering from lack. The one who forces Henry and Lelia to communicate, rather than use each other as the thing to defend against reality, is their son, Mitt. However, Mitt dies of suffocation on his 7th birthday. Mitt, who encompasses the integration of irreconcilable difference between Henry and Lelia, disappears from the earth, and this disappearance once again marks their difference as irreconcilable, which keeps them in their fantasmatic place where the meaning behind their interaction becomes, once again, the search to use each other as a defense against painful reality.

One of the ways the reader can notice Lelia's perversion is in her choice of occupation. She is a speech therapist; through her job she exhibits her English-speaking tongue to immigrant students of color. Lelia fantasmatically regards her tongue as a white phallus, and by flexing it to her immigrant students, she attempts to install the fantasmatic

conviction that acquiring the sound of perfect English will give them a white phallus with which they will be able to transform their status as immigrant of color to white naturalized Americans. Lelia's gesture indicates her fantasy of gender switching through her tongue that can enunciate perfect sounds; by showing her tongue to her immigrant students of color, Lelia seeks to transform her gender from that of lacking to that of having. In this sense, Lelia is a fetishist, who uses her students as the thing in order to carry out the fantasmatic process of gender switching. In doing so, she also seeks to disavow her knowledge that a tongue and a phallus are not the same bodily organ.

In the third chapter I offer a reading of James Baldwin's short story, "Going to Meet the Man." Baldwin illustrates the link between the justification of castration and the development of perversion in the main white character, Jesse. He suggests that the practice of racism instills irreparable scars in white participants of lynching, which come back in the form of perverse symptoms. Jesse's psychosexual development is significantly hindered when he watches the castration of African American man at a young age. Baldwin allows us to see that psychoanalysts' attempts to conceptualize the Oedipus complex as a solely psychic and fantasmatic phenomenon is precisely the site at which psychoanalysis emerges as a perverse practice. This is because this theoretical position indicates that psychoanalysts are resistant to incorporating the different ways in which African Americans have experienced the external environment. In other words, although for white Americans castration fear can be described as a form of fantasy, for African Americans it was a realistic occurrence that had to be feared. If Freudians have resisted incorporating this historical truth, then the theory of the Oedipus complex is developed based on a perverse logic. I thus argue that the theory of the Oedipus complex

requires a radical revision. This is because without such an attempt, not only will the link between psychoanalysis and perversion be inescapable, but also the articulation of the effect of racism will become impossible, which will, in the end, prevent the elucidation of the specific reality that people of color experience in the external world. Psychoanalysis will then become a practice that can only articulate the experience of certain individuals – it will end up excluding people of color from its practice both as practitioners and patients.

In the final chapter, I will offer my reading of J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*, in which I will articulate the link between the act of writing and perversion. Unlike Chang-rae Lee's character, Lelia, the main character in the story, Susan regards a pen as the phallus with which she, too, seeks to transform her feminine gender to masculine gender. Susan initially seeks to utilize a man of color, Friday, to facilitate this process. Then later she approaches a notable English writer, Mr. Foe, to translate her thoughts into a written work that can enter the world of the western canon. I will offer a close examination of the process Susan will facilitate, which begins from the perverse view of the writing to her becoming a feminine writer in her own right. This process can be described in three stages: Susan as a fetishist using Friday as the thing to conceal her lack of creativity; Susan as a pervert, who seeks to experience *jouissance* by having sex with Foe and believing that the act of copulation will give her the writerly phallus she has not possessed; and Susan as a writer, who arrives at the place where she realizes that her self-regard as lacking has an intrinsic link to hegemony, which has prohibited women from entering into the world of the Western canon. In other words, Susan will attain the knowledge that her lack is not associated with her body; instead, the notion is installed in

her by hegemony, which regards that the writing done by female authors will not enter the world of the western canon because they do not possess the writerly pen, the potent phallus.

I have noted previously that there is a strong link between psychoanalysis and religiosity. On this view, Lacan asks the following question:

I am not saying – though it would not be inconceivable – that the psycho-analytic community is a Church. Yet the question indubitably does arise – what is it in that community that is so reminiscent of religious practice?
(4)⁴¹

For Lacan, the unanalyzed link between psychoanalysis and religiosity not only allowed the executive members of the IPA to sustain intolerance towards the difference that emerged in his interpretation of Freudian theory and the application of his reading into clinical practice, it also resulted in weakening the link between psychoanalysis and science. This is because a religious view positions researchers to seek what they believe, as opposed to be surprised by the finding that they encounter. Lacan says: “In the religious register, the phrase is often used – *You would not seek me if you had not already found me*. The *already found* is already behind, but stricken by something like oblivion. Is it not, then, a complaisant, endless search that is then opened up?” (7)⁴²

⁴¹ Jacques Lacan. “Excommunication” in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981.

⁴² (The author’s italicization.) Between May 1961 and December 1963, a long series of negotiations took place at the IPA congress. The main participants of the debates were Wladimir Granoff and Serge Leclair for the Société française de philosophie (SEP) and Pierre Turquet for the committee. The negotiations addressed Lacan’s conceptualization of Freudian theory, which appeared significantly different from an Anglo-American interpretation of psychoanalysis. The negotiations concluded that Lacan and his pupils were to be excluded from the IPA. Lacan’s pupils provided the evidence of how effective Lacan’s practice was to Turquet – they wanted the IPA to recognize Lacan’s teaching, however, in a peculiar way, when the committee questioned about their own analysis with him they distanced themselves from the question. Lacan’s methods were not acceptable within the IPA standard. Elizabeth Roudinesco writes:

He [Lacan] made promises he did not keep; he exercised personal attraction over his patients, who were sometimes too servile toward him, sometimes too rebellious. In other words, Lacan was a “charismatic leader,” not an educational technician (249).

Although the link between religiosity and psychoanalysis may be important to some psychoanalysts, it weakened the link between psychoanalysis and science, as Lacan describes. However, the crucial issue at work is not so much of religiosity, but of a specific resistance, the resistance to change, which manifests in a form of resistance to difference, preventing psychoanalysts from learning about research findings in humanities and hindering diverse patients and candidates from entering into the clinical field. Perhaps, it is time to analyze why such resistance exists. This critical move will ensure that Freud's work will be read more attentively and vigorously, which will allow the elimination of the split between the two fields of psychoanalysis and widen the scope of psychoanalytic practice in the future by reintegrating tolerance to difference in psychoanalytic practice.

Lacan's exclusion was to take effect on October 31, 1963 at the latest. After 1964 the only groups that received the IPA affiliation were the Société psychoanalytique de Paris (SPP) and the Association psychoanalytique de France (APF), which was composed of the former members of the SFP. See Elisabeth Roudinesco. *Jacques Lacan* (252-59).

Chapter One

Is the Oedipus a Fetish? – Fanon Found and Lost: A Reading of *Black Skin, White Masks*

Before Frantz Fanon there was no theorist who sought to use psychoanalysis to illustrate the white Western subject's resistance to relinquishing racism.⁴³ Fanon also articulated the negative effects of racism upon people of color – as a result of the continuous existence of racism in the West, he emphasized that the psychic and environmental realities of black colonial subjects (and people of color living in the West) would be formed differently from those of white individuals. Fanon used his personal account, professional experience, as well as the works of Dominique O. Mannoni and Aimé Césaire in order to complete *Black Skin, White Masks*.⁴⁴ Fanon's writing began as a

⁴³ Aside from psychoanalytic texts, Fanon works closely with Hegel's examination of dialectical relationship between the master and bondsman, Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, and Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis of anti-Semitism, in order to develop this thesis. Particularly, throughout *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon consciously makes efforts to link racism specific to blacks with anti-Semitism. However, in doing so, the reader cannot help but to detect Fanon's disappointment toward psychoanalysts and other Jewish scholars who did not see the link between the discrimination against people of color and anti-Semitism. I will elaborate on this point later in the section, "Psychoanalysis and the Discourse on the Environment."

G. W. F. Hegel. "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage" in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. by A. V. Miller. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. by Colin Smith. London and New York: Routledge, 1962; and Jean-Paul Sartre. *Anti-Semite and Jew*. New York: Schocken Books, 1948.

⁴⁴ Franz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967. Dominique. O. Mannoni. *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*. New York: Praeger, 1964. Aimé Césaire. *Esclavage et Colonization*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948; *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956; *Discours sur le Colonialisme*. Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956. Before graduating from medical school, Fanon worked at Vinatier Psychiatric Hospital, and after, at the Saint-Ylié Hospital located in a town called Dôle, 150 kilometers north of Lyon. Fanon was interested in the development of psychiatric illness from the perspective of analyzing the effect of social environment. However, social psychology was unknown and there was no presence of psychoanalysts in Lyon. Thus, Fanon was unable to receive any clinical training in psychoanalysis. Although he read psychoanalytic texts widely, there was no indication that he sought a personal analysis, requiring daily sessions with a training analyst. Fanon's knowledge of psychoanalysis was solely based on his reading, and it was only in 1952 he began acquiring basic clinical experience. David Macey. *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*. (New York: Picador, 2000), p. 135.

way to stress that the examination of the rationale behind racism and the effect of racism upon the development of psychic structure was an important project for the field of psychiatry. Fanon originally intended to submit *Black Skin, White Masks* as the dissertation he was required to write in order to qualify as a psychiatrist.⁴⁵ However, his request was outright rejected by his Professor, Dr. Jean Dechaume, who argued that it lacked academic and scientific integrity to stand as a dissertation for completing his medical training.⁴⁶ Dechaume's disapproval expressed the sentiment that analyzing the way in which racism influences the development of psychic structure is a project not worthy of the field of psychiatry.⁴⁷ Perhaps, one can argue that his disapproval was unique to the socio-historical climate of the 40s in Lyon, France. However, here in the United States, too, the examination of racism and its effects on the development of psychic structure, or more explicitly, the effect of racism upon the formation of the psychic reality specific to people of color, has not been theorized adequately within the clinical field of psychoanalysis. In other words, in a curious way, the clinical field of psychoanalysis has maintained a similar stance to the time in which Fanon was completing his medical training. The particular disinterest Fanon witnessed is not unique

⁴⁵ According to David Macey, Fanon started writing *Black Skin, White Masks* when he arrived in Lyon between 1945 and 1946. He left Martinique and went directly to Paris. His decision was to study dentistry; however, after arriving in Paris, he quickly decided to leave because he was disturbed by the behavior of black colonial subjects, who refused to acknowledge that they were neither white nor French. He began seeing their identification to whiteness as perverse, which made him feel isolated and alone because he was not able to relate to them, nor to agree with their chosen existential status. This experience of alienation influenced his decision to leave Paris. He chose to go to Lyon because there were fewer black colonial subjects there. He chose medicine, not dentistry, as his subject of study.

⁴⁶ Macey, p. 138.

⁴⁷ Fanon is thinking of whites when he is exploring the link between racism and the process of subject formation. The teaching of psychiatry was dominated by Jean Dechaume, who was interested in examining the mind solely on the basis of "psychosurgery, neuropsychiatry and neurology." Dechaume lost an arm in the First World War, but he directed the surgical team every morning. In Lyon, the field of psychiatry was dominated by an "organicist and neuropsychiatric approach to both diagnosis and treatment: patients suffering from anxiety were treated with ECT, which is more normally used to treat depression." *Ibid.*, p. 135.

to the field of psychiatry in France in the '40s; it is a phenomenon that stubbornly exists in the clinical field of psychoanalysis today in the United States, where psychoanalysts are still resistant to analyze the effect of hegemony; as a result, issues of race are still pushed out of the consciousness of the practitioners, who would argue, as Dechaume did, that the examination of the construction of race and the practice of racism is not a topic worthy of psychoanalytic investigation.⁴⁸ Despite Dechaume's disapproval, Fanon did not stop writing *Black Skin, White Masks*, and he painstakingly analyzed the function of racism. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that the white subject uses racism in order to fulfill his or her unresolved infantile wishes, which stem from the failure to attain resolution of the Oedipus complex. And, as a result, the white subject uses people of color as the object, the thing, to which he or she will externalize infantile aggressive and erotic wishes. Racism for Fanon is the specific practice of transforming people of color from being the subject with unique demands, needs, and desires to the object, the thing. This argument immediately highlights the existence of the dialectic relationship: the white man and white woman are the ones who facilitate this act, and people of color are the ones who are prohibited from transgressing by becoming other than the target of aggression and erotic wishes – they will be the thing, they will be the Other.

According to Fanon, this specific dialectic relationship between the white man and white woman, and people of color has been kept and preserved for a long time. Aside from using people of color for the discharge of infantile aggression and erotic wishes, racism has one other function: it allows whites to attach the perception of otherness to people of color and use it as the basis from which to differentiate themselves. Fanon

⁴⁸ Further discussion of this point will be offered in the following section.

argues that this is the foundation on which Western white subjectivity gets established. The use of otherness that facilitates self-other differentiation is the moment when the Western subject is formed, which then becomes synonymous with the notion of white subjectivity.⁴⁹ In other words, the whiteness demands the prolongation of racism because without people of color as the Other, the ego of the white man and woman cannot be maintained. This argument, indeed, shows an affinity to the Hegelian argument that what holds the ego of white individuals together is the person of color:

The lord relates himself mediately to the bondsman through a being [a thing] that is independent, for it is just this which holds the bondsman in bondage; it is his chain from which he could not break free in the struggle, thus proving himself to be dependent, to possess his independence in thinghood. But the lord is the power over this thing, for he proved in the struggle that it is something merely negative; since he is the power over this thing and this again is the power over the other [the bondsman], it follows that he holds the other in subjection (115).⁵⁰

White individuals resist relinquishing racism because without it, without the presence of people of color, they will no longer know how to exist in the external environment.

Although Fanon is correct in believing that psychoanalysis offers an important tool for understanding the meaning behind the creation and maintenance of racism, as well as the reason that whiteness demands the existence of people of color, his use of psychoanalytic theory requires a critical attention to detail, because his rhetorical style, since it has the tendency to appear overly concrete at times, hinders him from fully explicating his ideas. Fanon uses psychoanalysis to indicate that racism is, indeed, a compromise formation that emerges out of the white man and woman's need to satisfy two forms of demand: one coming from the internal libidinal drive, which seeks

⁴⁹ I will return to this concept of self-other differentiation later in this chapter when I discuss Melanie Klein's work in the section, "Fanon on Femininity."

⁵⁰ G.W. F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

instantaneous gratification based on the pleasure principle, and the other coming from the external world, which insists on the delay in the attainment of libidinal satisfaction.⁵¹

Following this view, it is possible to postulate that racism is a form of malfunctioning secondary process.⁵²

Although Fanon's theoretical approach is extremely seductive, his effort to integrate psychoanalytic theory with Hegelian theory, especially his analysis of the dialectic relationship between the white man and black man, often demonstrates rather ineffective results due to his analysis of the Oedipus complex producing a rather hasty theoretical frame and conclusion.⁵³ For example, when Fanon insists that whites' tendency to utilize racism is stemming from unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex, he does not explain why the Oedipus complex is the stage in which racism gets concretized. His theoretical attention does not extend beyond the analysis of the dialectic relationship, when it would have been beneficial if he were to focus more consistently on the notion of difference through approaching the theory of not only the Oedipus complex but also primary narcissism.⁵⁴ For example, it would have been useful to delineate the

⁵¹ This idea is closely connected to Freud's conceptualization of the unpleasure-pleasure principle and his understanding of pleasure versus reality principle. Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). *S.E.*, 18.

⁵² Jacob Arlow and Charles Brenner argue that one of the characteristics of the primary process is the drive's tendency to press toward rapid discharge when the tension is noted as unpleasure. The cessation of tension is then experienced as pleasure. Arlow and Brenner argue that the primary process seeks to attain the cathexis of drive discharge according to the pleasure principle, not the reality principle. The primary process is closely connected to the unconscious; thus, the subject is often unaware of such instinctual pull. However, the secondary process describes the more mature mental process, which includes the capacity to tolerate frustration. It indicates the mind's capacity to "delay, modify, tone down, or oppose the discharge of the drive cathexis," and this process is facilitated by the preconscious. Jacob Arlow and Charles Brenner. *Psychoanalytic Concepts and the Structural Theory*. (New York: International University Press, 1964), pp.85-6.

⁵³ When Fanon introduces the notion of dialectic relationship, he is specifically thinking of the relationship between the white man and the black man. Further analysis of this point will be offered in the following section.

⁵⁴ Although the Oedipus complex is viewed as the stage in which the installment of the superego gets accomplished, I am working with Loewald's notion that the establishment of the superego occurs

connection between the Oedipus phase and the primary narcissistic stage: the Oedipus phase as the stage that takes place after the primary narcissistic stage where the concept of self-other, or me and mother, is still undifferentiated. Linking of the two developmental phases is important precisely because it offers the understanding that the child's learning to put a stop to his or her way of attaining libidinal gratification by using the mother is a gradual process. After the Oedipus period, the child will be able to maintain his or her status as being differentiated from his or her mother, and based on this advanced and internalized sense, he or she will begin forming identification with his or her same-sex parent.⁵⁵

If one is to apply this psychoanalytic point of view to understanding the formation of racism, it could be argued that when the white subject's unwillingness or difficulty associated with racial difference is noted, then such affective experience can be conceptualized as resulting from the unsuccessful resolution of both the pre-Oedipus and the Oedipus phase. Or, simultaneously, it could also be theorized that such difficulty is stemming from his or her unresolved pre-Oedipal issues associated with self-other differentiation. In other words, the Oedipus phase is not one concrete stage – it is a historicizing moment that includes aspects of the earlier phases in which the child began internalizing (and also resistant to internalizing) various ways of attaining libidinal

concurrently with the establishment of the ego. Further analysis of this point will be offered in the following section when I introduce post-Freudian notions of the Oedipus complex. See Hans Loewald. "On Internalization" in *The Essential Loewald: Collected Papers and Monographs*. Maryland: University Publishing Group, 2000.

⁵⁵ Freud believes that if the male child is able to form identification with his father and the female child is able to form identification with her mother, then this result can be seen as a successful resolution of the Oedipus complex. However, if the opposite is noted, meaning, if a male child forms identification with his mother and the female child identifies with her father in order to seek gratification of erotic and libidinal wishes, then he calls it the negative (or passive) resolution of the Oedipus complex. For him, this is the formation of homosexual object choice. See, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905). *S.E.*, 8, and "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924). *S.E.*, 19.

fulfillment by moving further away from primary process to increasingly utilizing the secondary process facilitated by the reality principle. When there is failure to attain resolution of Oedipal issues, the development of the ego will be hindered and the installment of the superego cannot be facilitated, which makes it difficult for the child to move away from the pleasure principle and begin utilizing the reality principle. As a result, the unresolved aggressive and/or erotic wishes will remain, seeking a moment for instantaneous release. Racism then allows the subject to prolong his or her investment in the pleasure-unpleasure principle, rather than pushing him or her to work towards internalizing the reality principle. In short, racism is a form of unpleasure-pleasure principle since it allows a way to attain the elimination of tension by first sensing the elevation of tension (unpleasure) by engaging in the gazing of racial difference, and then seeking to reduce the tension (pleasure) by first psychically producing the justification for harm to people of color and proceeding to externalize aggression or erotic wishes onto them.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Melanie Klein argues that the breast of the mother both gives and denies the attainment of gratification. Accordingly, the breast becomes “good” when it facilitates gratification and it becomes “evil” when it frustrates the infant due to lack of milk. Therefore, Klein argues that the prototype of what is felt as good becomes the prototype of good breast while the bad breast stands in for “everything evil and persecuting.” Klein argues that this happens because “the child turns his hatred against the denying or ‘bad’ breast, [and] he attributes to the breast itself all his own active hatred against it”; she calls this process projection. “Weaning” (1936) in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works: 1921-1945*. (New York: the Free Press, 1975), p. 291.

For Klein, projection is a process that allows the child to expel what is internally felt as evil or hateful out into the world. The child does so in order to preserve his or her own ego. Aggressions are then pushed out onto the objects that he or she perceives as dangerous. Although Klein would argue that the prototype of the object that creates aggression in the child is the breast, aggression can be externalized to any object the child perceives as harmful and dangerous. This argument is extremely useful in thinking about the reason racism does not get relinquished. It allows the subject who is experiencing aggression to expel it onto people of color. The Kleinian perspective suggests that projection is a primitive method utilized by children because it saves the ego from being bombarded by aggression. However, when it is utilized by adults, it can be seen as a form of psychotic symptom. One can see the display of aggression turned into the socially condoned adult behavior in the practice of lynching, which I strongly believe is a form of psychosis. Klein writes:

From the beginning the ego introjects objects ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ for both of which the mother’s breast is the prototype – for good objects when the child obtains it, and for bad ones when it fails

My reading suggests that Fanon's use of the Oedipus complex is more or less a socio-political statement, used as a rhetorical strategy to express the harmful effect of racism. His treatment of psychoanalytic theory - his choice of psychoanalytic language and concepts, for that matter - comes across as the language of a revolutionary, expressing his demand that the rationale behind racism, the utilization of people of color for the attainment of *jouissance*, must be stopped.⁵⁷ As a result of his rhetorical strategy, his theoretical analysis of the notion of difference both benefits and suffers from it. For example, his analysis of racial difference offers a critical link to psychoanalysis; however, when it is applied to an analysis of the notions of difference regarding gender discrimination and homosexuality, his argument becomes rather problematic. In other words, Fanon's articulations of the usage of racism and its resistance towards relinquishment are insightful; however, the reader is left with the impression that Fanon

him. But it is because the baby projects its own aggression onto these objects that it feels them to be 'bad' and not only in that they frustrate its desires: the child conceives of them as actually dangerous – persecutors whom it fears will devour it, scoop out the inside of its body, cut it into pieces, poison it – in short, compassing its destruction by all the means which sadism can devise. These imagos, which are a phantastically distorted picture of the real objects upon which they are based, become installed not only in the outside world but, by the process of incorporation, also within the ego. Hence, quite little children pass through anxiety-situations (and react to them with defense-mechanisms), the content of which is comparable to that of the psychoses of adults (262). Melanie Klein. "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive State" (1935) in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works: 1921-1945*. New York: the Free Press, 1975.

⁵⁷In discussing Fanon's next book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, David Macey expresses the following sentiment regarding Fanon's writing style:

The composite image of the 'Third World' that emerges from the book is in part a product of Fanon's relatively limited experience, of the circumstances in which it was composed and of Fanon's style of working. There is no indication of extensive or original research on his part. There are no statistics on the demography or the economy of his Third World. Political policies are discussed in very broad terms, and with little sense of detail. Fanon's tendency to generalize was now exacerbated by his material situation: he was dying and writing against a clock that was ticking faster and faster.... He writes on the basis of his own personal experience, but also as a seasoned political militant. He occasionally speaks as a prophet, and often writes as a psychiatrist who is intent upon analyzing the psychological effects of the colonial situation as he had been in *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Psychiatry can also be a fertile source of metaphors (470). David Macey. *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*.

does not apply his theory in the analysis of the other hegemonic constructs, specifically, the analysis of gender discrimination and homophobia.

While paying attention to Fanon's rhetorical strategy, it is important to further illustrate where his analysis of the notion of difference works and fails in articulating the reason psychoanalysis has resisted examining the function of racism. In order to accomplish this task, the theory of the Oedipus complex must be read entirely differently from the way Fanon suggests. I argue that racism must be conceptualized as not only limited to the subject's need to create a dialectic relationship, but, because the foundation of it is the phenomenon of self-other differentiation, it must also be thought of as a symptom specific to perversion. This is because the overt expression of Eros and/or aggression, whether it is experienced psychically or externalized in the form of actions, relies on the logic of perversion, and the extreme form of it can be seen in the formation of psychotic symptoms. It is because perverse logic stems from the subject's wish to disavow the existence of a reality in which moral and ethical values suggest that such behaviors should not be allowed and are unjust. In other words, it relies on the psychic process to push aside the existence of reality and to remain in fantasy where the concept of reality no longer creates an impact on the subject. In this sense, racism facilitates both an expression and the ideological template for the maintenance of the western subjectivity: when faced with the demand of the external environment (reality) whites use people of color in order to facilitate an escape into their fantasy.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon consistently argues that racism relies on the perception of difference. In other words, without utilizing the perception of racial difference as the justification, racism cannot be put into practice. However, the practice

of racism also requires the psychic process of disavowal – registration and repudiation of the awareness that to harm the Other based on the wish to attain *jouissance* is wrong.⁵⁸ In the worldview created by disavowal, the reality, or the shared awareness and opinion that inflicting harm on others is unjust, disappears. Therefore, in the psychic space created by disavowal, both time and shared awareness and opinion will be temporarily eliminated. What makes racism unique in Fanon's time and now is that this worldview - that it is wrong to harm the Other based on the perception of racial difference - can get eliminated because the Western hegemony silently and consistently encourages it. Although Fanon argues that racism is the expression of neurotic symptoms, which stems from the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex unique to the West, I argue that racism relies on the logic of perversion, and when it becomes extreme, it can manifest itself in the form of psychosis. Racism stems from perverse logic specifically because it requires the disavowal of reality, which is defined by the shared time, awareness, and opinion with others who remain always different from each other.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ I am using Alan Bass's notion of disavowal. He defines disavowal as the registration of unwanted information and repudiation of the information. More specifically, for Bass, the unwanted information the subject disavows is the existence of reality. However, for Freud, the unwanted information is the knowledge of the potential of castration, and the subject, a male, facilitates the act of getting rid of the knowledge through the process called splitting. Here Bass disagrees with the traditional Freudian view of the construction of fetishism. Bass argues that disavowal, getting rid of the existence of reality from the consciousness, is characteristic of fetishistic defenses. In other words, for the fetishist what he or she is registering and repudiating is the knowledge that there is an irrefutable difference between fantasy and reality. In other words, for Bass, the fetishistic defense is utilized not just by someone who regards feet as his sexual object in order to defend against the castration fear – it is employed by everyone. Bass says:

When Freud begins to conceptualize an intrinsic splitting of the ego in the process of defense such that there are always two contrary attitudes, he means the registration and repudiation of reality. Fetishism is simply a *perspicuous* example of a process that occurs in all psychopathological substitute formation (49).

In *Difference and Disavowal*. (Italicization is mine.)

⁵⁹ The subject suffering from perversion often rejects the concept of time as a signifier of reality. See Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937). *S.E.*, 23.

Psychoanalysts and Their Fetish: The Oedipus Complex and the Theory of Have and Have-not, Phallic Monism

In the beginning of Chapter Six of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that psychoanalysts neglected the analysis of the psychosexual development specific to people of color because they did not see that people of color experience the Oedipus complex. In exploring the reason behind the lack of interest, Fanon expresses a rather astounding conclusion: he believes the reason that psychoanalysts did not pay attention to people of color and their psychic reality was because they believed people of color did not go through the Oedipus stage, and he, too, agrees that whites are the only ones who go through the Oedipus phase. Ironically, Fanon's logic resembles that of the Oedipal child who categorizes the body according to the perception of having (with a penis) and not having (without a penis), but in this particular case, to have the Oedipus phase or not to have the Oedipus phase.⁶⁰ Before expressing his belief that Antilleans do not go through the Oedipus stage, Fanon firmly states his belief that the insight attained from psychoanalytic observation will articulate how "a man of color" sees the world.

Psychoanalytic schools have studied the neurotic reactions that arise among certain groups, in certain areas of civilization. In response to the requirements of dialectic, one should investigate the extent to which the conclusions of Freud or of Adler can be applied to the effort to understand the man of color's view of the world (141).

⁶⁰ This theory of the phallic monism describes the belief of a child, usually conceptualized as a boy child, that all human beings, including women, have a penis. But, the child believes that the woman has lost her penis because she sought to take her mother as her love object, and as a form of punishment her father castrated her. According to Janine Chassiquet-Smirgel, this belief fundamentally contradicts the wish to castrate women until at least the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. She defines phallic monism as a means of healing a part of the narcissistic injury that results from the child's feelings of helplessness. And because of the feelings associated with sexual maturation in particular, the child's sexuality becomes not just sexuality, but psychosexuality, which tries to resolve the impossibility associated with attaining incestuous infantile sexual wishes. *Creativity and Perversion*. (London: Free Association Books, 1985), pp. 46-54.

However, a few pages later, he expresses his disappointment toward Freud, Adler, and Jung. He says the reason he named his 6th Chapter “The Negro and Psychopathology” is because Freud, Adler, and Jung were not thinking of blacks in their works. He cites *Home of the Brave* as a reference and argues that the connection between psychoanalysis and issues concerning black people are examined insufficiently:⁶¹

There has been much talk of psychoanalysis in connection with the Negro. Distrusting the ways in which it might be applied, I have preferred to call this chapter “The Negro and Psychopathology,” well aware that Freud and Adler and even the cosmic Jung did not think of the Negro in all their investigations. And they were quite right not to have. It is too often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality. Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes (151).

Although Fanon points out that these three psychoanalysts were unable to see the link between psychoanalysis and the study of racism, he eventually produces a concrete response. Fanon strangely ends up forgiving Freud, Adler, and Jung and says that the Oedipus complex is a phenomenon specific to whites.⁶²

⁶¹ Fanon mentions in the footnote, “I am thinking here particularly of the United States. See for example, *Home of the Brave*.” However, he does not describe the reason he thinks the play failed to illustrate the way in which psychoanalytic theory can be used to describe the ontological status of people of color. Arthur Laurents. *Home of the Brave, a Play by Arthur Laurents*. Forward by Robert Garland. New York: Random House, 1946.

⁶² In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud links “primitive men,” who live outside of the Western moral, ethical, and familial structure, with neurotic patients in Western societies. Although he does not explicitly say it, for Freud, the Oedipus complex is the child’s reaction against the Western socio-cultural imaginary, which demands the need to maintain the restriction against incest. However, in the lives of “primitive people,” they do not internalize the incest taboo through the Oedipus complex – they learn it from totemic rituals and beliefs. In other words, for Freud, the Oedipus complex is strictly the process through which Western subjectivity is formed. However, throughout *Totem and Taboo* Freud argues that what connects the two groups of people is a strong conviction to dedifferentiate fantasy from reality. Freud also argues that what provokes the sense of guilt in neurotic patients comes from “psychic reality” and never “factual one.” He then says that neurotics prefer “psychical reality to factual reality and react just as seriously to thoughts as normal people to realities” (157). In sum, the commonality between “primitive men” and neurotics is that “in the former instance, too, psychical reality – as to the form taken by which we are in no doubt – coincided at the beginning with factual reality: that primitive men actually *did* what all the evidence shows that they intended to do” (161). (Author’s italicization.) In other words, the difference between the two groups is that Western subjects learn to repress restrictions through the Oedipus complex, but “primitive men” continue to live without fully integrating the restriction of incest taboo through castration fear. *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13). *S.E.*, 13.

Fanon's understanding and application of the theory of the Oedipus complex appears clearly problematical here because he is conceptualizing the Oedipus complex as a white phenomenon. For example, in the following paragraph, Fanon insists whereas all whites go through the Oedipus complex, 97 percent of the blacks in the French Antilles do not. At this point, Fanon turns his disappointment toward Freud, Adler, and Jung, who did not incorporate the examination of race, the effect of racism, and the analysis of the psychosexual development particular to people of color in their works, into his own theoretical frame:

Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes. It might be argued, as Malinowski contends, that the matriarchal structure is the only reason for its absence. But, putting aside the question whether the ethnologists are not so imbued with the complexes of their own civilization that they are compelled to try to find them duplicated in the people they study, it would be relatively easy for me to show that in the French Antilles 97 percent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves (152).

Should this paragraph be read as Fanon's desperate attempt to preserve the good faith of three analysts because he has firmly stated the usefulness of psychoanalytic theory in understanding the function and consequences of racism? Or, does he truly believe that this statement is true?⁶³

After having written the above paragraph, Fanon inserts the following disclaimer in the footnote attached to the paragraph: "On this point psychoanalysts will be reluctant to share my view." He then mentions Lacan who insists that the Oedipus complex is "abundant," thus, most likely that it occurs in a sphere not limited to the West (152). In order to differentiate his argument from that of Lacan, Fanon proceeds to define his

⁶³ See, for example, the previous paragraph taken from page 141 in which Fanon continues to regard psychoanalytic theory highly while being fully aware that three analysts, Freud, Adler, and Jung were not aware of the specific hegemonic structure that created pain and suffering for people of color.

understanding of the Oedipus complex. He indicates that the Oedipus complex is unique to the West, because it results from the failure of the moral values inherent in its cultural and socio-economic environment. He writes: “The collapse of moral values in France after the war was perhaps the result of the defeat of that moral being which the nation represented. We know what such traumatizations on the family level may produce” (152).

Fanon’s statement indicates that the Oedipus complex results directly from the collapse of moral and ethical values specific to the external environment in the West. In other words, for him, the external environment constructs family dynamics, which will influence the way each child receives care and nurturance. Therefore, for him, the external environment exists before the family environment, which shapes and forms the individual psyche. Should this statement be regarded as a different point of view from the traditional psychoanalytic view of the development of the mind? Fanon’s emphasis on the importance of the external environment upon the development of the mind is certainly a critique of the traditional psychoanalytic view of the external environment, which conflates two types of spaces: the primary environment created by the caretaker, the mother, and the socio-cultural environment that exists outside of the primary environment. However, although he shares this view of the environment, Fanon does not see Freud and Adler’s position critically. In other words, while noting that the traditional psychoanalytic view does not articulate the ways in which people of color experience the external environment differently, Fanon does not question why Freud and Adler failed to see this important fact.

Fanon dismisses one other important problem in psychoanalysis: he does not take a critical position toward the way in which Freud attempted to address issues of race,

which equated racial difference as a sign of primitive behavior, describing people of color as being driven by their primitive instincts in *Totem and Taboo*.⁶⁴ Fanon does not say anything about Freud's Eurocentric views when he offers his analysis of the function of totemic beliefs and their influence on the organization of taboos in the Native Peoples of the Americas and Australia. However, interestingly, the only analyst he critiques is Jung. Fanon argues that Jung's conceptualization of the "collective unconscious" offers nothing but a confused view, because it regards habits within a given culture as a form of instinctual expression:

Continuing to take stock of reality, endeavoring to ascertain the instant of symbolic crystallization, I very naturally found myself on the threshold of Jungian psychology. European civilization is characterized by the presence, at the heart of what Jung calls the collective unconscious, of an archetype: an expression of the bad instincts, of the darkness inherent in every ego, of the uncivilized savage, the Negro who slumbers in every white man. And Jung claims to have found in uncivilized people the same psychic structure that his diagram portrays. Personally, I think that Jung has deceived himself. Moreover, all the people that he has known –

⁶⁴In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud argues that there are similarities between "savages" and the Western subjects who are suffering from neurosis. Throughout *Totem and Taboo* Freud's argument is consistent: by understanding the behavioral traits of "savages" or "primitive people," psychoanalysis can learn greatly the "mental life of neurotic patients" (17). The difference between savages/primitive people and Western subjects suffering from neurosis is that savage/primitive people proceed to put their infantile belief system into practice whereas the Western subjects attempt to repress them:

It is no doubt true that the sharp contrast that we make between thinking and doing is absent in both of them. But neurotics are above all inhibited in their actions: with them the thought is a complete substitute for the deed. Primitive men, on the other hand, are uninhibited; thought passes directly into action. With them it is rather the deed that is a substitute for the thought (161).

Freud became interested in examining the behavior of so-called non-Western subjects after coming across Wundt and Jung's works. Freud writes in the Preface of *Totem and Taboo* that the four essays "Horror of Incest"; "Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence"; "Animism, Magic, Omnipotence of Thoughts"; and "Return of Totemism in Childhood" will offer the following:

They represent a first attempt on my part at applying the point of view and the finding of psychoanalysis to some unsolved problems of social psychology [*Völkerpsychologie*]. Thus, they offer a methodological contrast on the one hand to Wilhelm Wundt's extensive work, which applies the hypotheses and working methods of non-analytic psychology to the same purposes, and on the other hand to the writings of the Zurich school of psychoanalysis, which endeavours, on the contrary, to solve the problems of individual psychology. (Cf. Jung, 1912-1913.) I readily confess that it was from these two sources that I received the first stimulus for my own essays.... [These essays] seem to bridge the gap between students of such subjects as social anthropology, philosophy and folklore on the one hand, and psychoanalysis on the other. (viii)

Totem and Taboo.

whether the Pueblo Indians of Arizona or the Negroes of Kenya in British East Africa – have had more or less traumatic contact with the white man.... Jung locates the collective unconscious in the inherited cerebral matter. But the collective unconscious, without our having to fall back on the genes, is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group.... On this level one would have only to demonstrate that Jung has confused instinct and habit. In his view, in fact, the collective unconscious is bound up with the cerebral structure, the myths and archetypes are permanent engrams of the race. I hope I have shown that nothing of the sort is the case and that in fact the collective unconscious is cultural, which means acquired (187-8).

Just as he did in the case of Jung's conceptualization of collective unconscious, he can certainly regard Freud's argument in *Totem and Taboo* as motivated by the collective unconscious, which is an expression of "[t]he sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group," however, for a reason unknown, he refrains from doing so.

In addition, it is also interesting to note that Fanon does not call Jung's theory, psychoanalysis; instead, he calls it "psychology" (187). By not turning his critical attention on Freud or Adler, or showing his reservation to doing so, Fanon makes the reader wonder whether or not he wishes to maintain psychoanalytic theory as a grand theory that is not capable of producing an error. If so, such a belief points out the presence of fetishistic reasoning in his thought process. Is he doing so because he needs the fathers of psychoanalysis in order to embark on his scholarship? Fanon's position seems to suggest that Freud's and Adler's failure to incorporate issues of race should not be critiqued from the point of view of their own Eurocentric cultural bias, or from collective unconscious reasoning that predicates that the analysis of racism is not worthy of their attention.

According to Fanon's point of view, psychoanalysts are interested in theorizing the phenomenon of neurosis, the foundation of which stems from the failure to attain

resolution of the Oedipus complex. Fanon's interpretation of the Oedipus complex suggests that it takes place because of the failure of the moral values in the West, which results from the white man and woman's tendency to disavow their awareness that their identity depends on the practice of victimizing the Other. They are aware of their moral wrong inevitable in the practice of racism and feel guilty not being able to abandon it. The presence of guilt suggests the existence of the awareness of their wrong-doing and that the formation of aggressive thoughts or the externalization of aggression against another human being should not be permitted in their Western democratic society:

Another solution might be this: there is first of all a sadistic aggression toward the black man, followed by a guilt complex because of the sanction against such behavior by the democratic culture of the country in question. The aggression is tolerated by the Negro: whence masochism. But, I shall be told, your schema is invalid: It does not contain the elements of classic masochism. Perhaps, indeed, this situation is not classic. In any event, it is the only way in which to explain the masochistic behavior of the white man (177-178).⁶⁵

Fanon adds that since racism is played out in the open, people of color, the target of racism, do not have the time to "make it unconscious;" however, the experience of guilt suggests that the white man and woman can conduct a psychic retreat into the fantasmatic space where their awareness of immoral belief and behavior can be disavowed. He writes:

⁶⁵ According to Freud, masochism and sadism are "two classes" of instincts that go hand in hand; thus, one does not express itself without the other. He also connects masochism and sadism as expressions of death and life instincts.

The libido has the task of making the destroying instinct innocuous, and it fulfils the task by diverting that instinct to a great extent outwards.... The instinct is then called the destructive instinct, the instinct for mastery, or the will to power. A portion of the instinct is placed directly in the service of the sexual function, where it has an important part to play. This is sadism proper. Another portion does not share in this transposition outwards; it remains inside the orgasm and, with the help of the accompanying sexual excitation described above, becomes libidinally bound there. It is in this portion that we have to recognize the original, erotogenic masochism (164-5). In "Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924). *SE.*, 19.

Then there is the unconscious. Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to “make it unconscious.” The white man, on the other hand, succeeds in doing so to a certain extent, because a new element appears: guilt. The Negro’s inferiority or superiority complex or his feeling of equality is *conscious*. These feelings forever chill him. They make this drama. In him there is none of the affective amnesia characteristic of the typical neurosis (150).

Fanon does not mention that he has problems with Freud’s theoretical view of people of color; instead, without mentioning whose works he is referring to, he mentions that the theory that responsibly describes the psychosexual development of people of color, the one that does not categorize them as savage, genital, or primitive, does not exist. He then mentions that this outcome points to the fact that people of color’s psychosexual development has not been researched. It is because in order to do so, the researcher must articulate the hegemonic order of the West, which means that he or she has to uncover the unspeakable truth: the white man and woman depend on people of color to function as the Other so that they can maintain their ego and continue existing in their cultural imaginary (150-151). This statement may well be read as his critique on Freud; however Fanon does not say anything about whether or not this comment expresses his disappointment towards Freud’s work, *Totem and Taboo*. Although Fanon does not mention Freud explicitly, his arguments create a logical progression to the following thoughts: it is worthwhile to consider that psychoanalysts have not paid attention to the effect of racism because they are also a part of the social structure that maintains the Western hegemony.

Fanon regards the persistence of racism as an expression of the moral failure of the West, which in turn created the phenomenon of the Oedipus complex. The attainment of the working-through of the Oedipus complex is met with difficulty under the demands

of the Western hegemony, which insists on abandoning the libidinal cathexis based the pleasure principle and instead requires immediate response to the law and order of the external environment. As a result, the white man and woman continue using racism as a means to seek attainment of their unresolved sexual and aggressive wishes. Here is how Fanon defines racism as “collective catharsis” (145). First, he says that in every society there exists a channel or an outlet through which aggression can be released. One of the examples of such channels is children’s magazines or play. Fanon then argues that the magazines are put together by “white men for little white men” and “[i]n that magazine the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Sprit, the Bad man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians” (146). In attempting to define the “fixation” on violence and death on the part of American culture, Fanon, quoting G. Legman, notes the following:

There is still no answer to the question of whether [the] maniacal fixation on violence and death is the substitute for a forbidden sexuality or whether it does not rather serve the purpose of channeling, along a line left open by sexual censorship, both the child’s and the adult’s desire for aggression against the economic and social structure which, though with their entire consent, perverts them (147).

In the above passage, Fanon speaks about the white man and woman’s need to create the thing, turning people of color to the Other, in order to “pervert,” or redirect the libidinal cathexis into an accepted form of cultural practice, and aggression against people of color is an accepted form of cultural practice. And, according to Fanon, the members of the society who condone such catharsis are suffering from neurosis that results from the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex. Although he does not introduce the language of the ego or superego, following his argument it is also possible to add that in such a cultural context, there seems to exist a lack of sufficient ego and superego

structures; as a result, the members overtly externalize aggression and covertly express erotic wishes against the Other.

Fanon certainly begins his theorization of the Oedipus complex and its effect on whites in a rather provocative manner. However, his argument that the Oedipus complex is a product of Western civilization not only needs to be examined with critical attention, but it also requires additional explanation in order to fully understand why he arrives at this theoretical position. According to Freud, the Oedipus complex is the stage in which the child, whether boy or girl, encounters the necessity to separate from his or her primary love object, the mother. This stage takes place because the child recognizes the presence of the third figure, the father, who will appear as a threat to his or her attainment of libidinal fulfillment from the mother. For example, in “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” Freud argues that the Oedipus complex offers the male child two possible outcomes: active or passive resolution.⁶⁶ In an active Oedipus fantasy, the male child attempts to put himself in his father’s place in order to imagine having sexual intercourse with his mother as his father would. Freud regards this as the “masculine” (or active) position.⁶⁷ However, if the child sustains this fantasy, he will soon regard his father as an obstacle to fulfilling his wish. In a passive Oedipus fantasy, which Freud called the “feminine” position, instead of regarding his father as a threat, the male child will seek to take his mother’s place so as to be loved by his father

Generally speaking, at this stage of development children will have very vague notions of what constitutes satisfying sexual intercourse; however, Freud argues that

⁶⁶ Female children’s passage through the Oedipus phase will be discussed in the “Fanon on Femininity” section.

⁶⁷ “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” (176).

the male child will usually come to the conclusion that his penis has an important role in attaining sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, Freud mentions that when the male child comes across the perceptive knowledge of the female body, he often believes that she, too, used to possess a penis, but has lost it.⁶⁸ He then speculates about the cause of this terrible consequence. He uses this perceptive knowledge as “evidence” and concludes that castration can happen to him if he continues to hold on to his “masculine” inclination to regard his mother as his love object. In the child’s mind, a female child has lost a penis because she did something wrong, which means she did not give up her love for her mother; thus he, too, can lose it if he keeps regarding her as his father does, as his lover. Therefore, the child recognizes his wish, and senses that transforming his wish to an action will be considered doing “something wrong,” and this awareness gets further reaffirmed by his acknowledgement of the laws that govern his or her external world. This process explains the child’s stepping into the world of the cultural imaginary. He has to abandon his libidinal wish to take his mother as a love object because if he does not, he will face the terrible consequence of losing his penis.⁶⁹ In other words, a male child has to give up his love for his mother in order to save his own penis:

If the satisfaction of love in the field of the Oedipus complex is to cost the child his penis, a conflict is bound to arise between his narcissistic interest in that part of his body and the libidinal cathexis of his parental objects. In this conflict the first of these forces normally triumphs: the child’s ego turns away from the Oedipus complex (176).

⁶⁸ As I indicated earlier, this is the theory of phallic monism.

⁶⁹ Freud argues that the installment of the superego ends in a rather insufficient way for women because they do not experience castration fear the way boy children do. In saying so, Freud alludes to the idea that the psychic world of women is determined by lack, and because of it, they will become susceptible to neurosis. I will further address this problem in Chapter Three, “Invisibility and Not-Having: Tongue Twister and the Green Monster: A Reading of Chang-Rae Lee’s Native Speaker.”

For Freud, the notion of self-preservation for a little boy requires him to realize that he must turn away from the mother in order to save his penis. And the process of turning away from the Oedipus complex is initiated by the arrival of the latency period in which he will be required to work through and resolve his sexual interest in order to obtain the necessary socialization skills. However, Freud believes that the process of moving from the Oedipus period to the next developmental stage occurs in the never clearly distinguished “borderline” between pathological and normal.⁷⁰ For example, if the Oedipus complex has been repressed rather than resolved, pathological effects will result because the specific way the child handled the complex will persist in the unconscious, and later manifest in the form of symptoms.⁷¹ In other words, in order to pass through the Oedipus complex without leaving pathogenic traces, the child needs to work through it rather than repress his or her libidinal wishes that are attached to the primary object, the mother, and the perceptive knowledge of the consequences attached to sustaining such wishes.⁷² For Fanon, racism becomes a way for the white subject to prolong his or her infantile libidinal tie to the mother, a kind of tool that allows the maintenance of resistance to entering into the next developmental stage where the subject will recognize

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷¹ Hans Loewald writes the following in order to articulate the phenomena of the Oedipus phase. Specifically, he argues that the installation of the superego is not attained by the repression of the Oedipus complex. He argues that the transformation from the Oedipal stage to the following stage is facilitated by the process of internalization, which simultaneously initiates the formation of the ego structure:

In internalization, in contrast [to repression], the ego opens itself up, loosens its current organization to allow for its own further growth. Similarly, I submit that the formation of the superego, from the viewpoint of the ego, cannot be understood as a defense, successful or unsuccessful, against the Oedipus complex, or as a repression of it, but as something quite different.... I wish to make it clear that, while superego formation is a particularly accessible instance of internalization, internalization comprises much more than the formation of the superego; it is crucially involved in the formation of the ego (75).

“On Internalization” in *The Essential Loewald: Collected Papers and Monographs*.

⁷² In “Weaning of the Oedipus Complex” Loewald argues that the weaning from the Oedipus complex involves the psychic killing of the parent by the child. *Ibid.*

the existence of the external environment and its law and order, because the subject perceives that stepping out of the dyadic relationship and entering into the sphere of the cultural imaginary is too anxiety provoking.

Neurosis, Perversion, and Psychosis: The Function of Racism in the West

In addition to the argument that racism allows the utilization of people of color for the purpose of self-other differentiation process, based on which whites will develop their identity as the white Western subject, Fanon offers another critical insight: racism is gendered according to sexual difference. He argues that with racism the white woman seeks to attain the fulfillment of her repressed sexual wishes and the white man's investment in racism allows him to control aggression and the taboo against incestuous wishes. Fanon firmly states that the reason racism continues to exist is linked to the socio-cultural demand to restrain sexuality. In order to substantiate his argument, Fanon pays attention to the function of racism in two different perspectives. First, he views racism as a form of phobia (Negrophobia), which has its root in neurosis. Second, he regards racism as a form of much more severe psychopathology when it involves the practice of externalizing aggression in the form of physical violence. If such acts become extreme, they emerge as a psychotic symptom, an example of which is lynching.⁷³

⁷³ I will describe the specific link between aggression and sexual libido in my second chapter, which will examine James Baldwin's story, "Going to Meet the Man." I will demonstrate that lynching is linked to expression of sexual arousal, and the sadistic pleasure one attains from it is a form of *jouissance*. In arguing that racism is a form of perversion, it is important to recognize that it is so because the fantasy associated with the justification of committing violence against another human being stems from the disavowal of reality in which all men and women are created equal. The maintenance of the thought process that insists on inequality can be argued as stemming from perversion.

Although I view the practice of racism as stemming from the logic specific to perversion, Fanon sees the white woman's racism against black men as an expression of neurotic symptoms and that of the white man as resulting from a dialectic relationship involving a more severe form of psychopathology, Sadomasochism, which can turn into a form of psychotic break. In order to offer further analysis of the way gender difference affects the practice of racism, Fanon first situates the relationship between the white man and the black man and sees it strictly as a dialectical relationship. He then implies that this relationship is much more complicated than the simple expression of neurotic symptoms. It is because in Fanon's mind social relations are built amongst men, since women — both women of color and white — exist outside of the socio-economic sphere in which the negative influence of racism is most severe.⁷⁴ Having outlined thus, Fanon begins to describe Negrophobia specific to white women.

Fanon argues that Negrophobia originates when white women experience sexual arousal. However, they are not able to accept it as a part of life experience; therefore, they seek to displace it by making it into a phobic reaction.⁷⁵ Following this logic, Fanon argues that at the moment the white woman fears the black man, it is also the moment she desires the black man.⁷⁶ He argues that the white woman's sexual desire towards the black man is always over-determined, because in the Western cultural imaginary there

⁷⁴ This is where Fanon becomes concrete with regard to his analysis of gender; thus, he is being problematical. Although Fanon regards white women's phobic reaction as a form of racism, he does mention that white women are not free from experiencing aggression and externalizing it onto black men. However, their usage of aggression has a different function. According to Fanon, the way white women externalize aggression onto black men is connected to their view of their own masturbatory wishes. I will elaborate on this point further later in the section, "Fanon on Femininity."

⁷⁵ In the later section, "Fanon on Femininity," I will address his theory of aggression specific to white women.

⁷⁶ He mentions that the fear can sometimes develop right after they lose their husbands. This speaks about their inability to invest in a new object; thus, rather than being bombarded by their sexual drive, they begin developing the fear, and the fear, in this case, is the fear that is attached to black men.

exists an association between black men and genitalia, the signifier of potency and giver of delusional orgasm. Fanon shares a typical description of such sentiment in the following way:

“What do you expect, with all the freedom they have in their jungles! They copulate all the time and in all places. They are really genital. They have so many children that they cannot even count them. Be careful, or they will flood us with little mulattoes” (157).

This statement is an example of imagination at work. Fanon adds: “For the sexual potency of the Negro is hallucinating. Psychoanalysts who study the problem soon enough find the mechanisms of every neurotic. Sexual anxiety is predominant here” (157). In other words, racism relies on the psychic process of hallucination, a process that blurs the difference between perception and memory; a severe form of such symptoms is psychosis.⁷⁷

In order to explain why the white woman’s desire toward the black man expresses the sentiment, “sexual anxiety is predominant here,” Fanon offers his understanding of Freudian theory of phobia and argues that it results from the Oedipal phase of the psychosexual development. He mentions that phobia is an unequivocal expression of

⁷⁷ In perversion, a sense of reality is maintained, but simultaneously repudiated. And this maintenance and refusal is what allows the experience of pleasure in the subject. In other words, the subject is not completely disconnected from reality; however, the psychotic symptom is an example of the subject’s experiencing the loss of reality. According to Freud, the psychic process that produces dreams is hallucination. For Barry Opatow, dreams represent the mechanism of this precise process, but he says more specifically that in the dream one can see that the difference between perception and memories is repudiated. Opatow defines the primary process as hallucination and the secondary process as perception:

With the dream scene rendered inoperative in waking life, some compromise between hallucination and perception becomes necessary if the unconscious is to achieve actual fulfillment as an experience in reality. This formal compromise that is reached by the ego between perception and hallucination, between the dream scene and the external worlds, yields a phenomenological *illusion* (874-5).

Barry Opatow. “The Real Unconscious: Psychoanalysis as a Theory of Consciousness” in *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*. 45: (1997): 865-890. (Author’s italicization.) According to Alan Bass, this illusion is the disavowal of the difference between fantasy and reality intrinsic to fetishistic defense. See *Difference and Disavowal*.

sexuality – it describes the subject’s conflict regarding the experience of sexual pleasure. And since the subject is experiencing conflict, the attainment of *jouissance* will manifest in the form of the anxiety, which will then seek to simultaneously repress and grant the need for sexual fulfillment. Although Fanon sees women’s inability to experience sexual tension as stemming from the Oedipal phase, which is the expression of the self-preservative drive being split off from sexual drives, Freud sees that such splitting takes place in the oral phase of infantile sexuality when thumb sucking becomes a search for erotic stimulation independent of self-preservation. Therefore, such splitting is not a phenomenon specific to the Oedipal phase – it is a function that takes place specifically during the pre-Oedipal phase of development.⁷⁸ Therefore, if one is to follow Freudian theory, phobia is an expression of neurotic symptoms, because underneath a particular phobia there is the fear of the attainment of sexual gratification. As well, according to Freudian theory after 1926, anxiety is seen as the signal, alerting the subject to the emergence of the tension attached to sexual drive.⁷⁹ Therefore, Fanon would see that the white woman who is having Negrophobia would rather experience fear than be bombarded by expression of the sexual drive, which is constantly seeking fulfillment.⁸⁰

By linking phobia and racism Fanon makes a firm statement that racism is a form of sexual expression. He also argues that a specific rationale involving the formation of

⁷⁸ “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” (1915). *S.E.*, 14 and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

⁷⁹ *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926). *S.E.*, 20.

⁸⁰ I do not think that phobic expression discriminates gender. It is rather that phobia manifests in different way in all people. However, according to Fanon’s theoretical point of view, the subject of phobic expressions is strictly a woman, because her social context already forces her to inhibit her sexual expression.

phobia is not based on reality.⁸¹ A person may fear something that is completely benign and tame, such as a teddy bear or a piece of furniture; however, these objects trigger fear specifically because the fear is stemming from his or her fantasy, and such sentiment cannot be validated in reality. In order to substantiate this argument, Fanon first argues that Negrophobia works in the same manner – what becomes the foundation of such fear is not what is real but what is fantasized.⁸² The creation of a phobic object is subjective, but it relies on the principle that by utilizing the phobic object, the thing, and by focusing on the thing, the subject manages to escape the sexual drive seeking to attain fulfillment. Or it is also possible to say that by creating phobia the subject is seeking to experience sexual pleasure.⁸³

⁸¹ Here Fanon agrees with Freud that there is a link between neurosis and psychosis. Perversion is the experience of a temporary form of psychosis. See “The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis” (1924). *SE.*, 19.

⁸² Furthermore, for Freud what a phobic patient is afraid of is not a real object, but rather his or her own libido. The anxiety that is felt by a phobic patient is coming from an internal libidinal source and it is not consciously recognized. The phobic patient will transform the internally felt danger into an external one (or externalize his or her fear onto an object such as a teddy bear or a piece of furniture). Freud would describe such transformation as a process through which “a neurotic anxiety is changed into an apparently realistic one.” He uses an example of agoraphobia and says that what the agoraphobic patient is actually afraid of is not being out in the street, but feelings of temptation that are aroused in him or her by meeting people in the street. *New Introductory Lecture on Psychoanalysis* (1933). *SE.*, 22, p. 84.

⁸³ Lacan will call this experience *jouissance*, since it arrives vis-à-vis the attainment of pleasure that is not experienced by directly engaging in the activation of erotogenic zones by physical contact. Another example of *jouissance* is the pleasure that is attached to gaze and practice of gazing and being gazed at. Laura Mulvey connects Freud’s conceptualization of scopophilia and Lacan’s notion of the mirror stage, which explains the specific way in which visual pleasure is experienced. Mulvey argues that for Freud, scopophilia is one of the instinctive components that exists independent from the erotogenic zones. Within this context, the cinema allows the viewer to play on their voyeuristic fantasy by creating the illusion that he or she is looking inside of a private space. Mulvey further articulates that the position of the spectators in the cinema can also be described as a form of their repressed exhibitionism and projection of their repressed desire onto the performer. She then connects her argument with Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage.

For Lacan, an infant develops his or her mental image as perfect, complete, and happy, which is different from how he or she experiences the body. This psychological experience of being complete, perfect, and happy is important for the development of the ego. For Freud this phase is the primary narcissistic stage and for Lacan, the mirror stage. However, this process of recognition is misrecognition, *méconnaissance*, and it creates the gap between image and self-image, which becomes the long negotiation between love and despair, the home of desire. Mulvey sees the similarity between the mirror and the cinema screen. The cinema is the place where the audience members discharge the scopophilic desire, which seeks *jouissance* by forming identification with the “ego ideal” subject who is on the screen. The

However, what is unique about Negrophobia is that although it is constructed by perception, at a certain moment the view is transformed from what is private to what is public. In the following, Fanon describes such a moment, the moment when a child saw Fanon on the street. The child first experiences internal fear then expresses it to his mother:

“Look, a Negro!” It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.

“Look, a Negro!” It was true. It amused me.

“Look, a Negro!” The circle was drawing a bit tighter.

I made no secret of my amusement.

“Mama, see the Negro! I am frightened!” Frightened!

Fanon then expresses his reaction in the following way:

Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all historicity, which I had learned about from Jaspers. Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other... and the evanescent other, hostile but opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea (111-112).

This particular scene describes a painful truth: the child’s phobic reaction based on fantasy becomes reality. Fanon initially responds to the child’s reaction with laughter, an expression of the understanding that the fear shows the working of the child’s fantasy and thus should not be taken seriously. However, after the statement becomes a form of

cinema allows the pleasure of looking because it has the “structure of fascination strong enough to allow temporary loss of ego while simultaneously reinforcing it.” Laura Mulvey. *Visual and Other Pleasures*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), p. 18. Also see, Freud. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Jacques Lacan. “The Mirror State as Formative of the I function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” in *Ecris*. Trans. by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.

public opinion, his reaction changes drastically. Now, he realizes that the statement, “Mama, see the Negro! I am frightened!” is no longer functioning as a fantasmatic statement – it has transformed into a shared view, reality. It is possible to argue that the laughter indicates Fanon’s reaction to this painful experience, which he encounters with a sense of familiarity. In other words, the laughter indicates that he has previously experienced a similar circumstance, or been subjected to a comparable situation where he was unable to express anger, but felt the need to express his emotional state. In this sense, the laughter can be a form of compromise put to use when faced with the anticipation of aggressor who would punish him if he were to externalize his honest feelings, aggression. Fanon recognizes that he is unable to fight back; thus, he chooses laughter, which conceals pain while expressing his true sense of the experience, anger.

Mikhail Mikhailvoich Bakhtin defines this concept of masking frustration and anger against the state or authority with laughter, which is the central theme of carnival, with the term “carnavalesque.” According to Bakhtin, *carnavalesque* can be used to describe a historical phenomenon, particularly the carnival of medieval Europe where political, legal, societal, and ideological authorities are both enforced and challenged by the attendees of the event. In this sense, carnival is the place where the act of transgression was allowed, and with the laughter, the participants were able to also express their frustration and anger against the political climate as well as the ideology of the state.⁸⁴

Fanon then responds to the statement, “Look, a Negro” with an extraordinary observation – it takes him beyond his awareness of his body as black and transforms the

⁸⁴ Mikhail Mikhailvoich Bakhtin. *Rabelais and his World*. Bloomington Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984.

dual experience, as the subject who becomes the object for whites, into the triple ontological status. Fanon mentions, “I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other.” He became “the evanescent other, hostile but opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared,” and at this point he experiences nausea (111-12). After moving towards the other, he realizes his body disappearing, “transparent, not there,” and when this realization takes place, he becomes nauseous. When Fanon encounters racism, his experience of the external world suddenly shifts; the shift can be explained as the three-stage transformation from him being the subject, object, and abject exemplified by his experiencing of nausea. In *Power of Horror*, Julia Kristeva describes abjection in the following way:

The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-ject, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I.... [What is abject] draws me towards the place where meaning collapses.... A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing either. A “something” that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me (1-2).⁸⁵

Kristeva describes encountering the abject as an experience similar to one’s response to seeing objects such as feces, vomit, spasms, and corpses. These objects remind one of the impossibility of accessing the body, as well as emphasize the power given to the body,

⁸⁵ Julia Kristeva. *Power of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

which reminds him or her that the body functions independently of the mind.⁸⁶ In this way, Kristeva's definition of the abject is similar to both Freud's conceptualization of the death instinct and the Lacanian notion of the Real. The ego cannot handle experiencing the abject since it senses that doing so will diminish the power given to the mind. It is because the ego, until this moment, thought the mind played the key role in the formation of subjectivity, not the body (or the intersection of the body and mind, sexuality). The abject points to the power of the body, therefore, through abjection the psychic process which continues to blur the difference between fantasy and reality, or the mind and body, faces its ultimate truth: the existence of death. Encountering one's death creates paralysis then psychosis, but before such experience, the subject experiences — Fanon's word — nausea. For Fanon, the experience of encountering racism is much like encountering the abject — it brings people of color toward death, or it almost kills them each time because its function is to obliterate their subjectivities. As soon as racism is put to work, people of color will recognize the limit of their life instinct, their will to live, and face the absolute power of the death instinct, which seeks to pull them toward self-annihilation. Although racism's function is to reduce people of color to the thing, people of color's internal experience of going through objectification is experiencing it as abjection. Thus, for Fanon, every time whites seek to objectify people of color, people of color face death.

Racism depends on a process that transforms a fantasmatic idea into a realistic one through which a hateful sentiment that previously remained in secrecy can emerge into the public sphere. In order for racism to work, the inherent hegemonic structure that

⁸⁶ Or, as in case of neurosis, as well as for psychosis and perversion, the mind seeks to function independently from the body. In neurosis, the subject represses his or her recognition of the bodily needs that are linked to sexuality, which is a form of repressing the reality represented by the body. However, in psychosis, the subject's awareness of the reality vanishes, and in perversion, the recognition of the difference between fantasy and reality is not entirely repressed, but disavowed.

is supported by the hierarchy, which is further based on the perception of difference, transforms previously private knowledge into a shared belief in reality. Once Negrophobia is transformed into a public belief, it will be shared in the cultural imaginary so as to maintain the social hierarchy based on whiteness.⁸⁷ For Fanon, racism depends on this transformation of what is private to what is public, and the process must be examined at an intrapsychic level. In order to do so, the articulation of the unconscious motivation behind racism is necessary.

As I indicated earlier, Fanon views the white man's relationship to the black man as far more complicated.⁸⁸ Moving away from the analysis of Negrophobia, Fanon now specifically looks into the white man's relationship to the black man. Although for Fanon racism is a form of neurotic illness, it is here that he begins to see racism as a form of perversion. Fanon begins to explain that the white man and the black man will relate to one another in a dialectic relationship, which violently situates the black man as the Other to the white man. And here, too, Fanon suggests that the specific way in which this relationship develops depends on the process that reduces the black man to the genital

⁸⁷ As I indicated previously, the act of violence does not always mean physical violence – it comes in the form of a thought process that determines a form of action, even though the act may not contain any overt expression of aggression (or erotic wishes).

⁸⁸ In sum, Fanon views white men's Negrophobia as an expression of much more severe symptoms, ones that are linked to expression of aggression and subjugation through which they will attain sexual gratification. By taking such a theoretical stance, it seems he is working with yet another problematic psychoanalytic tradition: that perversion only happens with men because the perverse symptom, the attempt to retreat from reality, is motivated by the subject's attempt to save himself from castration, which he sees as a possibility in reality. Following this logic, women cannot experience castration fear because they are already castrated. Again, the view that defines women as castrated stems from the theory of phallic monism, which is a theory that is developed by the fantasy of the Oedipal boy, who is struggling to install the existence of sexual difference. According to his view, the boy comes to a conclusion in his fantasy that female genitalia are a representation of the consequences associated with carrying out his incestuous desire toward his mother, and the act of castrating his penis will be done by his angry father, who will seek to punish him for attempting to take his love object away from him. Incidentally, this is the moment the boy learns how not to entertain his incestuous desire toward his mother, and Freud would argue that this is simultaneously the moment when the installation of the superego will be completed. Freud. "Dissolution of the Oedipus."

level. As compared to the black man, the Other, the white man understands the concept of humanity – they have acquired the necessary social skills and understand taboos in order to function well in the cultural imaginary. This is because, unlike the black man, the white man has successfully developed an efficient ego and superego to manage the primitive id, which is seeking instantaneous gratification at all times.

Therefore, Fanon argues that the black man's function in the cultural imaginary is to remind the white man of the dangerous consequences of behaving like a pervert, whose action is a direct expression of the id seeking to attain instantaneous sexual fulfillment. The black man becomes the Other in the sense that through him the white man learns to prohibit himself from the powerful sexual drives:

Still on the genital level, when a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his ideal is an infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in relation to the Negro, who is viewed as a penis symbol? Is the lynching of the Negro not a sexual revenge? We know how much of sexuality there is in all cruelties, tortures, beatings. One has only to reread a few pages of the Marquis de Sade to be easily convinced of the fact. Is the Negro's superiority real? Everyone *knows* that it is not. But that is not what matters. The Prelogical thought of the phobic has decided that such is the case (159).

In this passage, Fanon shares his point of view that the white man's fear should not be seen as stemming from anxiety that originates from neurosis; instead, his fear should be seen as an expression of perversion. For example, the view that suggests that the black man is a "penis symbol" cannot be legitimated in reality – it is a form of fantasy that allows the white man to accomplish a form of psychic retreat from reality. In the external environment, or reality, the white man is subjected to responsibilities and demands, which signal the potential castration fear in him. And the castration fear can be seen as

stemming from his general experience of dissatisfaction because his wish and desire are not easily met in the external environment. As well, the castration fear can also be viewed as his anticipation of the potential punishment when he seeks to disobey the hegemonic order so as to fulfill his own wish and desire. By constructing the view of the black man as a “penis symbol,” the white man not only deters himself from the powerful libidinal pull toward the immediate attainment of pleasure, he also projects his built-up tension, frustration, and anger onto the black man so that he can function well in his social environment; as mentioned previously, an extreme form of such behavior is lynching.

In a few places in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon examines the rationale behind lynching. Although he does not see lynching as linked to psychosis, he suggests that the justification of it starts from a perverse logic: when faced with the need to release his discomfort stemming from anger and frustration that are attached to the hegemonic order, the white man needs to find a way to get rid of the discomfort by castrating and killing black men, who he views as the one who made him feel unwell.⁸⁹ This logic is perverse because the black man is *not* the one making the white man experience discomfort, rather, it is the existing socio-hegemonic structure that places demands upon the white man. Racism relies on a perverse logic specifically because the white man is aware of the source of his stress, which is coming from the hegemonic order, but chooses to disavow it so as to advance his socio-economic status. Such social structure requires the white man’s full participation regardless of his internal wish and desire, and the recognition of the

⁸⁹ In Chapter Three, “Perversion, Fetishism, and the Use of the Black Body: A Reading of James Baldwin’s ‘Going to Meet the Man,’” I will examine how the expression of psychotic symptoms stems from this very process; the formation of perverse logic, externalization of built up anger, frustration, and tension, are very much at the heart of the justification for lynching.

need to participate in such social expectation will induce anxiety.⁹⁰ Fanon then argues that intellectual achievement is attained through sacrificing sexuality – the white man is suffering due to his intellectual achievement, which forced him to abandon his sexuality:

Every intellectual gain requires a loss in sexual potential. The civilized white man retains an irrational longing for unusual eras of sexual license, of orgiastic scenes, of unpunished rapes, or unrepressed incest. In one way these fantasies respond to Freud's life instinct. Projecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves "as if" the Negro really had them. When it is a question of the Jew, the problem is clear: He is suspect because he wants to own the wealth or take over the position of power. But the Negro is fixated at the genial; or at any rate he has been fixated there. Two realms: the intellectual and the sexual. An erection on Rodin's *Thinker* is a shocking thought. One cannot decently "have a hard on" everywhere. The Negro symbolizes the biological danger; the Jew, the intellectual danger (165).

He then quotes Manonni, who argues that racism or "racialism" is a white man's defense reaction, or according to a psychoanalytic point of view, it can be regarded as a reaction formation.⁹¹ He begins to describe that what a white person is trying to defend against is his powerful incestuous tendencies (164). He writes the following: "Why not, for instance, conclude that the father revolts because in his opinion the Negro will introduce his daughter into a sexual universe for which the father does not have the key, the weapons, or the attitudes?" (165).

⁹⁰ Baldwin will definitively link sexual aggression with homoerotic feelings, but here Fanon is not thinking about that. However, Fanon will begin to see the link later. I will elaborate on this point later in the section "Racism, Sadoomasochism, and Homosexuality."

⁹¹ Laplanche and Pontalis argue that the term, "reaction formation" can be contrasted with other concepts such as symptom formation, substitutive formation, and compromise formation. They argue that theoretically, the distinction amongst the three can be established easily:

[I]n the case of the compromise-formation, the satisfaction of the repressed wish can invariably be recognized, bound up with the defensive action (for example, in an obsession); in a reaction-formation, on the other hand, only the opposition to the instinct is supposed to appear – and this in particularly explicit fashion, as when an attitude of extreme cleanliness serves as a complete mask for an active anal erotism (377-8).

J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973.

Psychoanalysis and the Discourse on the Environment

In describing the white man's aggression as masking their wish to attain sexual gratification, Fanon suggests that the psychic experience and the expression of aggression in the form of action are both stemming from the white man's fantasy; however, such fantasy always works unidirectionally, benefiting the white man.⁹² Fanon argues that his body is positioned in the "middle of a spatial and temporal world," in which no particular subjectivity other than that of the Other is given; therefore, he sees that his body and the world are always in dialectical relationship. In other words, black men are not allowed to utilize their fantasy as the reason to externalize their aggression against white men. Fanon writes:

In the *Weltanschauung* of colonized people there is an impurity, a flaw that outlaws any ontological explanation. Someone may object that this is the case with every individual, but such an objection merely conceals a basic problem. Ontology – once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside – does not permit us to understand the being of the black man. For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man. Some critics will take it on themselves to remind us that this proposition has a converse. I say that this is false. The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man. Overnight the Negro has been given two frames of reference within which he has had to place himself. His metaphysics, or less pretentiously, his

⁹² Fanon's statement indicates the specific reason why a statement such as "people of color are racist against white people" does not actually work. In order for racism to function, the erotic or aggressive fantasy moves unidirectionally, and the one who is allowed to participate in that practice is the white subject. On this point, Dianna Fuss argues that the white man's dependency on the black man is tangential, which seems to express a different point of view from Fanon's argument, which insists that the white man's ontological status is dependent on the existence of the black man. She writes:

For the white man, the considerable cultural capital amassed by the colonization of subjectivity amounts to nothing less than the abrogation of universality. While the "black man must be black in relation to the white man," the converse does not hold true; the white man can be white without any relation to the black man because the sign "white" exempts itself from a dialectical logic of negativity (143).

"Interior Colonies: Franz Fanon and The Politics of Identification" in *Identification Papers*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him (110).

In this paragraph, Fanon allows us to see that the possibility of accessing fantasy and/or the act of actualizing one's fantasmatic wish is given to the one who has access to power. The white man constructs blackness out of his wish to prolong his stay in fantasy. He does so because he does not wish to face the demands coming from the external environment, which prohibits him from attaining instantaneous libidinal fulfillment – he now has to act accordingly to the reality principle, rather than being driven by the pre-Oedipal infantile libidinal needs, the pleasure principle.

However, in the above paragraph, in a subtle manner, Fanon engages with his critique of psychoanalysts, who have consistently dismissed issues of race as part of their theoretical work. Although he does not say so explicitly, when Fanon argues that the *Weltanschauung* of people of color is different from that of whites, he anticipates counter arguments. His stance indicates his awareness that psychoanalysts would dismiss the specific role racism plays in the shaping of the psychic world of all individuals. And this problem has its deep roots in their understanding of what constitutes the environment that is worthy of psychoanalytic examination. In other words, Fanon's phrasing can be read as his attempt to argue against the way in which psychoanalysts have conceptualized the environment – according to their theoretical stance, the importance is always placed on the primary environment; thus, the societal environment loses its significance in the development of the mind.

If I am correct in assuming that Fanon is expecting a counter-argument from psychoanalysts, he might be expressing his dissatisfaction with regard to the noted

discrepancy between the promise that psychoanalysis offers, which emphasizes the examination of the conflict between the internal needs and the external demands, and the reluctance of psychoanalysts to engage in the analysis of the negative effect of racism. The reluctance stems from a theoretical stance which questions what kind of “environment” is worthy of psychoanalytic examination. For example, this debate invokes the sentiment that the examination of the societal environment is not worthy of psychoanalytic inquiry. Although reluctance to analyze the effect of societal environments exists in the clinical field of psychoanalysis, Freud’s point was unmistakable. He demonstrates that the examination of the external environment is necessary in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Some clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis consistently regard the analysis of the societal or external environmental influence upon the individual as holding no clinical relevance, because they regard the project as a task for the humanities and social sciences, such as politics, sociology, or anthropology. This very rhetorical stance seemingly prevents psychoanalysts from engaging in the examination of racism and its effect on people of color. Here, one can see the creation of a split within the field of psychoanalysis. One is the field of clinical psychoanalysis within which the examination of the external or societal environment is devalued. Then there is another field of psychoanalysis, mostly comprised of scholars in humanities and social sciences, who regard psychoanalysis as an important tool with which to engage in the articulation of hegemony. Although Freud offered a way to link the two fields together through his analysis of the effect of racism, clinical and academic practitioners of psychoanalysis are still reluctantly recognizing the presence of the other.

Indeed, the refusal of the clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis can be seen as ultimately linked to the hegemonic belief that condones the rhetoric of white supremacy, gender discrimination, and homophobia. It can also be viewed as stemming from the way they prioritize the examination of the subject's primary environment over that of the societal environment in which he or she will be required to respond to various demands. Should their lack of interest in the examination of the external environment be regarded as their expression of affinity with the discipline of psychiatry? Or is it based on their personal experience of how they have viewed racism? I would say yes to both of these questions. It is because here in the United States psychoanalysis has been taught within medical school settings; it is not until recently that analytic training became available to non-medical professionals. In addition, psychoanalysts' reluctance to engage in the examination of racism can be viewed as stemming from their personal point of view; it is an expression of unwillingness to speak about their painful historical past, because many psychoanalysts are Jews; thus, they have experienced and still are experiencing anti-Semitism. Throughout *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon regards anti-Semitism as a form of racism.⁹³ He consistently makes efforts to link the analysis of racism particular to people of color to anti-Semitism, but this effort can also be seen as his expression of disappointment toward psychoanalysts, most of whom are Jewish, because he believes they have been unwilling to link their experience with that of people of color.⁹⁴ Fanon's

⁹³ As I indicated earlier, Fanon consistently makes a link between racism particular to people of color and anti-Semitism. For example, he writes: "The Jews and I: Since I was not satisfied to be racialized, by a lucky turn of fate I was humanized. I joined the Jew, my brother in misery" (122).

⁹⁴ In other words, psychoanalysts were not able to do what he was able to do. He realizes that the fact of being Jewish is different from the fact of being black, though the both are suffering from racism. Although blackness can offer a way to analyze race that includes the analysis of anti-Semitism, the converse cannot be expected. In the following, Fanon writes that there is a history of Jews, but blacks are reduced to nothingness. Fanon expresses his disappointment toward Sartre, who failed to see this important fact, because he is a white man who does not suffer from the racism Fanon suffers from:

view with regard to the psychic reality of people of color is that if they are to be experiencing psychological symptoms, then the symptoms can be traced back to their experiencing trauma specific to becoming the target of racism; therefore, the trauma does not originate in their primary environment. What his argument offers is a bold critique of not only the field of psychiatry, but also of psychoanalysis: psychiatry holds that the formation of symptoms is biologically based; and psychoanalysis regards the origin of symptoms as stemming from the subject's splitting of object libido from self-preservative libido due to the failure in his or her primary environment. Contrary to these two

In all truth, in all truth I tell you, my shoulders slipped out of the framework of the world, my feet could no longer feel the touch of the ground. Without a Negro past, without a Negro future, it was impossible for me to live my Negrohood. Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned. Jean-Paul Sartre had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differently from the white man (138).

James Baldwin argues that although anti-Semitism is a form of discrimination, Jews are whites; thus, they are given the opportunity to oppress blacks, and when they do, they do not necessarily take into consideration the negative effect they are creating upon them. Growing up in Harlem, New York, he witnessed Jewish landlords and shopkeepers abusing their tenants and customers. Although he and others wanted to leave the neighborhood, they were poor; thus, they had to survive in an environment where they were subjected to "[a] coat of paint, a broken window, a stopped sink, a stopped toilet, a sagging floor, a broken ceiling, a dangerous stairwell, the question of garbage disposal, the question of heat and cold, or roaches and rats – all questions of life and death for the poor, and especially for those with children – we had to cope with all of these as best we could." When coming home from a butcher, he "certainly paid more for bad cuts of meat than other New York citizens, and we very often carried insults home, along with the meat" (3). Jewish landlords and shopkeepers did not live in the neighborhood – at the end of the day, they all closed the stores and went back to their nice neighborhoods. The reason Baldwin makes such a statement is that although both Jews and blacks suffer from discrimination, Jews are able to advance within the sphere of the cultural imaginary precisely because they are whites. In the following, Fanon and Baldwin make a similar point that social advancement is prohibited for blacks:

The Jew's suffering is recognized as part of the moral history of the world and the Jew is recognized as a contributor of the world's history: This is not true for the blacks. Jewish history, whether or not one can say it is honored, is certainly known: The black history has been blasted, maligned and despised. The Jew is a white man, and when white men rise up against oppression, they are heroes: When black men rise, they have reverted to their native savagery (6).

James Baldwin. "Negroes are anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White" in *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1970.

In the United States, Jews advanced their social status, and in the process they have decided not to pay attention to the experience of oppression outside of their own familiar historical context. For example, Nat Hentoff expresses that he, too, notices the failure of Jewish community organizations to reach beyond their own communities. He, borrowing from the argument of Albert Vorspan, argues that if Judaism is only relevant to the "*self-preservation*" and "*self-protection*" of Jews, then it is irrelevant to black people. However, he argues, if Judaism stresses this point, then how long can Judaism survive in the United States where there exist different points of view and values. Nat Hentoff. "Introduction" in *Ibid.* p. xiii (Author's italicization).

arguments, but not entirely divorced from them, Fanon adds that symptoms people of color experience are due to experiencing the conflict between the experience within their primary environment, which was nurturing, and the reality within their external environment, which enforces an ontological experience in which they are the Other, existing for the purpose of serving the interest of whites (141-3). The Western hegemony creates a hierarchy based on skin color, and this reality is the reality of both the white man and woman and people of color, and such experience needs to be included in the examination of psychic reality and symptom formation. Fanon's work shows its best potential when he attempts to bring together the splitting of psychoanalysis that exists in two fields. And I argue that through reconnecting the psychoanalytic clinical view with the critique of hegemony, which includes articulation of the negative effects of racism, gender discrimination, and homophobia, the split that separates the clinical field from the academic field of psychoanalysis can be repaired and both fields will be integrated.

Having described the function of racism thus far, Fanon then entertains a rather cynical question – is it possible for “the white man to behave healthily towards the black man and can the black man behave healthily towards the white man?” He then says that it is a “pseudo-question,” because in his mind, the answer is so definitively negative that it does not deserve an inquiry. For him the relationship between the two has been built based on the particular conflict resulting from Western culture, which perpetually produces the “imago” of blacks for the purpose of constructing the racial superiority attached to whiteness (169). For Fanon this is the reality of the relationship between the black man and the white man, and this reality is closely guarded by the culture of the West in which “[t]here is a quest for the Negro, the Negro is in demand” because in that

cultural imaginary “one cannot get along without him, he is in need, but only if he is made palatable in a certain way” (176). In the following, Fanon describes what that “certain way” means, which involves the phenomenon of gazing: “The white man is convinced that the Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of the penis, then it is the sexual potency that impresses him. Face to face with this man who is ‘different from himself,’ he needs to defend himself. In other words, to personify the Other.” Fanon then says, “The Other will become the mainstay of his preoccupations and his desires” (170).

The Contemporary View on the Failure of the Oedipus Phase: Psychic Retreat

Although I am sympathetic to Fanon’s argument that whites repress their awareness that to treat people of color as the Other is morally and ethically wrong, I would conceptualize the process as not one of repression, but more of disavowal.⁹⁵ I do not agree with Fanon’s argument that the Oedipus complex is the product of Western hegemony. In fact, his statement that the Oedipus complex is the product of the Western cultural imaginary is not a psychoanalytically informed argument. When Fanon insists that the white man and woman’s tendency to repress their racism is structured by Western hegemony, and their desire to engage in racism stems from the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex, he does not explain why the Oedipus complex must be the stage where racism gets concretized. Although psychoanalytic theoretical exploration often insists on the examination of the primary environment as its starting point, Fanon’s theoretical position indicates that he is not interested in examining the phenomenon of the

⁹⁵ It is Freud who teaches us that the work towards ending racism, gender discrimination, and homophobia cannot be achieved if it is strictly linked to the argument that emphasizes moral and ethical values. It is because, although the subject might understand the need to suppress his or her aggressive impulses against the Other, he or she may not be able to control them if there exist the unresolved aggressive and infantile sexual libidos that are constantly seeking expression. See *Civilization and Its Discontent* (1930). S.E., 21.

primary environment in relationship to the formation of the Oedipus complex. If he were to describe the effect of the Oedipus complex, the examination of pre-Oedipality upon the Oedipus complex cannot be avoided. The theory of the Oedipus complex must encompass the description of the psychic environment beyond the reality of the subject's societal or external environment. In other words, although Fanon's critical view of psychoanalysts' tendency to disregard the examination of the external environment is useful in mending the split that exists in two fields of psychoanalysis — academic and clinical — he does not stay close to the psychodynamic theory of the primary environment; as a result, his theoretical claim begins to lose its effect.

The Oedipus complex is the stage where the child works through the difficulty associated with installing the reality that includes unwanted information, and such information can be categorized in two ways: the existence of sexual difference and the fact that there is a difference between fantasy and reality. Later on in life, the resistance to accepting reality will manifest in the form of a response much like the one employed by a fetishist. What a fetishist accomplishes is to grab hold of an object that prolongs his or her stay in fantasy. More often than not, such an individual's motivation is triggered by the acute anxiety associated with the recognition of the existence of external reality. In sum, the subject's refusal to recognize that his or her fantasy is not reality can coincide with or be enhanced by the recognition of sexual difference. Alan Bass writes:

Sexual difference is the dissonant reality whose registration would provoke something like panic, near traumatic levels of anxiety. The fetishist's visible oscillation between the absence and presence of the phallic substitute has been preceded by a much less visible registration and repudiation of difference. Here one can accurately say that via disavowal

there is an oscillation between reality and fantasy: sexual difference is replaced with the fantasy of phallic monism (31).⁹⁶

According to Bass, although the fetishist appears to defend against the existence of sexual difference, what he or she is defending against is the existence of reality at large.

Therefore, the fetishist's aim is to dedifferentiate reality and fantasy, and, in so doing, to remain in an infantile state where his or her ontological existence does not contain any anxiety. In this sense, the fetishist is perpetually looking for ways to not leave this space of no tension — fantasmatic space — because he or she believes that doing so will prevent him or her from experiencing anxiety.

John Steiner calls the practice of moving towards such fantasmatic space, *psychic retreat*, which he mainly conceptualizes as the analysand's defense against the analytic process, or his or her reluctance to engage with the analyst. Bass would argue that the analysand who disavows the notion of difference will perpetually blur the difference between fantasy and reality, which results in experiencing reality as undifferentiated from fantasy. Steiner also mentions the analysand who conducts psychic retreat does so because he or she believes that doing so will protect him or herself from anxiety. He mentions that the analysand's motivation is stemming from the wish to be away from the analyst, who represents the existence of anxiety-inducing reality:

Typically it appears as a house, a cave, a fortress, a desert island, or a similar location which is seen as an area of relative safety. Alternatively, it can take an inter-personal form, usually as an organization of objects or part-objects which offers to provide security. It may be represented as business organization, as a boarding school, as a religious sect, as a totalitarian government or Mafia-like gang. Often tyrannical and perverse elements are evident in the description, but sometimes the organization is idealized and admired... [T]he avoidance of contact with the analyst is at the same time an avoidance of contact with *reality*. The retreat then serves

⁹⁶ *Difference and Disavowal*.

as an area of the mind where reality does not have to be faced, where phantasy and omnipotence can exist unchecked and where anything is permitted (2-3).⁹⁷

Both Bass's and Steiner's works suggest a different way of conceptualizing one's resistance toward reality, which involves the existence of the notion of difference. The practice of racism can then be regarded as the practitioner's wish to refuse reality and remain in the infantile state where the difference between sexes, or the difference between fantasy and reality does not exist. Bass and Steiner's arguments help us further our understanding of why the entrance into the Oedipus complex can create such reactions. According to Bass and Steiner, the Oedipus complex marks the subject's recognition of the impossibility of prolonging the infantile libidinal attachment to the mother, which is the form of reality. However, the subject may refuse to accept such reality by rejecting the existence of the third figure, the father, who represents the limit to his or her fantasy.⁹⁸ And this refusal comes back as a form of enigma when the subject interacts with the analyst, who brings in the limit and danger of fantasmatic thought processes that continue to gratify his or her infantile wishes.

The entrance of father into the dyadic space will alter the child's wish to prolong his or her infantile libidinal tie to the mother, and this experience will set the stage for his or her experience of the notion of difference, whether the notion is attached to race, sexual orientation or gender. In other words, the pre-Oedipus child experiences the mother as undifferentiated from the self and the Oedipus phase initiates the movement towards differentiation. The one who enters the dyadic scene, the figure that helps to

⁹⁷ John Steiner. *Psychic Retreat: Pathological Organizations in Psychotic, Neurotic and Borderline Patients*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993 (Italicization is mine.)

⁹⁸ According to Freud, a female child goes through the Oedipus period differently. I will return to this point in the "Fanon on Femininity" section.

differentiate the pre-Oedipus child from his or her mother is the third figure, the father, who is met with resistance. In addition, this resistance will be fortified by another important fact of life: the child must understand that just because he or she wishes to continue using the mother for attaining libidinal fulfillment, the external environment prohibits such a wish. This realization is brought forward by the third person, the father, who not only enforces the notion of prohibition, but also instills the existence of sexual difference. Thus, psychoanalytically speaking, the animosity towards the notion of difference can be argued as stemming from the subject's reaction against the existence of reality in which he or she is reminded of the limit of his or her fantasmatic wish, the remembrance of the threatening third figure, and finally, the existence of sexual difference that induces both castration fear and penis envy. Therefore, intrapsychically speaking, the white man and woman who react violently towards people of color are not responding negatively towards people of color, but rather they are reacting against the existence of reality in which encountering difference between their internal needs and external demands cannot be avoided. Or, it could be argued that their anger and erotic wishes indicate that they are fantasmatically viewing people of color as the third figure, the father, who seeks to cut their libidinal ties to their mothers. As long as they are viewing people of color instead of viewing their father as the severer (or the castrator) of the libidinal tie, they can displace their negative feelings to people of color and preserve their relationship to their fathers. Such individuals then are suffering due to the difficulty in attaining resolution not only from the Oedipus phase, but from the pre-Oedipal period in which the process of self-other differentiation—I am different from my mother, I am different from the Other—should have been accomplished.

Although Fanon does not articulate how he arrives at the conclusion that 97 percent of the black French Antilleans cannot produce the Oedipus neurosis, I argue that this claim alludes to the fact that in the French Antilles, the child's primary environment is not dyadic – it immediately includes a third figure (or multiple figures). Although this argument seems promising from the point of view of sociological or anthropological analysis, it does not address the significance of the primary narcissism, which becomes the foundation from which the child will facilitate care towards the self and towards the Other. And most importantly, according to the psychoanalytic point of view, the primary narcissism is fostered by the dyadic relationship between the child and mother, and it happens even though others exist in the child's primary environment. Despite Fanon's theoretical stance, which might be read as a useful criticism towards the theoretical interest of psychoanalysis, and which places its emphasis on the examination of the primary environment, he cannot carry out his argument successfully because by moving away from the analysis of the pre-Oedipal phase, it seems that he is using psychoanalytic theory in a less rigorous and rather concrete manner.

Is Fanon a Psychoanalyst or is he a Revolutionary Philosopher?

Despite the problem associated with Fanon's usage of the Oedipus complex, his argument that the notion of difference attached to race predetermines the subject's entrance into the sphere of the Western cultural imaginary offers a critical insight. Although he does not articulate it further, what he implicitly suggests is the idea that the reason the Western cultural imaginary predetermines one's access to power based on the perception of racial difference is that in that sphere of the cultural imaginary, the notion

of difference is vigorously being resisted. Although his work tends to move away from the analysis of the influence of the pre-Oedipus upon the Oedipus period with regard to the construction of racism, he does elucidate the possibility of utilizing psychoanalysis as a method of socio-political analysis. And what Fanon strives to do is to analyze the Western hegemony's pervasive resistance to incorporating the notion of difference within the cultural imaginary using psychoanalytic theory. However, though Fanon might not be aware of it, his use of the language, which highlights the harmful practice of racism, along with psychoanalytic language, which focuses on the psychodynamic and fantasmatic thoughts, does not work together well, and often confuses the reader.

The reader experiences that when he is engaged in psychoanalysis, he is thinking as a revolutionary philosopher, who is seeking to initiate a revolution to end racism.⁹⁹ And when he is absorbed in political analysis, he is thinking much like a psychoanalyst. In other words, Fanon tends to shift between the two fields: one that attempts to engage in the analysis of the socio-political environment and the other that seeks to describe the development of the mind as resulting from the conflict between the subject's libidinal needs and the demands that exist in his or her external environment. The critical problem is that for Fanon, as we have seen previously, his conceptualization of the external environment is of a strictly societal environment. Therefore, when he analyzes the influence of the external environment upon psychosexual development, his minds switches back into the analysis of the socio-political sphere. In other words, he is mainly thinking of the external environment as the place of the cultural imaginary, not the place of primary narcissism. Although he is able to stress the importance of conducting the

⁹⁹ I am regarding Fanon as a political philosopher, following Diana Fuss in her essay, "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification" (141).

analysis of the external environment, he has trouble understanding that the successful analysis of racism requires the analyst to incorporate both the internal and external realities in his or her analysis. When Fanon is engaged in the analysis of the external environment, the reader is left wondering whether or not he is using psychoanalysis while simultaneously seeking to disengage from it. In other words, in various places in his text, Fanon's rhetorical strategy seems to suggest that he sees psychoanalysis's theoretical limits but does not admit it because he wants to preserve the father of psychoanalysis, Freud and his disciples.

Fanon's argument that the reason whites suffer from neurosis, which he argues is stemming from unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex, contains psychoanalytic concepts, but it stands as no more than a political statement, evoking the urgency to alter the way in which the Western cultural hegemony produces illnesses. Fanon might have wished to say that the reason the resistance to relinquishing racism persists is because the Western tradition overvalues the dyadic structure and devalues the presence of the third figure (or multiple figures) in the subject's primary environment; and being a part of such a socio-cultural environment will create neurosis. However, he does not specifically say that. Concurrently, when Fanon states that blacks do not develop neurotic symptoms, what he might be stressing is the idea that their primary environment does not resemble that of the whites. Although this view expresses a concrete and rather fetishistic logic, underneath this assumption, Fanon hints at an important idea: the reason psychoanalysts have not paid attention to the psychosexual development of people of color is not because blacks do not suffer from neurosis; it is because the psychoanalysis, too, is a product of the Western hegemony, which vigorously resists the notion of difference. In other words,

just as whites are suffering from neurosis, psychoanalysis, too, is suffering from neurosis. Fanon's logic indicates this point of view; however, instead of linking psychoanalysis with neurosis, I would argue that clinical practitioners of psychoanalysis are often approaching psychoanalysis with perverse logic, which seeks to disavow the existence of difference.

Racism, Sadomasochism, and Homosexuality

After having defined racism as a phenomenon stemming from the unsuccessful resolution of the Oedipus complex, Fanon takes a step further and states that racism should, indeed, be regarded as a form of regression, a kind of refusal on the part of whites to proceed with the maturation process, to become adults and face the reality that all people are different, yet created equal. He then argues that this fact of "fixation" implies that whites are stuck at the "pre-genital" level, which explains the reason they have not yet been able to sublimate their aggression to a higher and more civilized behavioral pattern.¹⁰⁰ Fanon attempts to reverse the existing stereotype that regards black men as full of unpredictable rage and behavior—the typical behavior of a pre-genital child who is filled with aggressive fantasies—by describing the white man and woman as the ones suffering from regression, not the people of color.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ The pre-genital level of development is often seen as synonymous to the pre-Oedipal phase. However, the term pre-genital refers to the infantile sexual activities prior to the recognition and institution of the attainment of pleasure that is associated with the genitals. Laplanche and Pontalis define pre-genital component instincts to be "the originally anarchic functioning of the non-genital component instincts." A psychoanalytical point of view suggests that when the patient develops fixation on objects, people, activities, and so on, it is an expression of pre-genital sexual organization. This is a rare moment in which Fanon speaks about his view of the pre-Oedipal stage with regard to the formation of racism. See *Language of Psychoanalysis* (328).

¹⁰¹ Earlier, Fanon discussed whites' view that black men are described as always genital, his argument here indicates that as compared to whites, blacks have at least reached the genital level of development, which

In the following, Fanon continues to elaborate on the view that racism is a form of regression; however, while being engaged in his argument, Fanon starts questioning whether or not there is a link between the expression of racism and that of homosexuality or homosexual object choice:

The white man who ascribes a malefic influence to the black is regressing on the intellectual level, since, as we have shown, his perception is based on a mental age of eight years (comic books). Is there a not a concurrent regression to and fixation at pre-genital levels of sexual development? Self-castration? (The Negro is taken as a terrifying penis.) Passively justifying itself by the recognition of the superiority of the black man in terms of sexual capacity? It is obvious what a variety of questions it would be interesting to raise. There are, for instance, men who go to “houses” in order to be beaten by Negroes; passive homosexuals who insist on black partners (177).

Fanon’s thought suggests that he views homosexuality as an expression of sadomasochistic desire. Fanon cannot help but to see the white man’s interaction with the black man without a notable aggressive component, which suggests that the white man’s kind, thoughtful, and friendly action is motivated by homosexual desire.¹⁰² This is because for him the white man’s relationship to the black man cannot continue without violence and/or his aggressive wish to turn the black man into the Other so that he can externalize his built-up aggression and unfulfilled sexual wishes. In addition, even though Fanon does not elaborate further, his argument also elucidates an important task the act of

makes whites appear as stuck in a lower developmental stage. The notion of reality here is different from the reality that Fanon speaks about earlier, which articulates the existence of conflict that can be noted in the external environment, and is a result of whites’ wish to subordinate blacks. The reality here implies more or less the awareness that is supported by the mature ego, which indicates that harming others based on the perceptive knowledge of difference should not be permitted in a civilized society. However, this awareness is often disavowed by many, including lawmakers and enforcers. I argue that the disavowal is an indication of societal permission to continuously allow the expression of the wish that attempts to use racism as a way to attain *jouissance* in order to attain the fulfillment of sexual needs. For further discussion with regard to the development of the mature ego and how it moves through the development line in relation to reality, see Hans W. Loewald. “The Problem of Defense and the Neurotic Interpretation of Reality” in *the Essential Loewald: Collected Papers and Monographs*.

¹⁰² The expression of homosexual desire is raced for Fanon. For example, he does not believe that only white men are capable of becoming gay. I will return to this point later in the chapter.

gazing accomplishes: while gazing at the black man and his racial difference, the white man is attaining sexual gratification attached to the idea of subjugating himself to the fantasmatic penis of the black man.

In this field of vision, the perception of racial difference becomes the fetish, the thing with which the white man seeks to disavow the wish for homosexual arousal attained from subjugating himself to the black man. In other words, as long as the white man is seeing racial difference and attacking the black man based on the perception of racial difference, regardless of whether or not aggression is being acted out or imagined, the existence of his sexual arousal can be foreclosed upon. Therefore, in order for the white man to succeed in carrying out the disavowal of his homosexual impulses, the existence of the black man's racial difference is needed. In other words, in order for the disavowal to work, the black man's racial difference is fantasmatically put to function as the thing that allows the psychic elimination of the tension-raising frightening ideas: the existence of homosexual impulses, desire for subjugation, and wish to be penetrated by a big penis. In other words, the racial difference attached to blackness becomes the object, or the thing that is made to function as the target of such sexual desire. Although Fanon does not follow through in his argument as to why racism, sadomasochism, and homosexuality are intrinsically linked with one another, I argue that he sees the white man's racism against the black man as a defense against his homosexual desire. Therefore, Fanon describes one more important task racism accomplishes: it allows the suppression of homosexual desire.

Homosexuality and People of Color

Just as he argues that the 97 percent of the black Antilleans do not experience the Oedipus complex, Fanon argues that homosexuality of the black Antilleans is a result of repression particular to his racial identities. He writes the following in the footnote:

Let me observe at once that I had no opportunity to establish the overt presence of homosexuality in Martinique. This must be viewed as the result of the absence of the Oedipus complex in the Antilles. The schema of homosexuality is well enough known. We should not overlook, however, the existence of what are called there “men dressed like women” or “godmothers.” Generally they wear shirts and skirts. But I am convinced that they lead normal sexual lives. They can take a punch like any “he-man” and they are not impervious to the allures of women-fish and vegetable merchants.

In Europe, on the other hand, I have known several Martinicans who became homosexuals, always passive. But this was by no means a neurotic homosexuality: for them it was a means to a livelihood, as pimping is for others (180).

This quote suggests that since the black Antilleans do not experience the Oedipus, homosexuality does not exist in Antilles. Therefore, when he sees gay black Antilleans, their sexuality cannot be regarded as an expression of their sexual desire – it is an indication of the harsh reality in which they chose to offer their bodies as a means of survival. Fanon continues:

Such then is this haunted man, condemned to make his choice of himself on the basis of false problems and in a false situation, deprived of the metaphysical sense by the hostility of the society that surrounds him, driven to a rationalism of despair. His life is nothing but a long flight from others and from himself. He has been alienated even from his own body; his emotional life has been cut in two; he has been reduced to pursuing the impossible dream of universal brotherhood in a world that rejects him (181).

Dianna Fuss argues that Fanon's most serious problem is in this particular moment. For Fanon, homosexuality is a form of "cultural construction of racism."¹⁰³ Fuss elucidates that Fanon views the expression of homosexual desire as only possible within the context of the white Western hegemony. Thus, for Fanon, an expression of same sex desire is synonymous to the expression of whiteness. When he notes gay people of color, he comes to the conclusion that through homosexuality they are seeking to alter their ontological status from being people of color into being whites. In other words, Fanon sees that people of color use homosexuality as a tool to transform their racial features – gay means white since, in his mind, homosexuality only exists in the white West. The transformation of racial features through homosexuality is impossible in reality; however, it is possible in fantasy. Here Fanon treats the fantasmatic idea as though it were developed based on a realistic observation. He then problematically argues that when one is feeling the sense of "fault, guilt, refusal of guilt, paranoia," he or she is then "back in homosexual territory."¹⁰⁴ Although it is uncertain as to why those affective experiences are linked to the expression of homosexuality in Fanon's mind, his logic indicates that he is configuring homosexuality to be the sexual expression that naturally invokes such sentiments – the white man comes close to experiencing the sense of fault, guilt, refusal of guilt, and paranoia when they experience homoerotic feelings. And to push this argument further, he alludes to the fact that the evocation of those feelings is not a part of

¹⁰³ Dianna Fuss. "Interior Colonies: Franz Fanon and the Politics of Identification"(157).

¹⁰⁴ Fuss looks at this particular moment of Fanon's argument and writes the following:

It is not entirely clear which of these two "complexes" (racism or homosexuality) Fanon believes to be the pathological trigger for the other; more certain is the sleight of hand in which "homosexuality" is inserted into a violent cultural equation where "homophobia" properly belongs.... If racism is articulated with homosexuality instead of homophobia, where are antiracist lesbians and gay men, of all colors, to position themselves in relation to same-sex desire? Fanon's theory of sexuality offers little to anyone committed to both an anti-imperialist and an anti-homophobic politics (157-8).

the black Antilleans' cultural trend, because, as he mentions time and time again, they do not suffer from these neurotic symptoms because they did not go through the Oedipus complex. In this argument Fanon defensively makes the black Antilleans healthy, although elsewhere in the text he urgently mentions the need for further analysis of the struggles people of color go through, which influence their psychosexual development.

Just as he fetishistically concludes the theory of the Oedipus complex as that which is only applicable to the Western subject, Fanon refuses to consider homosexual expression, or same sex desire as a part of the experience of the nonwestern subject. This theoretical stance creates a violent view of the existence of lesbians and gay people of color not only in the West but also in the world where the overt practice of homophobia is often enforced in the cultural imaginary. Fanon engages in an anti-racist ideology, calling for the critical re-thinking of negritude for the purpose of developing a subjectivity that is not defined by the need of whites. However, his rigid view associated with the expression of same sex desire stresses that the interiority of lesbians and gay men of color is predetermined by Western imperialism. As well, his argument consistently suggests that when people of color express their same sex desire, their act implies that they are expressing their wish to be seen and treated as white. Although Fanon persistently argues the importance of reclaiming negritude, calling for the need of "a psychoanalytic interpretation of the life experience of the black man and a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Negro myth," such a project excludes not just the black man, but all people of color, men and women, who express same sex desire (150).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ However, it is worthwhile to consider whether or not Fanon's homophobic tendency is linked to general attitudes within the field of psychiatry. It is no surprise that the tendency to regard homosexuality as a form

Fanon on Femininity

Although Fanon anticipates the response that the utilization of the classic psychoanalytic “schema” of sadomasochism does not sufficiently explain the nature of the relationship whites will seek to create with blacks, he insists that Freudian theory can offer the reason whites seek to establish a sadomasochistic relationship with people of color.¹⁰⁶ In order to elaborate on Fanon’s understanding of gender, particularly his view on femininity, it is worthwhile to start from a Freudian notion of female sexuality, because Fanon’s argument problematically relies on it. Needless to say, Freudian psychoanalysis has viewed the development of feminine sexuality in a phallocentric way; that is to say, it has held the belief that the female child’s psychosexual development

of perversion has a long history in the field of psychiatry, and this sentiment has also been shared by psychoanalysts, calling lesbian and gay patients unanalyzable, even though Freud consistently insisted on and calling for the need to vigorously theorize about the “polymorphously perverse” nature of sexuality as a part of psychoanalytic discipline in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. For example, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality from its official list of mental illnesses in 1973, though a number of vocal analysts insisted that homosexuality is a form of illness, and that therefore, it can be cured by psychoanalysis. Byrne Fone. *Homophobia: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), p. 414.

One example of such analysts is Alfred Adler, who expressed his sentiment in his essay “Homo-Sexuality” that homosexuality is, indeed, a problem:

The attitude of homo-sexual towards life will always be a *hesitating one*.

Homo-sexuality has a number of different aspects. In some fashion or other and in varying degrees, a homo-sexual will be found to be antagonistic to social life, to have changed his occupation, to have began later and finished earlier. His entire life flows along as though regulated by some brake-mechanism. The power required for operating this brake, he must himself produce again and again (190).

Fanon admired Adler and probably read his words closely. He was also surrounded by psychiatrists who regarded the expression of same sex desire as a form of psychiatric illness. However, what is unique with regard to Fanon’s insistence of the lack of homosexuality amongst the black Antilleans is that it illustrates his wish to preserve his people as free from homosexuality or neurosis. If they seem to be suffering from homosexuality, such sexual expression is not originating from their psychosexual development – it has to be seen as the mark that the West has left behind. In other words, for Fanon, the expression of same sex desire originates from the subjugation they had to endure due to French colonial power. Alfred Adler. *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*: New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1929. (Author’s italicization.)

¹⁰⁶ This is an interesting moment. Whose response is he anticipating? Although one can argue that this is his rhetorical style, which means the statement can be regarded as his way of establishing his argument, I wonder if he is anticipating a response from psychoanalysts, who would claim that the way he uses his theory should not be linked to psychoanalysis.

differs from that of the male child precisely because she lacks a penis.¹⁰⁷ A female child views her body as inadequate, which triggers a sense of inferiority; thus, she develops penis envy. However, later in adulthood, though she continues to see her “lack” as being “the punishment personal to herself,” she must alter that affective awareness in order to save herself from development of an inferiority complex. In order to do so, she develops a “reaction formation,” or, at least, this is the opinion based on phallic monism that “[masculine] sexual character is a universal one.” Freud then writes: “[S]he begins to share the contempt felt by men for a sex, which is the lesser in so important a respect, and, at least in holding that opinion, insists on being like a man.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, according to Freud, women internalize their gender identity based on forming identification with the perceived power that the phallus possesses, and in doing so, she attempts to save herself from penis envy. In other words, this move suggests that instead of regarding her body as lacking the phallus, she will develop a psychic conviction (or fantasmatic view) that she possesses the phallus. However, her newly developed identity does not entirely allow her to escape from penis envy – it later comes back to her as a form of “jealousy.”

Freud’s point of view suggests that the expression of jealousy in women is “enormously reinforced from the direction of displaced penis envy.”¹⁰⁹ A woman’s attempts to transform herself from the subject who is lacking into the subject who possesses the phallus requires the retention of a fantasmatic view of phallic monism. Freud’s view helps us understand Fanon’s illustration of the specific function of white

¹⁰⁷ Again, this view is associated with phallic monism.

¹⁰⁸ Sigmund Freud. “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925). *S.E.*, 19, p. 253.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

women's racism, which is connected to their discontent from receiving feminine gender assignment and their attempt to transgress from it by using people of color. Fanon sees white women's aggression against black men as their displaced anger towards their father. Instead of using white men who racially resemble their fathers, they use black men as the object, the thing, in order to externalize their aggression. According to this schematization, the affect of disappointment gets attached to the mother, and anger (or erotic wishes) gets attached to the father. The reason they do not use white men for this purpose is that white women regard white men as the signifier of the absoluteness of the reality, the existence of the unshakable hegemonic order. In order to substantiate this argument that white women's anger against black men originates from their aggression towards their father, Fanon returns to Freud's elaboration of the scene of "a child [who] is being beaten," the beating fantasy, which Freud claims is a common occurrence in young girls.¹¹⁰

For Freud, in the girl's beating fantasy the one who is being beaten is often her rival, of whom she is jealous. However, simultaneously, her rival is not another being – it is actually her genitals that invoke jealousy. According to the theory of phallic monism, it is because she sees her body as lacking. In other words, when she is engaged in perceptive reality, she is identifying with the masculine gender, which continuously evokes envy and jealousy towards her genitals. And since the phallic monism is functioning unconsciously, she cannot change her perception of her body as lacking; therefore, she proceeds to attack it. However, according to Freudian theory, the girl's beating fantasy has another important aspect: it speaks about her attitude toward

¹¹⁰ Freud introduces the beating fantasy in his paper, "A Child is Being Beaten." (1919), *SE*. 17. Here, he is reworking of the theory by introducing an aspect of gender difference. However, his analysis does not produce a fruitful result.

masturbation. In the following passage, Freud formulates the connection between the beating fantasy and masturbation fantasies:

[The beating] fantasy seems to be a relic of the phallic period in girls. The peculiar rigidity which struck me so much in the monotonous formula ‘a child is being beaten’ can probably be interpreted in a special way. The child which is beaten (or caressed) may ultimately be nothing more or less than the clitoris itself, so that at its very lowest level the statement will contain a confession of masturbation, which has remained attached to the content of the formula from its beginning in the phallic phase till later life (254).¹¹¹

Then yet another consequence of penis-envy is stemming from the girl’s relationship to her mother, whom she begins to regard as responsible for giving the insufficient body, the body that lacks the penis. She then begins to “show jealousy of another child on the ground that her mother is fonder of it than her.” According to Freud, the girl’s fantasy is structured by two perceptive ideas: her mother giving her the clitoris—an insufficient “penis”—and her mother being fond of another child. And he argues that these two fantasies result in breaking the girl’s libidinal attachment to her mother. He says: “It will fit in with this if the child which has been preferred by her mother is made into the first object of the beating-phantasy which ends in masturbation.”¹¹² Following Freud’s logic, one can postulate that the discovery of sexual difference then creates tension in the girl. She seeks to relieve it by turning to masturbation, which functions as a reminder that her genitals are inferior. Freud writes the following:

¹¹¹ “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes.” (1925).

¹¹² Freud argues that although the reactions of human individuals of both sexes are made up of masculine and feminine traits, masturbation is further removed from women than men. Women frequently fight against it and they are unable to make use of it when men are able to. Freud sees the elimination of clitoridal sexuality as a necessary precondition for the development of femininity. And for girls the strong feeling against masturbation appears soon after the first sign of penis envy. According to Freud, this impulse is “a forerunner of the wave of repression” which at puberty will do away with a large amount of the girl’s masculine sexuality in order to make room for the development of her femininity. She continues to free herself from masturbation, which becomes the basis for the development of sexual life. “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925). *S. E.*, 19, p.254.

In the past I had often formed an impression that in general women tolerate masturbation worse than men, that they more frequently fight against it and that they are unable to make use of it in circumstances in which a man would seize upon it as a way of escape without any hesitation.... But it appeared to me nevertheless as though masturbation were further removed from the nature of women than of men, and the solution to the problem could be assisted by the reflection that masturbation, at all event of the clitoris, is a masculine activity and that the elimination of clitoridal sexuality is a necessary precondition for the development of femininity (255).

Following Freud's logic of the "beating fantasy" of young girls, along with using Helen Deutsche and Marie Bonaparte's arguments, Fanon attempts to analyze the white woman's specific fantasy, "a Negro is raping me." Before introducing the analysis of race into the argument, he writes the following paragraphs in order to illustrate his understanding of the female child's experience of the Oedipus period:

From the work of Helene Deutsch and Marie Bonaparte, both of whom took up and in a way carried to their ultimate conclusion Freud's ideas on female sexuality, we have learned that, alternatively clitoral and clitoral-vaginal and finally purely vaginal, a woman having retained, more or less commingled, her libido in a passive conception and her aggression, having surmounted her double Oedipus complex-proceeds through her biological and psychological growth and arrives at the assumption of her role, which is achieved by neuropsychic integration (178).

After having made this point, Fanon proceeds to speak about the psychic attributes of fixation particular to white women, which, he argues, has a link to the practice of desexualizing aggression, and the practice is often noted as a residue of the psychosexual development from infantile sexuality:

Corresponding to the clitoral stage there is an active Oedipus complex, although, according to Marie Bonaparte, it is not a sequence but a coexistence of the active and passive. The desexualization of aggression in a girl is less complete than in a boy. The clitoris is perceived as a diminished penis, but, going beyond the concrete, the girl clings only to the quality. She apprehends reality in qualitative terms. In her as in the little boy there will be impulses directed at the mother; she too would like to disembowel the mother.

One question, then, is whether, side by side with the final achievement of femininity, there is not survival of this infantile sexuality. “Too strong an aversion in a woman against the rough games of men is, furthermore, a suspicious indication of male protest and excessive bisexuality. It is possible that such a woman will be clitoral” (178-179).¹¹³

Here Fanon is largely working with Deutsch’s argument, which essentially agrees with Freud’s argument that the clitoral masturbatory tendency is linked to the girl’s recognition of her anatomical difference. For Freud and also Deutsche, this is the moment the girl encounters the knowledge of her body as lacking a penis.

Furthermore, in the above paragraph, when Fanon begins to pay specific attention to the girl’s relationship to her mother and the frustration she experiences that results from the dyadic relationship with her mother, he is moving far from Deutsche or Freud’s argument – he is now stepping into the terrain of Object Relations theory.¹¹⁴ One psychoanalyst who focused on early infantile fantasies, such as the fantasy of the disembowelment of the mother’s body, is Melanie Klein. Without being aware, Fanon engages with Klein when he argues that gender determines different ways in which the boy and girl pass through the Oedipus phase.¹¹⁵ Here, Fanon is correct in assuming that

¹¹³ Fanon is quoting from Marie Bonaparte, “De la sexualité de la femme” in *Revue Française de Psychoanalyse*, (April-June, 1949), p. 180. Also, when he mentions Helene Deutsch, he is thinking of her work, *Psychology of Women*. New York: Grune and Stratton, 1944-5. However, the original essay, “The Psychology of Women in Relation to the Functions of Reproduction” (1925) appeared in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 6.

¹¹⁴ Developed by the British School of Psychoanalysis, whose members included Melanie Klein, Donald W. Winnicott, and Anna Freud.

¹¹⁵ It is important to point out that for Klein, the Oedipus complex starts early as compared to Freud, who argues that it starts out during ages 3 through 5. Klein argues that the Oedipus phase starts during the first year of life and it develops in both sexes similarly in relation to the mother’s breast. Here significant theoretical differences between the Freudian and Kleinian views of the Oedipus complex emerge. Freud conceptualizes the Oedipus development as taking place in relation to the child’s recognition of the existence of the third figure, the father, who breaks the dyadic relationship between the mother and child. The father’s existence in the environment, which is further enforced by the perception of his potent penis, stands as the signifier of the existence of reality in which the child will be forced to recognize that his or her wish to have the mother forever is impossible. The boy will have to come to an understanding that he cannot have her as his love object because of the existence of the angry father, who will seek to castrate him if he fails to give up his love interest in her. And through the presence of the father, who will inform

both male and female child can both exhibit strong oral-sadistic impulses towards the mother, and the anxiety and guilt associated with having such fantasies. He suggests that such oral-sadistic tendencies may manifest differently in women.¹¹⁶

Although Fanon does not cite Klein's work, by being attentive to Deutsch's argument, he agrees with Klein, who argues that the young girl gives up masturbation because she regards it as disappointing to her. In the following passage Klein shares her agreement with Deutsch on the subject of the fantasy behind the girl's inhibition toward masturbation:

I entirely agree with Helene Deutsch (1925), who holds that the genital development of the woman finds its completion in the successful displacement of oral libido on to the genital. Only, my results lead me to believe that this displacement begins with the first stirring of the genital

the child of the existence of sexual difference, the girl will recognize her body as lacking and become angry with her mother for giving her an insufficient body; thus, this anger breaks her ties to her mother and she will then have to begin developing her libidinal investment in her father. See Freud "Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex."

However, Klein argues that the girl's wish to form identification with the mother directly results from the Oedipus period in which such impulses are prominent. Although Freud suggests that the discovery of the lack of penis turns the girl away from her mother to her father, Klein argues that this discovery operates only as a "reinforcement" in the direction towards her father because she is already developing her aggressive and anxiety-ridden experience at her mother's breast, which was not producing enough milk to satisfy her needs. Thus, Klein argues, "The deprivation of the breast is the most fundamental cause of the turning to the father," which induces the sense of guilt in the girl. She then seeks to overcompensate by seeking to create a new relationship with her mother, which will become a form of "a fresh love-relation." Yet, in that new relationship with the mother, the girl still experiences the castration complex, the feeling of insufficiency attached to her body, from her earlier experience, within which the girl continues to experience the feelings of hate and rivalry toward the mother. Eventually, she abandons her mother and turns to the father as the object "to love and be loved by," and with whom she will seek to have a baby that can finally compensate her insufficient body. Melanie Klein. "Early Stages of the Oedipus Complex" (1928) in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works: 1921-1945*. (New York: The Free Press, 1975), pp. 190-193. Klein critiques Freud's lack of understanding with regard to the way in which the girl goes through the Oedipus differently from the boy in the following way:

Freud refers to the girl's motherly feelings derived from the early relation to her mother in the pre-Oedipal phase. He also refers to the girl's identification with her mother, derived from her Oedipus complex. But he has not linked these two attitudes, nor shown how the feminine identification with her mother in the Oedipus situation affects the course of the girl's Oedipus complex. In his view, while the girl's genital organization is taking shape, she values her mother predominantly in the phallic aspect (416).

In "The Oedipus Complex in the Light of Early Anxieties" (1945). *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ The analysis of the difference Fanon seems to propose here requires the utilization of theory beyond the model that Freud originally offered. Here, I am specifically thinking of not only Klein, but Winnicott as well.

impulses and that the oral, receptive aim of the genitals exercises a determining influence in the girl's turning to the father. Also I am led to conclude that not only an unconscious awareness of the vagina, but also sensations in that organ and the rest of the genital apparatus, are aroused as soon as the Oedipus impulses make their appearance. In girls, however, onanism does not afford anything like so adequate an outlet for these quantities of excitations as it does in boys. Hence the accumulated lack of gratification provides yet another reason for more complications and disturbances of female sexual development. The difficulty of obtaining full gratification by masturbation may be another cause, besides those indicated by Freud, for the girl's repudiation of onanism, and this may partly explain why, during her struggle to give it up, manual masturbation is generally replaced by pressing the legs together (192).¹¹⁷

Fanon then begins to formulate a theory of aggression specific to the white woman. He views that it originates in her infantile sexuality, and her general inhibition towards masturbation plays a large part in her tendency to both externalize aggression and eroticize the black man. Fanon concludes that the white woman attains her "neuropsychic integration" through passive conception of their sexuality and aggression; however, such transformation will produce fixations – this is how passivity will soon turn into activity (178).

According to Freud, the beating fantasy also expresses the girl's desire for the father. He argues that while going through the Oedipus phase, a girl's aggression towards her father demands reciprocity – she wants him to give her aggression, but she fails to have her wish fulfilled. Borrowing this theoretical argument, Fanon insists that her desire, or the "free-floating aggression" gets attached to blacks. Fanon illustrates his view, which takes a different stance from Freud, Deutsch, and Bonaparte:

Here is my own view of the matter. First the little girl sees a sibling rival beaten by the father, a libidinal aggressive. At this stage (between the ages of five and nine), the father, who is now the pole of her libido, refuses in a way to take up the aggression that the little girl's unconscious demands of

¹¹⁷ "Early Stages of the Oedipus Complex" (1928). *Ibid.*

him. At this point, lacking support, this free-floating aggression requires an investment. Since the girl is at the age in which the child begins to enter the folklore and the culture along roads that we know, the Negro becomes the predestined depositary of this aggression. If we go farther into the labyrinth, we discover that when a woman lives the fantasy of rape by a Negro, it is in some way the fulfillment of a private dream, of an inner wish. Accomplishing the phenomenon of turning against self, it is the woman who rapes herself (179).

Fanon conceptualizes this turning around, making what is passive active, as the achievement of female sexuality, and the white woman uses the black man in order to achieve this goal; more specifically, she uses the black man in order to become a feminine subject. However, Fanon reminds us that this process does not always succeed – at a certain stage, a failure of transforming their passivity associated with sexuality and aggression occurs, and this results in the production of certain fixations (178). In other words, for Fanon, intrapsychically speaking, the white woman's wish to use the black man does not help her, but rather creates fixation on the black man. Although she will then produce aggressive or erotic thoughts or externalize her aggression and erotic infantile fantasies towards the black man in the form of actions, such process will keep her stuck in infantile sexuality. Returning to the issue of the Oedipus phase, it is useful to reiterate that for Fanon, the white women's aggression and erotic fantasies towards the black man is the displacement of her infantile sexual wish towards her father.¹¹⁸ If her father were unable to give her what she wanted, then she would use the black man as the substitute from whom she will seek to receive both pleasure and punishment. She will then turn her fantasmatic wish to be beaten by her father into another wish, the wish to beat or be beaten by the black man. However, at this point she will turn the latter part of the wish from passive to active by engaging in the fantasy that while she is hurting

¹¹⁸ And Fanon certainly does not mention anything about black women, nor the possibility of white women's homoerotic feelings towards black women.

herself, she thinks of herself as being hurt by black men. This moment illustrates an interesting hegemonic reality. As in the case of the white man, the white woman's fantasmatic masochistic wish using the black man only functions unidirectionally.¹¹⁹ The white woman is fantasizing that the black man is hurting her because she is aware that that particular wish cannot become a form of fantasy.

If we go further into the labyrinth, we discover that when a woman lives the fantasy of rape by a Negro, it is in some way the fulfillment of a private dream, of an inner wish. Accomplishing the phenomenon of turning against self, it is the woman who rapes herself. We can find clear proof of this in the fact that it is commonplace for women, during the sexual act, to cry to their partners: "Hurt me!" They are merely expressing this idea: Hurt me as I would hurt me if I were in your place. The fantasy of rape by a Negro is a variation of this emotion: "I wish the Negro would rip me open as I would have ripped a woman open" (179).¹²⁰

What he dismisses is the idea that gender assignment, which marks her body as lack, pushes her way from masturbation. This argument suggests that since masturbation does not give white women satisfactory *jouissance*, they use black men to release their built up sexual tension in the form of aggressive fantasies. Following Fanon's argument, a way to end the white woman's racism against the black man then requires her discovery of her body as not lack, and that therefore she should not inhibit herself from masturbating. However, such thoughts will encounter resistance because of the societal view which leads women to disengage from masturbation and engage instead in regarding people of color as the Other, towards whom the unfulfilled libidinal impulses should be discharged.

¹¹⁹ It is because in reality she is allowed to be sadistic to people of color; but the same cannot be applied to people of color. For example, historically speaking, when black men were perceived as having aggressive thoughts against a woman or thoughts of raping her, they would be castrated and then lynched.

¹²⁰ Fanon describes fantasies of white women who dream of having sexual intercourse with black men in a number of places in *Black Skin, White Masks*. The famous example he gives is of a story told by a prostitute for whom going to bed with a black man brought on an orgasm. She then found out that going to bed with black men was no more remarkable than going to bed with white men (158).

The same prostitute told Fanon a story of a woman who went to bed with a black man, which resulted in her going mad. She then remained insane for two years, but when she became well, she refused to go bed with anyone else (171).

After having said all of this, Fanon anticipates a response from the white woman, asking him to describe how her psychosexual development differs from that of the woman of color. He responds by saying that he “knows nothing about her” (180), because, as previously argued, he cannot speak about the psychosexual development of women of color because he does not believe they go through the Oedipus phase. With this sentiment, Fanon does not engage in the description of psychosexual development of women of color.

With regard to Fanon’s concreteness addressing issues of gender and the expression of homosexual desires that are attached to women of color, Diana Fuss makes the following statement:

Unfortunately, Fanon does not think beyond the presuppositions of colonial discourse to examine how colonial domination itself works partially through the social institutionalization of misogyny and homophobia. Fanon’s otherwise powerful critique of the scene of colonial representation does not fundamentally question the many sexualized determinations of that scene. In each of Fanon’s works, including, “Algeria Unveiled,” the colonial other remains an undifferentiated, homogenized male, and subjectivity is ultimately claimed for man alone. When the politics of sexual difference is in question, Fanon’s theory of identification risks presenting itself as simply another “theory of the ‘subject’ [that] has always been appropriated by the “masculine” (161).¹²¹

Although Fanon attempts to use psychoanalysis to elucidate what racism accomplishes in the West, at the end of the process the reader is left wondering if he was successful in proving this argument. Fanon was, indeed, able to accomplish the task of explicating how psychoanalysis can be used to facilitate the analysis of racism, how racism affects the development of the psyche, and the reason racism refuses to disappear. However, his work does not stand to offer an effective analysis of gender discrimination and

¹²¹ Dianna Fuss. “Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification.”

homophobia. With Fanon's enthusiasm, I attempted to illustrate the tendency within the clinical field of psychoanalysis, which has been resistant to examining the effect of racism on both parties involved, whites and people of color. Even though I found Fanon's argument useful in elucidating the field's reluctance towards incorporating the examination of race and the effect of racism on psychosexual development, it seems his argument often created a fetishistic response, especially when he was handling the question of Oedipality. His concrete description, which indicated that the Antilleans do not go through the Oedipus complex, undoubtedly affected his analysis of gender and the expression of same sex desire. As a result, his work ends up critiquing one form of hegemonic practice and supporting the other (gender discrimination and homophobia). Therefore, while Fanon's attempt to situate the examination of racism in the scene of psychoanalytic theory-making remains invaluable, his argument often begins to exhibit a concrete and fetishistic quality. Does it mean that his work did not make any contribution to the field of psychoanalysis?

It seems Fanon's work is a different kind of psychoanalytic work precisely because it critically describes how race has a significant influence on the process of subject formation. In this regard, his work portrays him as a different kind of psychoanalyst, who is seeking to alter the way psychoanalysis is practiced, which consistently dismisses the analysis of race and the effect of racism upon the formation of both the individual and collective psyche. It in this sense he is a revolutionary and psychoanalyst. Although the two titles can be seen as an unusual combination, in Freud's time psychoanalysis was often conceptualized as a revolutionary method in understanding the working of the mind. Until Fanon, the association between

revolutionary and psychoanalyst had not been marked; he reminds us of the importance of such a link and encourages psychoanalysts to engage in the analysis of hegemony and ideology. Therefore, *Black Skin, White Masks* must be read as Fanon's attempt to elucidate the intrinsic link between the work of the revolutionary and the psychoanalyst, and this link must be vigorously maintained until issues of gender, race, and sexuality are well integrated into the field of psychoanalysis.

Chapter Two

Invisibility and Not-Having: Tongue Twister and the Green Monster – A Reading of Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker*

In the previous chapter, I argued that the construction of race or racial difference, which is linked to the justification of harm against the Other, is the subject's perverse response to the knowledge that there exists a difference between fantasy and reality. Indisputably, the practice of racism depends on the disavowal of the difference between fantasy and reality; specifically, what a racist seeks to accomplish through racism is to turn the Other into a fetishistic object, the thing, then seek to use it in order to relieve the elevated tension that arrives when recognizing the difference between fantasy and reality. Needless to say, the justification for racism is always fantasmatically based, because in reality the individuals who are perceived as different will never cease to be humans; they will never become the thing.

I have argued thus far that the occurrence of racism is primarily based on the phenomenology of gazing attached to the body; in this chapter, I will demonstrate the ways in which language constructs and produces racial difference. Furthermore, I will elucidate how language can also be linked to the formation of perversion when used to disavow the difference between fantasy and reality, or how language can become a fetishistic tool with which the subject seeks to remain in fantasy while attempting to get rid of the difference between fantasy and reality. In order to explicate these phenomena, I

will offer my reading of Chang-rae Lee's novel, *Native Speaker*.¹²² In the novel, Lee addresses the intricate relationship speech and language establish amongst race, gender, and immigration – all of which both foster and defend against the formation of perversion.

The story is told by the main character, Henry Park, who is a second-generation Korean American, married to a second-generation Scottish American, Lelia. He was born and raised in Queens, New York, where the survival of first-generation Asian Pacific Americans depends on an intricate system of self-reliance and betrayal. Lee depicts Henry and Lelia to be both independently and correctively seeking to utilize stereotypes that are associated with racial and gender differences for survival. Throughout the book, and even in its title, *Native Speaker*, Lee suggests that the development of perversion is intrinsically linked to the practice of a specific style of gazing attached to speech. The listener forms a perceived notion of who looks like a native speaker of the English language by engaging in a practice that determines whether or not the speaker will fit in the stereotype of an American English speaker, thus, a native speaker.

Henry's wife, Lelia uses the English language as a tool to undo her keenly felt disappointment of being a female writer in New York City.¹²³ And Henry hides behind

¹²² Chang-rae Lee. *Native Speaker*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.

¹²³ New York City is a place where many languages other than English are spoken openly in public. The Korean community is prospering, especially in the area called "Korea Town," around 32nd Street in Manhattan, and in Flushing, Queens, where the community members and their customers interact with each other speaking Korean. In addition, individuals who are defined as New Yorkers include many who emigrated from Asia and the Pacific Islands, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean; and they challenge the notion of who should be called a "New Yorker" on a daily basis. It is my understanding that Chang-rae Lee picked New York City as the place for this story because he is interested in challenging the notion of not only who gets to be called a native speaker, but also he is invested in challenging the preconceived notion that speakers of the English language are all white and in showing that the idea includes those who did not originally emigrate from Europe. In doing so, he is interested in grounding the position of second-generation Asian Americans as Americans, meaning the two nouns, Asian and Americans, should not be seen as conflicting with each other. In addition, he also gives the reader the opportunity to recognize that speakers of the English language are heterogeneous, and some of them do speak it with an accent.

her whiteness, or uses Lelia as a thing, to escape from the harsh reality of having to encounter racism on a daily basis. Henry works for a private firm as a spy, collecting information on first-generation Asian Pacific Americans whose success and visibility are regarded as a threat to the other members of their communities. Through paying close attention to the way in which Lelia and Henry negotiate the notion of difference, I will illustrate that they both use language as a tool to carry out a form of psychic retreat. In other words, through their own relationship to the English language, they attempt to escape from their own realities that demand the negotiation of gender and racial difference; as a result, their unresolved struggles with difference come out in the form of perverse symptoms.

This chapter is divided into two sections, one dedicated to Henry and the other to Lelia. Before beginning each section, I will look at Freud's attempt to theorize femininity and the subsequent criticisms on his problematic biologically deterministic stance. Freud's work on femininity and the criticism of his theoretical view will be used to offer a reading of not only Lelia's perverse relationship to the English language but also Henry's manner of relating to Lelia as a feminine subject.¹²⁴ And in describing Henry's ontological status, I will then articulate the notion of invisibility specific to Asian Pacific Americans by focusing on both the external and internal struggles that they negotiate,

¹²⁴ Freud had always been troubled by the question as to why his female patients' symptoms were seemingly different from those of his male patients. In other words, one can say that Freud was always troubled by the expression of femininity, which had its roots in the construction and enforcement of gender. Freud began his career as a researcher of the neurophysiology of hysteria, and most of his patients were women who were suffering from hysterical symptoms. The OED defines hysteria as coming from the Greek word, *hysterikos*, which means disturbances peculiar to women and caused by the disturbances in the womb. Freud was surprised when he discovered that he misinterpreted Dora's transference, which resulted in a significant therapeutic failure that led to the premature termination of the treatment. Though Freud was preoccupied by the notion of femininity from the very beginning of his career as a psychoanalyst, he did not actively start writing about it until the late 1920s. I will describe this trend shortly in the following section.

which addresses the question of how to be visible yet simultaneously minimize the consequences of being the subject of the Orientalizing gaze. Finally, in my concluding statement, I will demonstrate that, although Henry and Lelia's realities are distinctly different, they both use each other in order to alleviate the tension that accompanies living. Their approach towards each other exemplifies the psychopathology of racism, the response to racism, and perversion as a response to racial difference. Henry and Lelia both use each other to negotiate their discomfort that stems from the experience of being seen as subjects who are suffering from "not-having": Henry, for not-having white racial identity and Lelia, for not-having masculine gender.¹²⁵

(I)

Theory of Invisibility

Freudian Theory of Femininity

Although Freud made various biologically deterministic arguments about women, his interest in writing about issues of femininity stemmed from his wish to better understand why the symptoms of his female patients differed from those of his male patients.¹²⁶ Freud argues that women suffer from neurosis because they can not

¹²⁵ I will elucidate the concept of "having" versus "not-having" in the following section. I am specifically not using the Lacanian term, "lack" because of the obvious implication that it refers to castration anxiety. The concept of "having" versus "not-having" refers to more of the fantasmatic configuration of phallic monism, which I will describe in the following section.

¹²⁶ It is worthwhile to note that Freud once described female patients as suffering from hysteria while his male patients suffered from obsessive compulsive disorders: the development of the two different symptoms, hysteria and obsessive compulsive disorders, he attributed to the phylogenetic facts of male and female anatomies: a little girl experiences the Oedipus complex differently from a boy because she does not have a penis, and not having a penis prevents her from experiencing the successful installation of the superego. However, Freud's earlier work insisted that hysteria did not specifically occur to women. He

successfully install moral and ethical values by experiencing the threat of castration. In other words, the specific fear that the threat of castration brings is the cornerstone for the development of the superego:

In girls the motive for the demolition of the Oedipus complex is lacking. Castration has already had its effect, which was to force the child into the situation of the Oedipus complex. Thus the Oedipus complex escapes the fate which it meets with in boys: it may be slowly abandoned or dealt with by repression, or its effects may persist far into women's normal mental life. I cannot evade the notion (though I hesitate to give it expression) that for women the level of what is ethically normal is different from what it is in men. Their super-ego is never so inexorable, so impersonal, so independent of its emotional origins as we require it to be in men. Character-traits which critics of every epoch have brought up against women – that they show less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great exigencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection or hostility – all of these would be amply accounted for by the modification in the formation of their super-ego which we have inferred above (257-258).¹²⁷

purposefully demonstrated this point of view to the Viennese medical establishment by presenting cases of male hysteria. This was part of his attempt to demonstrate that hysteria is a product of a particular defense – conversion. See “Report on My Studies in Paris and Berlin” (1956[1886]), “Observation of a Severe Case of Semi-Anaesthesia In a Hysterical Male” (1886) *S.E.* 1.

However, it is also important to note that Freud systematically bracketed the question of femininity and treated it as the “other” sexual expression within a schema of masculine sexuality. For example, in describing his theory of psychosexual development he argues that both sexes mature from “masculine sexual inclinations.” For example, he writes the following passage in “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality” (1905), Vol. 7:

The auto-erotic activity of the erotogenic zones is, however, the same in both sexes, and owing to this uniformity there is no possibility of a distinction between the two sexes such as arises after puberty. So far as the autoerotic and masturbatory manifestation of sexuality are concerned, we might lay it down that the sexuality of little girls is of a wholly masculine character. Indeed, if we were able to give a more definite connotation to the concepts of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine,’ it would even be possible to maintain that libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman (219).

And, fifteen years later Freud adds a footnote in the section, “Castration Complex and Penis Envy,” in which he argues that both male and female children form a theory of phallic monism: women originally had a penis, but they lost it in castration. He argues that after realizing that girls possess no penis, boys start to form a low opinion of them (p. 195, *n.* 2). Then, three years later, in 1923, he finally began to publish a series of short papers in which he began addressing the questions pertaining to femininity more vigorously. He then indicated that a boy and girl go through psychosexual maturation differently. For example, in “Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” Freud argues that a girl will have more difficult time going through psychosexual maturation because she does not experience the Oedipus complex as a boy does because the lack of a penis prevents her from experiencing the adequate installation of the superego.

¹²⁷ *The Ego and Id.* (1923). *S.E.* 19

In the passage above, Freud attempts to illustrate that the psychogenesis of women is determined by not having a penis, and because of it, they will become susceptible to neurosis. In saying so, Freud aims to differentiate the psychosexual development of a boy and girl so that he can then begin theorizing the superego development for a girl.

However, by focusing on female sexual development, ultimately what he is seeking to do is to offer a theoretical model for understanding how the mind responds to the notion of sexual difference.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, his theoretical stance does not go far from the theory of biological determinism, stating “[a]natomy is destiny,” which he borrowed from Napoleon.¹²⁹ He then shifts his focus from biological determinism to the theory of phallic monism, meaning both sexes start going through psychosexual development from masculine sexual inclinations.

Although it is problematic, Freud’s theoretical view on phallic monism offers an explanation of the phenomenon of female perversion; specifically, phallic monism describes the intrapsychic reality of women who choose to hold onto their fantasmatic

¹²⁸ Freud’s difficulty in writing an effective theory of femininity (instead of investing in the phylogenetic argument) stems from his recognition of his own inability, which could also be argued as Freud was experiencing a form of castration anxiety, since he could not understand what he encountered in his analytic hour. In addition, his struggle to come up with an effective model of the theory of femininity resulted in his being seduced by the scientific language of biological determinism at the time. This outcome was inevitable because Freud maintained his position that psychoanalysis was a scientific endeavor throughout his career. Therefore, in his mind every problem he encountered must be explained by a scientific observation; hence, in this case the problem of femininity must be explained by biological determinism. Throughout his career Freud maintained his theoretical stance that psychoanalysis is a scientific method. Nevertheless, he was often confronted by his students and audience who persistently argued that psychoanalysis differed significantly from other natural sciences. See, “The Claim of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest” (1913). *S.E.* 13. One of the interesting moments in Freud’s attempt to situate psychoanalysis as a scientific method can be noted when he equates the analyst with a surgeon who is holding his instrument, a surgical knife, for proceeding to interpret his patient’s transference. See “Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis” (1912). *S.E.* 12, p. 115. In saying so, Freud stresses that he developed his technique, particularly of the concept of neutrality, based on scientific observation. See “The Dynamics of Transference” (1912); “Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psycho-Analysis” (1912); “On Beginning the Treatment (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis, I)” (1913); “Remembering, Repeating and Working-through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis, II)” (1914);, and “Observations on Transference-Love (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis III)” (1914), all in *S.E.* 12.

¹²⁹ “Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” (1924).

belief that their bodies are lacking a penis.¹³⁰ Such women then attempt to engage with the fantasmatic experience of the disappointment of “not-having” a penis by further retreating into their fantasies where the notion of sexual difference does not exist. These women then justify the act of retreat as a desirable way to handle the anxiety that comes when they realize that their bodies do not resemble the male body. This argument illustrates that women can develop perverse symptoms, which is a different theoretical stance than the one Freud offered: for him, only men can develop perversion because it is a defense against castration fear.¹³¹

Generating Fetish: Transforming Sexual Difference from “Not-Having” to “Having” Using Race

In his attempt to theorize perversion, Freud argues that the possession of a penis is necessary—a position also taken by post-Freudian theorists such as Chassequet-

¹³⁰ One way to think about the notion of disappointment is not to regard it as a narcissistic injury, but to regard it as an expression of the desire that begs for the making of an environment that respects gender equality. For example, theorists such as Judith Halberstam and Judith Butler persistently insist that gender difference is performative; thus, not fixed. They attempt to discuss the heterogeneous and discursive nature of gender through queer theory. Therefore, they might suggest that when women develop perversion it is because they are unable to recognize that the expression of gender difference is performative. I argue that perversion is stemming from their unwillingness to recognize the discursive nature of gender expression; thus, concreteness is what is influencing their symptom formation. Women who are suffering from perversion are concretely holding onto the notion that their gender does not resemble that of male gender. In this respect, too, perversion can be seen as the defense against difference. See: Judith Halberstam. *Female Masculinity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998; Judith Butler. *Bodies That Matter*. New York: Routledge, 1993; and Alan Bass. *Difference and Disavowal: Trauma of Eros*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

¹³¹ It seems Lacan’s work will be useful in understanding the experience of the subject who has difficulty tolerating the experience of “not-having.” The Lacanian word “manqué” means “lack” in English. “Manqué à être” means “lack of being”, whereas “manqué à avoir” means “lack of having”, which is the way I am conceptualizing the notion of “not-having.” For Lacan, the experience of lack is almost always accompanied by the veil, which suggests that there is an object that is behind it. And since the object is veiled, it is simultaneously desired and therefore regarded as unattainable. For Lacan, desire always exists in relation to manqué or lack. See “The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power” in *Ecrits: A Selection*. London: Tavistock, 1977.

Smirgel.¹³² The absence of a penis will create a reaction in women that subsequently establishes the foundation for the development of neurotic symptoms, which will then call on a particular kind of longing that eventually produces penis envy. In other words, Freud's point of view suggests that when women are experiencing penis envy, it is impossible for them to be simultaneously suffering from castration fear.¹³³

Although Freud suggests that women are unable to develop perversion, Lee's character, Lelia's ontological stance exemplifies someone who is suffering from perversion. Lelia seeks to have a body that is characterized by "having" in her fantasy, and this wish becomes the foundation of her perversion. Although a woman's body or her sexual difference should not be viewed as lack in reality, women can prolong this view in their fantasies; they do so because for them, perversion allows them to attain experience of the switch from "not-having" to "having."¹³⁴

The justification for racism can be explained as the subject's resistance to encountering difference: while phallic monism is resistance to the existence of sexual difference, racism is a practice that allows the maintenance of the subject's resistance to difference in a more global sense. Phallic monism and racism both form a strong tie to the unpleasure-pleasure principle, which is a process of tension reduction and attainment

¹³² This argument suggests that women develop neurotic symptoms because they lack a penis, and men develop perverse symptoms because they have a penis.

¹³³ Freud's argument is based on biologically determined logic: a female child becomes disappointed and envious when faced with the impossibility of attaining pleasure from her "insufficient" genitals. What she desires is a penis, the body part that is visible and allows direct access to the attainment of pleasure. Freud then explains how the woman comes to terms with her disappointment and envy by supplying another biologically deterministic argument: in order to overcome these feelings she will become pregnant and give birth to a baby, preferably a boy. Even though Freud portrays women as feeling powerless based on their so-called biological limitations, through procreation, he thinks women seek to accomplish what men are never able to do. Although Freud does not say it, his writing can be read as suggesting that giving birth to a baby is women's way of getting back at men, to show them what her body can do that theirs cannot: her body can nourish and birth a human being, which the male body is never able to do. I will further elaborate on this point when I offer my reading of Luce Irigaray in the following section.

¹³⁴ For further discussion of this phenomenon, see Joyce McDougall. *Plea for a Measure of Abnormality*.

of sexual pleasure, both of which are methods certainly women, too, can use to attain *jouissance*. For example, when they recognize the ramifications of receiving gender assignment based on their sexual difference, they experience unpleasure. A perverse reaction to this moment is that in order to lower the tension, or relieve the unpleasure of being the recipient of “not-having,” a woman seeks the thing, a fantasmatic object, in order to alter her ontological status of “not-having” to “having.” This is the moment an expression of perversion links itself to the logic of fetishism, or more specifically, fetishism allows the conflation of gender and race differences in such a way that they become one, the thing, with which the subject seeks to disavow the awareness that the transformation of “not-having” to “having” is not possible. In Lelia’s case, the thing is people of color and immigrants.

The fetishistic thought process in which people of color can be used as the thing does not discriminate gender. However, the registration of the fear pertaining to the recognition of the Thing, the encountering the awareness that fantasy and reality are not the same, is different for women. For women, the Thing is their recognition that their bodies are different from the male, but not inferior, yet they are not given equal access to the power and privilege available to men.¹³⁵ Women learn that they have to repress this recognition, the Thing, because their internal understanding cannot transgress the law and order sustained by the patriarchy. They have to learn to hide the truth, to keep the veil

¹³⁵ I use the concept, the Thing specifically as one’s fear of encountering destitution and death in my final chapter, “Writing and Racializing Otherness –Letters, Perversion, Writing, and Psychoanalytic Process: A Reading of J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe*.” It is because to accept the existence of reality is also to recognize that one’s life will end one day. Therefore, to be in touch with reality also means to accept that while one is living, he or she is simultaneously moving towards death. This idea is expressed by the concept, the Thing, since it is something that one cannot accept and often disavows.

over the penis, even though they know that the signifier attached to the penis is empty. In order to elucidate this point further I will turn to Luce Irigaray.

Encountering the Thing: A Dialogue with Luce Irigaray

Although, the baby becomes an over-determined substitute for the penis in Freudian theory, a feminist reading of female psychosexual development suggests that by giving birth to a baby or holding on to the prospect of phallic monism in their fantasy, women may be trying to undermine the masculine power that is given to the penis.¹³⁶ According to such an argument, women are the ones who can decide whether to become the subject of “having” or “not-having,” instead of passively receiving the problematic gender of “not-having.” At the moment when she chooses to “have” or to “not-have” children, she recognizes the power that is given to her body; therefore, she no longer has to long for the organ that is attached to the signifier of power. She completes the chain of the signifying process – the signifier of power is now met with the signified, which is her ability to decide whether to have or to not-have. Women will be aware that the penis cannot always prolong its function as the signifier of power, because at the end of the signifying process, it will eventually be met with an empty signified. And it is at this moment the penis ceases to be the symbol of power.

In “The Eternal Irony of the Community,” Irigaray locates the notion of invisibility and disappointment attached to the Freudian theory of female sexuality. She argues that in psychoanalysis the notion of the self and the other is already (en)gendered,

¹³⁶Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*, Trans. Catherine Porter; *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Trans. Gillian C. Gill; and *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill. Also see Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément. *The Newly Born Woman*. Trans. by Betsy Wing and Juliet Mitchell. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986.

which makes it impossible for women to gain equal access to the moment of self-recognition. The existing notion of “womanhood” is what is perpetually forcing women to function as the guardian of the blood tie.¹³⁷ Using Hegelian logic, Irigaray argues that the reason a woman cannot attain self-recognition, to become a person with her own consciousness, has to do with the phallogentric argument that women’s reproductive organs are less significant because they are invisible.¹³⁸ The notion of invisibility then receives assigned meanings – it has to depend on something that is visible. In other words, the notion of invisibility that describes woman’s sexual organs creates the rhetoric that suggests that the only way a woman can gain self-worth is through union with a man who possesses visible sexual organs.¹³⁹ Irigaray mentions that according to Hegel, what makes female and male reproductive organs function differently from each other is blood, which interestingly has another function: visibility. The power and privileges assigned to

¹³⁷ Luce Irigaray. “The Eternal Irony of the Community” in *Speculum of the Other Women* (215).

¹³⁸ Irigaray’s argument heavily relies on a Lacanian perspective. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose describe Lacan’s view on feminine sexuality in the following way:

Lacan’s most direct attempt to take up the question of feminine sexuality, [is] not just . . . part of a return to the earlier debate, but . . . goes beyond Freud. And it raises issues which clearly relate to feminist demands for an understanding of femininity which is not confined by the phallic definition.... Lacan argues that the sexual relation hangs on a fantasy of oneness, which the woman has classically come to support.

Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne. Ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose. Trans. Jacqueline Rose (137).

¹³⁹ Irigaray introduces Hegel’s argument on this specific point by taking the following paragraph from *Philosophy of Nature*:

On the one hand, the uterus in the male is reduced to a mere gland, while on the other, the male testicle in the female remains enclosed within the ovary, fails to emerge into opposition, and does not become an independent and active cerebrality. The clitoris moreover, is inactive feeling in general; in the male on the other hand, it has its counterpart in active sensibility, the swelling vital, the effusion of blood into the corpora cavernosa and the meshes of the spongy tissue of the urethra. The female counterpart of this effusion of blood in the male consists of the menstrual discharges. Thus, the simple retention of the conception in the uterus, is differentiated in the male into productive cerebrality and the external vital. On account of this difference therefore, the male is the active principle; as the female remains her underdeveloped unity, she constitutes the principle of conception (175).

Louise Kaplan would argue that the logic that emphasizes the need for a woman to gain self-recognition through union with her man is perverse logic. See *Female Perversions*. I will offer a close reading of this topic in the final chapter, “Racializing Otherness – Perversion, Writing, and Psychoanalytic Process: A Reading of J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe*.”

men rest on the significance given to visibility – the male organ does not fail to respond to the gazer’s inquiry since it is able to feed back visual imagery through blood circulation, which produces erection – and hence, irrefutable meaning:

Woman is the guardian of the blood. But as both she and it have had to use their substance to nourish the universal consciousness of self, it is in the form of bloodless shadow – of unconscious fantasies – that they maintain an underground subsistence. Powerless on earth, she remains the very ground in which manifest mind secretly sets its roots and draws its strength. And self-certainty – in masculinity, in community, in government – owes the truth of its word and of the oath that binds men together to that substance common to all, repressed, unconscious and dumb, washed in the water of oblivion. This enables us to understand why femininity consists essentially in laying the dead man back in the womb of the earth (225).

Irigaray says that phenomenology reminds us that visibility does not always articulate access to power.¹⁴⁰ In order to demonstrate her argument, she returns to Freud. She then critiques his biological determinism by arguing that although being described as invisible, a woman’s ability to reproduce and to be the guardian of genealogy is a powerful sign because she is the one who is in charge of keeping the blood of humanity flowing. And for Irigaray every woman is aware of this knowledge and of her power.

At the moment when a woman realizes her power, she discovers the function of the phallus, which has always been met by the empty signified. For Lacan, this discovery of the empty signified recalls a particular fear – the fear of exposure that may shift the law that blindly hands power over to man.¹⁴¹ In other words, the moment the phallus (the

¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, Melanie Klein also conceptualizes invisibility as the creator of an affect that powerfully influences the development of psychic structure. Klein’s work allows us to understand the power of the mother’s milk – the link between the milk and the development of psychic reality of the child. The color white, which is also the color of the milk, is often regarded as invisible. Klein offers the theory that indicates that unavailability of the object (the part object, the breast and the whole object, the mother) that provides the milk will lead to the development of severe psychopathology. See Melanie Klein. “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms” in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946 – 1963*.

¹⁴¹ For post-Freudians, this fear of exposure is linked to the subject recognizing the difference between fantasy and reality. See Alan Bass, *Difference and Disavowal*. Interestingly, if one is to push this argument

organ with the signifier of power) becomes the penis (the organ with an empty signified), a dread similar to castration fear is triggered in a woman because she cannot share the knowledge that there is no power behind the phallus – it is just the penis, another piece of flesh that does not mean much to the world.¹⁴² In this sense, the phallus functions as the reminder of the lack. And the power attached to the phallus must be maintained so that its true function, castration fear, can be avoided at all costs. However, castration fear in this sense only works in fantasy. The Lacanian notion of the veil that is attached to the empty signified – *manque à être* – facilitates the operation of desire through concealment of the truth (the phallus is the penis) while simultaneously instituting the fear of exposure of the truth in the subject. Although Freud may not see it in this light, when the woman recognizes her right to reproduction, or to be the guardian of blood, to use Irigaray's words, she recognizes men's deep-rooted fear of castration, which she sees as pitiful.

Invisibility: An Asian Pacific American Perspective

Since the United States first opened its doors to immigrants from Asia in 1850, Asian Pacific Americans have become a target of scrutiny as the Other. They are seen as nonwhite immigrants arriving from unfamiliar and exotic places, from places unknown. Their facial features and bodies stood out as different from the rest of white America,

further, he or she will come to an understanding that the logic that justifies the distribution of power to men is fantasy-based. In other words, all hegemonic thinking stems from fantasmatic ideas. This argument touches upon the fundamental stance of feminist theory that utilizes a Lacanian framework. See Elizabeth Grose, *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction*.

¹⁴²Lacan defines the phallus as the marker of signification. For him the signifier is both what constitutes lack and seeks to fulfill the lack. So, in order to maintain the power that is attached to the penis, the penis also needs to function as the reminder of the lack of power. Lacan writes the following in "The Signification of the Phallus":

For the phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function, in the intrasubjective economy of analysis, may lift the veil from the function it served in the mysteries. For it is the signifier that is destined to designate meaning effects as a while, insofar as the signifier conditions them by its presence as signifier (579).

which induced anxiety in many white Americans. And, in order to minimize the anxiety associated with their visual presence in the United States, lawmakers placed a strict restriction on the number of immigrants permitted to enter each year. These restrictions, called exclusion laws, were specifically instituted to reduce the number of immigrants from particular groups. For example, in 1888 the Chinese exclusion law was instituted, followed by the exclusion law of South Asians in 1917, Koreans and Japanese in 1924, and Filipinos in 1934. The exclusion laws functioned as “national origin” quotas, which did not get changed until 1965. The removal of the quota system increased the number of immigrants, which created many historical, political, and economical changes, which influenced the visibility of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. Although some Asian Pacific American families have been living in the United States for nearly five generations, Asian Pacific Americans are forever regarded as immigrants; this scrutiny does not apply to those whose families originally emigrated from Europe.¹⁴³

Henry’s daily struggle as a second-generation Korean American includes having to encounter the unavoidable force of gaze that articulates the viewer’s racism and xenophobia, which reminds him that he does not belong in white America. The gaze that racializes him (or other Asian and Pacific Americans for that matter) creates two outcomes. First, it places him in a specific stereotype and makes it impossible for him to argue that he is different from how he is being perceived. Second, it sets up a particular way of seeing that makes him become invisible. Under this practice, he disappears into the viewer’s perception, he is there, but simultaneously the viewer no longer sees his

¹⁴³ See Lisa Lowe. *Immigrant Acts*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), pp.7-36, and Ronald Takaki. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. New York: Chelsea House, 1995.

presence. I argue that this specific way of not seeing, or making someone invisible, is an expression of aggression, which is a particular form of racism that perpetually refuses articulation when the act is being carried out.

(II)

Story

Henry: The Experience of Alienation and Trans-generational Trauma

Henry's job is to collect information on the "new comers," the first-generation immigrants who are politically and economically influential, and thus emerging as a threat to the other members of their communities in New York City. Although it seems suspicious at first, the reader will come to realize that Henry's job represents his complicated relationship to his father whom he both betrays and protects. One of Henry's clients is a prominent first-generation Korean American community leader, John Kwang, and his status as a first-generation immigrant grabs Henry's curiosity beyond his duty as the one that supplies Kwang's information to his superior. One of the characteristics of Kwang that puzzles Henry is his ability to articulate his thoughts, ideas, and even feelings in English; Kwang's Americanized mannerisms ceaselessly confuse and fascinate him. Henry's observation of Kwang is curiously linked to his working-through of the experience he had when watching his father struggle with English. Henry sees his father's desire towards assimilation constantly met with various difficulties associated with socio-economic and linguistic struggles, as well as cultural difference. The way his father lives in America as a first-generation Korean American has influenced Henry's understanding

of what kind of life he can have as the son of an immigrant father. Henry is strongly influenced by his father's family values and work ethic, both of which come from Confucianism, which emphasizes rigidly articulated principles of socio-familial hierarchy. The message Henry's father instills in him is the idea that the one who is in the position of power is the one who can articulate the notion of truth. In other words, power defines truth and knowledge.

I know all about that fine and terrible ordering, how it variously casts you as the golden child, the slave-son or daughter, the venerable father, the long-dead god. But, I know, too, of the basic comfort in this familial precision, where the relation abides no argument, no question or quarrels. The truth, finally, is who can tell it (6-7).

The life lesson he learned from his father sets up a rigid frame in which he begins to frustrate Lelia.

Henry conceals the nature of his occupation from Lelia as long as he can. And the reason he does so is not only because the secrecy was mandated by his job, but also because he wishes to use his job's requirement as a justification for keeping his life distinctly separate from her. In doing so, he is behaving like his father, who does not talk about or explain what he does at his grocery stores in Manhattan and Queens. Henry's attempt to know his father more intimately were usually shut down by his mother, who convinced Henry that asking too many questions to his father would "shame him." His mother continued: "Your father is very proud. You don't know this, but he graduated from the best college in Korea, the very top, and he doesn't need to talk about selling fruits and vegetables. It's below him." And she says: "He only does it for you, Byong-ho, he does everything for you. Now go and keep him company" (56). This statement indicates that Henry's father is tolerating his shame because he has to support his family

by taking on an inferior job, but, more importantly, it suggests that his father is working hard so that Henry, the second-generation Asian American, can have a better life in the United States. The idea that his father is sacrificing his life for him instills feelings of guilt in Henry; however, simultaneously, it also forms identification to his father, who then becomes his masculine ego ideal.¹⁴⁴

In his description of himself and the nature of his occupation, Henry shows an element of internal conflict:

And yet you may know me. I am an amiable man. I can be most personable, if not charming, and whatever I possess in this life is more or less the result of a talent I have for making you feel good about yourself when you are with me. In this sense I am not a seducer. I am hardly seen. I won't speak untruth to you, I won't pass easy compliments or odious offerings of flattery. I make do with on-hand materials, what I can chip out of you, your natural ore. Then I fuel the fire of your most secret vanity (7).

The nature of Henry's occupation informs the reader of the existence of invisible shadowy figures whose sole interest is to compromise the lives of first-generation Asian Pacific Americans who aspire to actualize their American dreams in New York City. In this sense, Henry's occupation subtly informs the reader of the unspoken harsh reality of first-generation Americans in New York (and certainly in other parts of the United States): their lives will be scrutinized, then constructed by the subjectivity of the informants who come in the form of various individuals such as law enforcers, school teachers, employers, shop keepers, or even their own community members. The informant will use the gathered information to jeopardize the lives of first-generation Americans when their activities are perceived as threatening to the existing social order.

¹⁴⁴ In Freud's paper, *the Ego and Id* (1923), ego ideal and superego appear for the first time, but they are described as having synonymous functions. However, in "On Narcissism" (1914). *S.E.* 14, the term ego ideal appears more or less as the psychic structure that moves towards regression to the earlier psychic state.

The sentiment Henry's occupation gives out is the following: first-generation Americans must stay subservient to those who are born in the United States; otherwise, they will suffer negative consequences.¹⁴⁵

It could be said that Henry has learned how to be an effective spy from his father, who kept his thoughts and feelings to himself.¹⁴⁶ Henry is a good writer, or more or less, a good reporter, who does not rely on metaphors to express what he means:

I aim to be a *clean writer*, of the most reasonable eye, and present the subject in question like some sentient machine of transcription. In the commentary, I won't employ anything that even smacks of theme or moral. I will know nothing of the crafts of argument or narrative or drama. Nothing of beauty of art. And I am to stay on my complicated task of rendering a man's life and ambition and leave to the unseen experts the arcana of human interpretation. The palmistry, the scriptology, the rest of their esoterica. The deep science (203).¹⁴⁷

He approaches writing scientifically, in the way he mentions above, making a series of important decisions so as to not include his personal point of view. Henry's approach to writing seems to contain some obsessive qualities. As well, when he speaks, he is unable to share spontaneously his thoughts and ideas because doing so will provoke his feelings, which makes him unable to speak. Henry describes the difference between him and Lelia when it comes to his ability to express thoughts and feelings:

For although I have spent ample hours of my adult life rigorously assessing and figuring all sorts of human calculations, the *flesh math*, as we say, I retain an amazing facility for discharging to hope and dumb chance the things most precious to me.

When real trouble hits, I lock up. I can't work the trusty calculus. I can't speak. I sit there, unmoved. For a person like Lelia, who grew up

¹⁴⁵ One of the ways in which Lee demonstrates the hierarchy between immigrants and non-immigrants, is when he describes the relationship between Korean shopkeepers in Harlem and Queens, N.Y., and their African-American customers. I will pay attention to the phenomenon of their interaction in the following section. Kwang is one who does not behave like a first-generation immigrant; in this sense, he steps outside of the social order. As a result, he will suffer the consequences.

¹⁴⁶ Lee's description of Henry's relationships to his father and other Americans suggest that first-generation Asian Pacific Americans are speaking, but their voices escape speech.

¹⁴⁷ (Author's italicization.)

with hollerers and criers, mine is the worst response. It must look as if I'm not even trying. Unless I drink too much I'll eventually recede. I go into my "father's act," though she only knows this from what I've told her. It's the one complaint she'll make about him, though she always ends with something fond. And this is the primary gripe she has with me – she's even said as much, despite her list – but with us it's ever urgent, the big one.

I don't have any deep problems with her. I know this must sound spiteful. She has her shortcomings, certainly, but I won't go into them because once you start ticking things off they just keep going until they take on a life of their own, which neither truth nor good intention can withstand (157-8).¹⁴⁸

To Lelia, Henry's inability to verbalize his thoughts and feelings openly is an expression of his disinterest or unwillingness to communicate, which incessantly frustrates her.

Henry's style of communication, the belief that one can also communicate in silence, or that words cannot express everything, is stemming from his internal sense of how to exist in the world as a second-generation Korean American whose language extends beyond the standard spoken English language.¹⁴⁹

Henry's non-communicative mannerism indicates that his thoughts and feelings can only emerge in a highly organized manner, which can be useful for his job as a spy. Although he inherits his style of communication from his father, his occupation illustrates the complicated relationship second-generation Asian Pacific Americans maintain with first-generation Asian Pacific Americans. What marks first-generation Asian Pacific Americans as "strangers from a different shore," as Ronald Takaki calls them, is not only their racial appearance and mannerisms, but also their accented spoken English, which produces sounds different from those made by native speakers.¹⁵⁰ Second-generation

¹⁴⁸ (Author's italicization).

¹⁴⁹ Later I will describe the exchange between Chang-rae Lee and his mother from his autobiographical account; the intimacy of their communication is not expressed through the standard usage of spoken English language, but rather, it is with the space between two languages, Korean and English.

¹⁵⁰ Ronald Takaki. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*.

Asian Pacific Americans and other native speakers will recognize the accent of immigrants, and this recognition will create an intricate system in which they begin to place immigrants into various stereotypical categories. And, motivated by their own internalized racism and xenophobia, second-generation Asian Pacific Americans may also use first-generation immigrants' accents as justification for expressing their anger and frustration: they will fantasmatically see first-generation Asian Pacific Americans as their parents, who put them through difficult childhood experience because of the lack of language proficiency and difficulty assimilating in mainstream American culture. They will then place the first-generation immigrants in the world map, so as to differentiate them as the Other, rather than to treat them as Americans or to consider them as having similar historical backgrounds. This behavior is learned – some second-generation Asian Pacific Americans learned it from the way they saw racist and xenophobic native-born native speakers treating first-generation Asian Pacific Americans. They are forming identification with the aggressor; in doing so, they are seeking to transform their status of being the ones who suffer discrimination into being the ones who discriminate.¹⁵¹ In the case of Henry, he learned how to treat first-generation Asian Pacific Americans from watching how native speakers treated his father. He formed identification with whiteness, which became the basis for building his relationships with first-generation Asian Pacific Americans, and his identification to whiteness helped him do his job well.

Through the description of Henry's struggle with self-expression, Lee suggests that first-generation Asian Pacific Americans are not the only the ones who are being cut off from speech; he argues that so too are second-generation Asian Pacific Americans. In

¹⁵¹ For the description and logic behind of the identification with the aggressor, see Anna Freud. *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. New York: International University Press, 1946.

the case of Henry, it is not the accent that marks him as the Other; instead, it is the internal thoughts that influence his decision-making process – his pattern of negotiation entails constantly having to decide what he can say in words. His preferred method of communication is one in which the less he communicates is the better, an approach he takes from his father. Henry's contemplative mannerism and his communication style discursively inform the listener that when attached to racial difference, mannerism has the potential of becoming a form of accent. Henry's mannerisms, too, can stand out as a sign that he is a nonnative speaker. In addition, if a listener is an Orientalist, he or she hears the speaker with a particular gaze, with which he or she seeks to release built-up tension.¹⁵² Orientalism sets up a discourse in which, regardless of the generational difference, Asian Pacific Americans can become the target of this practice of tension reduction.¹⁵³

The first time Lelia meets Henry, his native fluency confuses her, because she sees his racial difference, therefore, expects him to speak imperfectly. Lelia comments on Henry's accent in the following way: "You speak perfectly, of course. I mean if we were talking on the phone I wouldn't think twice." Henry responds: "You mean it's my

¹⁵² Said argues that Orientalism was originally developed by the West for the purpose of building its own national identity. The Orient as stands as fantasmatic geographical location that was used so that the West was able to juxtapose their national identities against it. The Orient as the Other became important nationalistic concepts, which are first built on essentialism then eventually become racism. Said describes the transformation of Orientalism to racism in the following way:

On the level of the thematic, [the Orientalists] adapt an essentialist conception of the countries, nations and people of the Orient under study, a conception which expresses itself through a characterized ethnist typology... and will soon proceed with it towards racism (97).

¹⁵³ Also, for some individuals who fetishize the racial features of Asian Pacific Americans, sexual difference does not get registered, meaning, their perverse logic indicates that as long as the object of their attraction is an Asian Pacific American, they are sexually aroused regardless of his or her gender and sexual differences. Just as I demonstrate the connection between the experience of sexual arousal and racism in the Baldwin chapter (Chapter 3), the subject who has a so-called "Asian fetish" seeks to utilize racism as a way of attaining and prolonging sexual arousal so as not to experience the specific fear associated with encountering the Thing, which is both castration fear and the realization of the difference between reality and fantasy.

face”(12). After sensing the possibility that Henry might perceive her as a racist, Lelia becomes alarmed. She then describes herself as someone who does not see race, but in doing so, she ends up exposing herself as someone who always does. She finally says that Henry’s speech resembles that of someone who is not a native speaker:

“No, it’s not that,” She answered. She reached over as if to touch my cheek.... “Your face is part of the equation, but not in the way you’re thinking. You look like someone listening to himself. You pay attention to what you’re doing. If I had to guess, you’re not a native speaker. Say something.”

“What should I say?”

“Say my name.”

“Lelia,” I said. “Lelia.”

“See, you said Leel-ya so deliberately. You tried not to but you were taking in the sound of the syllables. You are very careful.”

“So are you.”

She took a sip from the cup. “It’s my job, Mr. Henry Park. Unfortunately, I’m the standard-bearer” (12).

In this passage Lelia positions herself as the one who has access to speech, who knows and can detect the slightest accent when the English language is spoken by an Asian Pacific American. However, what she communicates indirectly is the message that she does, indeed, see race, but prefers to disavow the awareness that she does. In other words, she sees race but blinds herself after seeing it. Lelia’s decision to blinding herself can be interpreted as her seeking to disavow the awareness that when she sees Henry she does, indeed, encounter her own racist stereotypes attached to Asian Pacific Americans. And while attempting to blind herself (or disavow such awareness) she utilizes power attached to whiteness with which she secretly racializes Henry’s body. Lelia’s disavowal allows her racism to remain somewhat intact and unconscious to her. This blinding that she facilitates demonstrates an important idea: racism relies on the process that prohibits the racist from knowing its negative effect on people of color. The racist’s aggression or

sexual impulses are targeted against people of color, but such knowledge is being concealed from him or her while the act of subjugation is taking place.

According to Lelia, she is the “standard-bearer.” Perhaps, when she is listening she tries to pay attention to whether or not silent letters such as *f* or *ph* are correctly pronounced, the distinct sound of *th* is enunciated, and/or the different sounds between the letters *r* and *l* are noted. She is the one who assigns second-generation Americans (and their first-generation parents) their places in the United States by detecting their accent. She is saying she does not see race, but contrary to her claim the reader recognizes that she does. However, the way she allows herself to see race is through recognizing nonnative speakers’ accented English: Lelia establishes a peculiar relationship to English language and through it she maintains her perceptive knowledge of the speaker’s racial difference. Lelia sees racial difference as emerging through the sound of nonnative speakers’ accented English, and when she positions herself as native speakers and teaches the correct pronunciation, she is fantasmatically attempting to teach them how to erase their racial difference through speaking English correctly. She does not wish to see that this particular practice is an expression of the desire to exhibit power over immigrants and people of color whose first language is not English. Lelia’s choice to be a speech therapist is an expression of her conscious or unconscious desire to exhibit this power.

After a moment of silence, and subsequent to detecting Lelia’s Orientalism through her interest in detecting his accent, which is motivated by the existing stereotypes that eroticize Asian Pacific Americans as foreigners or strangers from a different shore, Henry decides to approach her by expressing his sexual interest towards her. This is his

way of asserting his masculine power, because in meeting Lelia's gaze, which attempts to orientalize, he experiences discomfort, which indicates previous traumatic experiences where he had encountered individuals who sought to orientalize him. This moment triggers discomfort in Henry in a way similar to the effect of encountering the primal scene: the haunted imagery of the racist seeking to castrate him (or the father who is hurting the mother) returns again and again as an enigmatic signifier. Henry leans towards her and kisses her. He then asks her if she had ever kissed "an Asian" before. By doing this, he subtly informs her that he knows she is eroticizing him and he will gladly become the subject of her gaze and objectification as long as she will make herself available to him as a sexual object. Once again Lelia resists answering Henry's question. The reader wonders if her silence validates Henry's recognition that she is an Orientalist. However, moments later, Henry faces Lelia's Orientalism that is attached to her sexual expressiveness; at this moment he begins to feel uncomfortable:

"You taste strange, but only because I don't know you.
Hold on."
She kissed me again, lingering this time.
"Definitely Korean," She said, nodding. Then she
stopped. "Hey are you enjoying this?"
I smiled and said couldn't she tell.
She searched my eyes. "No," she said, now aroused, "I
really can't" (13).

By saying "You taste strange," Lelia orally incorporates Henry. She expresses that she will consume the Other whose racial difference she will taste orally. She then assigns the name of the country, Korea to the flavor she has tasted in her mouth. Henry's response to Lelia's Orientalism is internal, and it is rather passive aggressive – he does not do much to refute it but fantasizes what type of face she wanted to see: "I put myself in her place and imagined her father and mother. Boyfriends, recent loves. I made those phantom

calculations, did all that blind math so that I might cast for her the perfect picture of a face” (13). In addition, his passive aggressive response indicates another phenomenon: it is his way of forming identification with Lelia; in particular, it is his attempt to fetishize her so as to gain access to power associated with whiteness.

At this moment in the novel, by maintaining his relationship to Lelia, Henry makes himself a participant and endorser of Lelia’s peculiar system. He first acknowledges her perverse approach to language, as well as her investment in Orientalism, but he will then disavow his awareness. It is because by letting her orientalize him, he is seeking to transform his status as being the passive recipient of violence to active seeker of sexual pleasure – this is how his passivity links itself to aggression. He takes Lelia’s tendency to orientalize him as an opportunity to turn her into his sexual object.

Henry’s disavowal also speaks about his wish to be regarded as an “American man,” without the hyphenated part of his identity, Asian-, being attached to his body. Henry wishes to facilitate a process that allows him to carry out the so-called racial disembodiment, though in reality he cannot choose to be either Asian or American – the attainment of fulfillment depends on his ability to be both Asian and American. Although he continues to regard Lelia’s whiteness and gender as the thing with which he tries to remain in a fantasy where he can exist as an American without the hyphenation, he knows he can never get rid of the gaze of the Orientalist. And, in order to seek relief, he needs to lower the level of anxiety that comes when being seen as an Oriental, the Other. Henry’s way of doing so is by elevating his sexual tension, which accomplishes the task of substituting the anxiety with his desire for sexual intercourse with Lelia. In other

words, what Henry attempts to do is to eliminate his racial difference by submitting to his sexual drive. Underneath his decision to kiss Lelia there exists aggression – his kiss is an expression of his wish to show her that he is the one who consumes her orally, not she him.

Although Henry seeks to eliminate his racial difference through turning his aggression into his sexual drive, his effort does not always produce a successful result. Henry attempts to use Lelia's Orientalism as an opportunity to turn her into his sexual object, however, when this approach fails, his anxiety reemerges. He experiences this specific anxiety when encountering Orientalists, who turn him into the thing with which they will enter their fantasmatic world, the Orient. In this way, Orientalists are also fetishists, who use Asians and Pacific Americans in order to avoid the knowledge that there exists a difference between fantasy (Orient) and reality (Asia and Pacific Islands). In other words, they refuse to learn that in reality there is no place called the Orient. They seek to fantasize Asians and Pacific Islanders as Orientals or regard Asia and Pacific Islands as the Orient so as to refuse their own reality. Henry's experiencing of anxiety also functions as a reminder that he was not able to successfully turn the discomfort of being gazed upon as an "Oriental" into sexual desire.¹⁵⁴ And, when he recognizes a hint of the malfunctioning of this substitution, the switching of the anxiety attached to his racial difference with the elevation of sexual drive, he experiences it as a form of castration fear.¹⁵⁵ If the failure of this substitution is noted, Henry will have to find a better way to cope with racism. Perhaps, the way to do so is to engage in verbal

¹⁵⁴ This process also describes the psychic process of turning something passive to active in order to attain a sense of mastery over pain and discomfort. See *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

¹⁵⁵ For further discussion of this idea, see David Eng. *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*.

expression, to explicitly state his point of view that he does not like to be fetishized as an “Oriental,” but he disengages from this process. It is because Henry is aware that the very nature of his relationship to the English language is such that it does not allow him to articulate what he needs to express, which is how Orientalism affects the very core of his ego.

Historically speaking, Asian Pacific Americans are viewed as not suffering from racism because they did not experience slavery and public lynching.¹⁵⁶ The perception that Asian Pacific Americans do not experience racism produces a peculiar rhetoric that suggests that in order to claim the experience of racial subjugation, one must possess a black body.¹⁵⁷ This rhetoric indicates that because Asian Pacific Americans’ bodies are *not* black, they do not have to fear racial discrimination and they do not have to fear the potential of castration. In fact, they should *enjoy* their difference because it can also offer pleasure to others for whom having the opportunity to experience Asia or the Pacific Islands would be extremely gratifying. In other words, the difference Asian Pacific Americans are perceived to possess is often regarded as pleasurable to others. It is because the difference is perceived to offer a discursive space in which the problematic practice of exoticizing Asian Pacific Americans becomes Orientalists’ expression of their appreciation towards their cultural differences. This particular rhetoric of appreciation is

¹⁵⁶ In the United States, the signifier of skin color is linked to the signified, blackness, which means in order to be seen as people of color, one must possess a black body. The way Asian Pacific Americans are racialized often requires their body to be juxtaposed to blackness, which highlights the fact that their body is different from the black body; therefore, they are *not* black. This juxtaposition produces a peculiar rhetoric that Asian Pacific Americans are then seen as not people of color because they do not possess a black body.

¹⁵⁷ David Eng. Racial Castration: *Managing Masculinity in Asian America*; Gary Y. Okihiro, “Is Yellow Black or White?” in *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp.31-63; and Michael Omi and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s*. (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), pp. 57-86. Also see Dan Caldwell, “Negroization of the Chinese Stereotype in California” in *Southern California Quarterly* 53 (June 1971): 123-31.

a product of Orientalism, and it is how racism specific to Asian Pacific Americans operates.¹⁵⁸ In the following, Zizek speaks about the problem of turning the subject into the object of desire, the thing – for him this practice cannot divorce itself from the practice of ideology:

What psychoanalysis can do to help the critique of ideology is precisely to clarify the status of this paradoxical *jouissance* as the payment that the exploited, the servant, receives for serving the Master. This *jouissance*, of course, always emerges within a certain phantasmic field; the crucial precondition for breaking the chain of servitude is thus to ‘traverse the fantasy’ which structures our *jouissance* in a way which keeps us attached to the Master – makes us accept the framework of the social relationship of domination.¹⁵⁹

For Zizek, traversing of fantasy can lead to the realization that the behind fantasy there exists nothing but the drive. In addition, this drive will seek to attain *jouissance* through automatically linking itself to the power of the Master. In other words, Orientalism is a product that is used in order to pleasure white Western subjects.

In examining Henry’s depression and anxiety, there is another point to be made with regard to the struggle specific to Asian Pacific Americans. Asian men’s bodies are perpetually pitted against black men’s over-determined masculinity. The stereotypical racist notion that Asian men are effeminate comes from this perceptive reality. As some Asian Americanists have noted, Asian men are often fantasized as not possessing a penis.¹⁶⁰ And if they are fantasized as such, Asian women as a sexual opposite, can also

¹⁵⁸For Said, Orientalism is Western projection that governs the Orient, which always overrides the East. Said frequently arrives at the argument that the construction of the Orient allowed the West to gain power over the East. In this sense, through Orientalism the East became a commodity, which was to be used to allow the West to obtain its economic and intellectual power. *Orientalism* (92-105).

¹⁵⁹ Slavoj Zizek. “Love Thy Neighbour? No, Thanks!” in *The Plague of Fantasies*. (New York: Verso, 1997), P. 48.

¹⁶⁰ See Richard Fung, “Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn” in *Q & A: Queer in Asian America*. Ed. by David Eng and Alice Hom. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998. Also see, David Eng. *Racial Castration*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

be fantasized as possessing a penis.¹⁶¹ As I argued in the previous section, these fantasies employ the logics of phallic monism and concreteness, both of which are particular to fetishism. If the rhetoric of racism suggests that Asian Pacific Americans are regarded as not suffering from racism because they are not black, in what way can we begin to name the kind of struggle or oppression they encounter in their lives in the United States?

Henry's affect and his relationship to his wife Lelia suggests that Asian Pacific Americans' struggles are linked to the management of the gaze the Orientalist and fetishist alike utilizes, which strives to see what kind of "special" body they possess. Their bodies are then objectified so that the Orientalist, who is also fetishist, can prevent him or herself from experiencing tension-rising and anxiety-provoking stimuli. This practice is juxtaposed with Henry's perpetual struggle with anxiety.¹⁶²

Eventually, Henry's anxiety and depression lead him to psychoanalysis, but it was his job that takes him to a psychoanalyst.¹⁶³ He receives an assignment to spy on a

¹⁶¹ Asian women's bodies are regarded as the substitute for the male body; their bodies can become a "better choice" because they do not remind them of their mothers' "castrated" body. The logic of phallic monism suggests that women used to have a penis, but lost it because they did something they were not supposed to do. Men, both gay and straight, who are afraid of sexual intercourse, will fantasize Asian women in this regard, as is very commonly seen in my clinical practice.

¹⁶² In an interview with Young-Oak Lee, Chang-rae Lee speaks about the specific anxiety that first-generation immigrants experience in the United States, which is the theme in *Native Speaker*:

YOL: Henry's parents felt uncomfortable in American society and were worried about what people thought of them. Do you think this kind of anxiety that the immigrants have will disappear as generations of immigrants follow?

CRL: I don't think any new immigrants will ever be free of this kind of anxiety – it's impossible, and probably necessary, for sheer survival (217).

Young-Oak Lee. "Language and Identity: An Interview with Chang-rae Lee." *Amerasia Journal* v.22 (1996). Although Lee does not cite Freud's theory of anxiety, Chang-rae Lee's explanation of the usefulness of anxiety matches with Freud's theory of anxiety after 1926, which he viewed as the tool that signals the potential arrival of danger. For Freud, the function of anxiety in this way can explain the subject's response to trauma, precisely because anxiety signals the arrival of a traumatic event, seeking to prepare the subject to handle potentially dangerous circumstances. See, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926). *S.E.* 20.

¹⁶³ Chang-rae Lee's father, Young Yong Lee is a psychiatrist who worked in Bellevue hospital before opening a private practice in Westchester, NY. There was a strong influence of psychoanalytic teaching at Bellevue Hospital due to a close relationship with New York University medical school, and within its department of psychiatry physicians have been seeking psychoanalytic training through New York

psychoanalyst, Dr. Luzan, who is a first-generation Filipino American. Henry decides to use the assignment as the opportunity to enter a therapeutic relationship with Dr. Luzan, and in this fictitious therapeutic frame, Henry begins experiencing relief from his symptoms. Interestingly, Dr. Luzan's ethnicity as Filipino allows the two subjects, who are second- and first-generation Asian Pacific Americans, to establish a connection based on a common language: despite the generational difference, they are both native speakers of the English language. In addition, their commonality also indicates that both Korea and the Philippines were once subject to Japanese and United States colonialism. Through their commonality, instead of difference, they begin building their therapeutic relationship. It is also interesting to note that Luzan is another first-generation Asian Pacific American who is perceived to be not affected by the trauma of not knowing how to express his thoughts and feelings in English. However, in a different way from Kwang, Dr. Luzan's access to English articulates the painful past of having to go through the experience of colonial education, of being forced to learn English in school. Therefore, Dr. Luzan's relationship to the English language elucidates the existence of trauma in a more implicit manner. Thus, it is not just silence that communicates trauma, but the ability to speak a colonial language can also communicate a historicity that is traumatic to the subject. Perhaps, by introducing Dr. Luzan and describing his ethnicity as Filipino, Lee suggests that the nature of the trauma that comes with native fluency is something language cannot fully express. The reader wonders if Henry would have ever seen a psychoanalyst if he had not taken Dr. Luzan as a job assignment. This portrayal of Henry's resistance to the idea of attaining therapeutic relief speaks about the complicated

relationship between the idea of a “talking cure” and Asian Pacific Americanness, or what it means to be Korean and male or Korean American and male – all of these identities rely on the notion that sharing one’s feelings using words, especially to express one’s feelings towards his or her family members, is a sign of dishonor.¹⁶⁴ Silence is something that Henry depends on and uses “liberally and for gaining advantage” (96). He attempts to show that his silence worked through his “face, a peerless mask, the bluntest instrument” (96). Henry has seen his father holding in his thoughts, feelings, and wishes, and sacrificing his individuality so as to offer Henry a better life in the United States as an American. Henry’s guilt towards his father affects him in such a way that, in order to validate his father’s life and his sacrifice, he unconsciously identifies with his father’s struggle – he attempts to live his life just as his father approached his life, by holding in and not speaking his thoughts and feelings openly. Therefore, at the moment Henry senses the need to express his thoughts and feelings through language (and without language one does not mark his or her existence in the United States), he senses internal conflict: his wish for self-expression is met by the thought that to do so contradicts his father’s belief. In addition, this struggle is fortified and reinforced by the external violence motivated by Orientalism, which constantly silences his voice and erases his body.

Henry’s father’s life as an immigrant represents a harsher reality for Henry. He sees this especially when he is helping his father’s grocery store.

¹⁶⁴ *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans: Issues and Concerns for Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Daya Smith Sandhu, Ed. Commack, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 1999; George K. Hong. *Psychotherapy and Counseling with Asian American Clients: A Practical Guide*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2001; and Lee C. Lee. *Handbook of Asian American Psychology*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2007.

My father, thinking that it might be good for business, urged me to show them how well I spoke English, to make a display of it, to casually recite “some Shakespeare words.”

I, his princely Hal. Instead, and only in part to spite him, I grunted my best Korean to the other men. I saw that if I just kept speaking the language of our work the customers didn’t seem to see me. I wasn’t there. They didn’t look at me. I was a comely shadow who didn’t threaten them. I could even catch a rich woman whose tight strand of pearls pinched in the sags of her neck whispering to her friend right behind me, “Oriental Jews” (53).

Henry uses language to appear and disappear, and this is an advantage that his father does not possess. To the rest of America, his father remains invisible, and, through watching him, Henry learns to become invisible, too. He also knows that the only moment he can emerge as an American is when his face is not shown and he is speaking English as a native speaker. Henry sees his father’s struggle, which often affects him as well; however, Lelia remains oblivious to it. She insists on believing that Henry is the one who makes her “crazy,” because she perceives him as not sharing what he is thinking and feeling to her the way she expects (116). Lelia is unable to hear the content of Henry’s speech even when he speaks, because it exists outside her reality. For her, meanings attained through matching signifiers and signified can only take place if Henry expresses his words by utilizing metaphors and signs that are accessible to her.

Henry’s choice of language expresses the metaphors of suffocation, appearance and disappearance; and even life and death. It also expresses second-generation Asian Pacific Americans’ complicated relationship to the nonnative speakers of English. Second-generation Asian Pacific Americans approach first-generation Asian Pacific Americans with familiarity, but also with both love and aggression. In some ways, Henry’s ambivalence towards first-generation Asian Pacific Americans is a sign of his projective identification –Henry is introjecting his personal struggle of not knowing how

to adequately handle the particular kind of fetishistic view that is driven from Orientalism to them, which places him in a higher social order than where most first-generation Asian Pacific Americans find themselves. Or, it is possible to say that his occupation as a spy is the practice of introjection on a grand scale, a form of enactment, meaning he is doing to others what others have been doing to him.¹⁶⁵

Lelia: Seeing is Believing – Tongue as the Phallus, Immigrants as the thing, and Henry as the Thing

Henry articulates Lelia's relationship to speech in the following way:

What I found was this: that she could really speak. At first I took her as being exceedingly proper, but I soon realized that she was simply executing the language. She went word by word. Every letter had a border. I watched her wide full mouth sweep through her sentences like a figure touring a dark house, flipping on spots and banks of perfectly drawn light. The sensuality, in certain rigors (10-11).

In the above passage, Henry views Lelia's usage of speech as a form of sexual expression – her use of the English language indicates an unquestionable link between speech and sexual gratification. And the organ Lelia uses to attain sexual gratification is her tongue – she moves it around like a “figure,” and, by doing so, she creates meanings by matching signifiers with signified. This imagery provokes the obvious Lacanian association: the

¹⁶⁵ Both projective identification and introjection are concepts that are developed by Melanie Klein. Klein defines projective identification as a defense against depressive anxiety and separation anxiety. Hanna Segal notes that Klein claimed projective identification facilitates the process in which the self and internal objects are split off. Then the internal object that is being split off is projected onto the external object, which will then be possessed and controlled. Projective identification has two aims: one, it is directed towards the idealized object in order to prevent it from separation. Two, it is directed towards the bad object in order to gain control of its potential for harm. Freud speaks about introjection in conjunction with the status of the ego (*The Ego and the Id*, 1923). Klein pushes this argument and mentions that this precipitate consists of introjected part objects such as the breast, penis, and later whole objects, such as the mother and father. See Hanna Segal. *Introduction to the Work of Melanie Klein*. London: Hogarth Press, 1973,

tongue is functioning as a subject, throwing him or herself into the signifying chain. The dark house represents the pre-existing stage before the formation of subjectivity, which will be altered once the light is turned on (or once the subject enters the signifying chain). The subject will then be forever lost in the signifying chain, ceaselessly desiring to create meanings by facing the impossibility associated with what language does not allow. It is Lacan who reminds us that desire is expressed by lack; the signifier of which is the phallus. It is possible to say that Lelia's desire to use her tongue stems from her fantasmatic logic: in her fantasy, she regards her tongue as equal to the phallus.

In describing Lelia's ontological status, the concepts of "not-having" and "having" require further elaboration. In Lelia's mind, the concept of "having" refers to having the power to control the external environment; thus, the concept of "not-having" associated with Lelia is both *manqué à avoir* (not having) and *manqué à être* (not being). Her work is an expression of her wish to rescue immigrants and poor people of color – ones whose tongues are tied because they do not speak English. It is in this sense the concept of "having" and the signifier of the phallus are significantly linked: Lelia, by being a speech therapist, seeks to function as one who is "having." She will then be able to aid her students in becoming speaking subjects, which requires them to repudiate the old subjectivity exemplified by the experience of "not-having."

When Lelia uses her tongue to communicate with Henry, she experiences a kind of power struggle: based on his racial difference she perceives him as a nonnative speaker. However, when he speaks, she realizes that he is, indeed, a native speaker, and this recognition frustrates her. For Lelia, native fluency is not only connected to whiteness, it is also gendered as phallic and masculine. However, when she encounters

Henry's native fluency, Lelia worries that her phallus will get contrasted with his penis. Despite his racial difference, Henry's masculine sexual difference is visible. Therefore, his penis will become more powerful than her phallus because it can be viewed in reality whereas her phallus remains invisible. And while losing herself in this struggle Lelia loses her sexual interest in Henry. Henry becomes someone who reminds her of the harsh reality of the external world that she is powerless. In a very noticeable way, Henry reminds Lelia of the limitation of her fantasmatic wish: the elimination of gender and racial differences is impossible. However, unlike Henry, her nonnative-speaker students do not threaten her fantasmatic wish, and so she uses them as the thing (fantasmatic figures, not real people) with which to refute the awareness that the elimination of difference is impossible. In her conscious awareness, nonnative speakers do not become the "figure touring a dark house" because they do not yet have access to the signifying chain in which affects, thoughts, and ideas are communicated through uttering English words without an accent (11). Lelia takes advantage of her students' status as nonnative speakers and uses their inability to speak as native speakers as the thing to prolong her fantasmatic conviction that elimination of their racial difference (or difference between fantasy and reality) is possible.

Lelia's occupation can be regarded as the result of her forming a peculiar identification with nonnative speakers' ontological status – she sees them as suffering from "not-having." Lelia then demonstrates to the nonnative speakers that they, too, can transform the experience of "not-having" to "having" by learning to use their tongues correctly. This approach is linked to her fantasmatic conviction, a fetishistic one indeed, that they, too, can eliminate the notion of difference attached to their racial and

immigration status. In Lelia's mind, nonnative speakers' accents are evidence of their still having a dysfunctional tongue, and as long as they have it, they cannot transform their racial status to "having," which for her means becoming white subjects.

When Henry and Lelia meet at the party in El Paso, Lelia explains to Henry what she does for living in the following way:

"So, I work for a relief agency," she said, warming up. "I drive a pickup truck. I deliver boxes of canned food and old clothes to some neighborhoods around town. Many of the people there are illegals, Mexicans and Asians. Whole secret neighborhoods brown and yellow. Tell me, am I being offensive?" (11)

Henry answers, "I don't think so," because he is unwilling to share his impression that her comments can be taken as offensive to the nonnative speakers and insensitive to their need to speak English for survival in the United States. In addition, by saying "I don't think so," Henry disavows the discomfort from hearing her offensive remark because he, too, is regarded as yellow. And by disavowing his discomfort, he expresses his wish to be regarded as a native speaker, an American man, who is as good as white, without the hyphenated part of his racial identity, the "Asian-." In addition, Lelia's description of the "whole secret neighborhood" reminds him of Queens, New York, where most of the residents are so-called brown and yellow in the eyes of whites.¹⁶⁶ Lelia feels a relief from Henry's response of "I don't think so;" thus, she starts exposing herself more. In the following, she tells Henry what she does with the truck she drives.

"Okay. Anyway, they know my blue truck. They forget my face but they know my truck. I carry a box into a house. I check if the infants and children look healthy. The sick ones go on a list for the health service. I come back outside and people are always waiting there. They just want to talk. They know me as the English lady. All day I give lessons from the

¹⁶⁶ The expression, "people of color" names the practice of whites who see and categorize people based on their skin colors. The expression also indicates that individuals' experiences in the United States are influenced by this color-coded categorization.

back of the truck. I sit there and they talk to me. I help them say what they want. *How much is this air conditioner? Does this bus go to Sunland Park Racetrack? Yes, I cook and clean and I can sew.* Now I teach a class at night. The same people and more. I try to turn them away, you know, because of fire codes. They look at me confused and don't move. Half of them end up standing. They bring their babies because they heard you can learn in your sleep. What can I do? I let them all stay. Everybody in this town wants to learn English (11).¹⁶⁷

Lelia's job is to feed words to nonnative speakers. She is using her truck as a house in which they are learning how to use their tongues correctly. It is also her job to rescue the nonnative speakers who are desperately expressing their wish to know how to say what they need in English. Lelia is teaching them how to survive, and this gives her tremendous power, or it is more appropriate to say that this experience makes her feel phallic.

Although Lelia is also a second-generation American like Henry, her white European background allows her to mask her parents' immigration history. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Scotland, an English-speaking country. Therefore, when they arrived, they were spared having to learn a new language. As compared to Henry's family, Lelia's family was able to "blend in" visually into the cultural imagery of what people should look like in the United States. Although she appears to be a helpful teacher to immigrants and poor people of color, Lelia's insensitivity, or her wish to obtain power using them as the thing, suggests the lack of her internal understanding as to what nonnative speakers experience in the United States. Lelia shows that she has developed identification to the discourse of Otherness in a fetishistic way.¹⁶⁸ While existing under

¹⁶⁷ (Author's italicization.)

¹⁶⁸ According to Marx, fetishism is a way that things will replace a social relation between people. However, Žižek argues that the essential feature of fetishism does not consist of replacing men with things, but rather it describes the relationship in which necessary elements for building a social relationship stem from misrecognition. *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (23-28).

the disguise of a benevolent and compassionate “rescuer” of the nonnative speakers, whose bodies are marked by their inability to enunciate English words correctly, Lelia continues to maintain a peculiar identification to her students’ experience of “not-having.”

After Henry and Lelia get married, Lelia moves to New York and primarily works as a speech therapist. He describes Lelia’s job in the following way:

Sometimes she would have kids over at our place. The children she saw had all kinds of articulation problems, some because of physiological defects like cleft palates or tied tongues. Others had had laryngectomies, or else defective hearing, or learning disabilities, or for an unknown reason had begun speaking much later than was normal. And then others – the ones I always paid close attention to – came to her because they had entered the first grade speaking a home language other than English. They were nonnative speakers. All day she helped those children manipulate their tongues and their lips and their exhaling breath, guiding them through the difficult language (2).

Henry’s narrative expresses his awareness that Lelia’s act of undifferentiating the nonnative speakers of English from the children who have speech impairment is problematical. Henry then seems to pay close attention to the nonnative speakers because he recognizes that their struggles and difficulties demand a different level of understanding, which requires the assessment of trauma that they might be experiencing. For example, how did immigration affect them both physically and psychologically? And how does their parents’ experience of the lack of resources such as healthcare, employment and education contribute to their self-esteem, which will inevitably influence their willingness to speak? These questions have to be kept in mind when the educator is approaching children who are nonnative speakers. However, when addressing the problems associated with speech impairment, the approach towards such students does not involve the assessment of trauma that is associated with the loss of their

previous life due to immigration. Nor does it involve witnessing the hardship their parents have gone through in order to finally call the United States home, a struggle which may take many years. By putting children who are nonnative speakers and children with speech impairment together in the same sentence, Lee critiques the assumption that the two groups of children experience similar psychological problems. However, the nonnative speakers' struggles are more specific – they express the traumatic impact of immigration and the pressure for assimilation that the children suffering from speech impairment do not face.¹⁶⁹

In order to interact with a nonnative speaker, the listener needs to be aware of the complicated nature of the immigration process and the inevitable violence the speaker experiences when he or she attempts to speak English to native speakers. Watching his father and the rest of his family members, Henry has become sensitized to the intricate process in which communication between the nonnative speaker and native speaker gets carried out, a process that often produces pain and sadness in both the speaker and listener. In the following, Henry describes his experience of knowing two languages, English and Korean:

I thought English would be simply a version of Korean. Like another kind of coat you could wear. I didn't know what a difference in language meant then. Or how my tongue would tie in the initial attempts, stiffen so, struggle like an animal booby-trapped and dying inside my head. Native

¹⁶⁹ Although there is speculation that some children are more susceptible to developing speech pathology than others due to their physiological make up, many researchers emphasize that speech impairment often results from the children's environmental failure during the time of the primary narcissistic stage. See *Exploring the Speech-Language Connection*. Rhea Paul, Ed. *Communication and Language Intervention Series*, Vol. 8. In my reading, the juxtaposition between the children suffering from speech impairment and the immigrant children whose native languages are not English indicates Lee's point of view, which critiques the view that the immigrants' inability to learn English has to do with their physiological limitations or it is stemming from an environmental failure that occurred in their primary narcissistic stage. Lee's juxtaposition seems to indicate that the immigrants' difficulty with English is linked to two reasons: their experiencing of trauma specific to immigration and the force of silencing they experience by native English speakers after arriving in the United States.

speakers may not fully know this, but English is a scabrous mouthful. In Korean, there are no separate sounds for L and R, the sound is singular and without a baroque Spanish trill or roll. There is no B and V for us, no P and F. I always thought someone must have invented certain words to torture us. *Frivolous. Barbarian.* I remember my father saying, Your eyes all *led*, staring at me after I'd smoked pot the first time, and I went to my room and laughed until I wept (233-4).

What separates Henry from his father is his ability to pronounce the letter, "L." And when he pronounces the "L," he sees the insurmountable distance between him and his father. He longs for his father, yet his father is unable to demonstrate to him that the letters "L" and "R" occupy two different worlds. His father's body, more specifically his tongue, may not be able to demonstrate this knowledge. However, his father may well be aware of the difference between the two letters but cannot inform him through the correct pronunciations. Henry's laughter indicates his aggression against his father (he is laughing at his father) who is appearing unintelligent. However, he ends up crying because he recognizes that the distance between him and his father which will never cease to exist – the distance is signified by his father's inability to demonstrate the truth through speech.

It is possible to see that by putting children who are nonnative speakers and children who have speech impairment together, Lelia might be viewing both accents and racial difference as a form of physical handicap. Just as Henry's choice of an occupation is motivated by his fantasmatic wish, Lelia's job, too, is linked to her fantasmatic wish: by rescuing to children from their future "colored" or handicapped by their inability to speak English as native speakers, she is seeking to become phallic. In her fantasy, Lelia is interested in showing children who are nonnative speakers how to erase their racial difference through using their tongues correctly. However, there exists another fantasy

which illustrates the following wish: through functioning as speech therapist to these children, she is also seeking to rescue them from their dysfunctional immigrant parents, who gave them a deficient body: a tongue which produces incoherent sounds. In particular, Lelia sees their mothers as the ones responsible for teaching them their languages, mother tongues, which inevitably force the children to have a life mirrored by hardships and obstacles. To Lelia, a human tongue is more than a muscle, manipulation of which will produce correct sounds in English language. She regards the tongue much like human genitals:

Lelia decorates the studio with colored butcher paper and animal posters and cutouts her students make. You see her hand-drawn illustrations of the human mouth, the tongue, the upper and lower palates, the uvula. Her strokes are broad and gentle, the colors muted; Lelia says anatomically correct pictures give the kids nightmares (232).

Lelia is concerned that a human tongue's raw naked visual image might produce a traumatic effect on her students, especially the ones who are so fragile that they cannot adequately handle the process of learning about the existence of sexual difference.¹⁷⁰ Through concealing parts of the tongue, Lelia makes the astounding association between the tongue and the phallus. And by concealing a part of the picture, she aims to install the phallic imagery of the genitals into the children through a veil. In her fantasy, she is not just their speech therapist, but is their white mother who has the capacity to teach them how to speak correctly.

If one is to examine Lelia's position from a Freudian perspective, her gesture suggests the possibility that her students will form disappointment towards their biological mothers, who gave them a dysfunctional tongue. Lelia constructs an image of

¹⁷⁰ The Oedipus period installs the idea of sexual difference. However, children who are going through the Oedipus stage often will hold onto their own version of sexual difference.

herself as the only one who can restore the children's disappointment; she does so by functioning as the guardian of the key to the symbolic world. Lelia's position towards her students, especially to her nonnative-speaker students whose ability to enunciate words is not interrupted by physio-psychological difficulties, subtly pushes the children's biological mothers away from them. And in doing so, she ends up appearing much like the father in the Oedipus triangle, whose presence in the child's psyche results in breaking the mother-child dyad.¹⁷¹ Therefore, by attempting to sever the children's relationship to their biological mother, Lelia installs the imagery of her tongue, the one that produces the functional sounds, as the phallus. As a result, she emerges as the phallic mother, who exhibits power neither their mother nor father possesses.

However, when Lelia becomes pregnant with her son, Mitt, she experiences a particular kind of loss, the loss of her ability to retreat in her fantasy where she facilitates the elimination of her gender role. In a way, her son prevents her from conducting this specific form of psychic retreat. Interestingly, the word, "Mitt" means a hand or mitten, which can function as a fetish object. However, if the letter "i" in the word is substituted with the letter "u," the word will become another word, "mutt," which has a connotation of mixed breed or people who are racially mixed. Mitt is regarded as a product of miscegenation, one whose body will be used as a fetish object, the thing. However, Lee does something critical – he rescues Mitt as the thing and makes him as the subject who cuts Lelia's fetishistic chain: through her pregnancy Lelia's sees the reality that sexual difference is irrefutable. Therefore, through giving birth to Mitt, Lelia acknowledges her status as a biological mother in reality, and this reality results in irradiating her

¹⁷¹ Jacques Lacan. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in *Ecris* (75-81).

fantasmatic wish to function as the phallic mother.¹⁷² For Lelia, becoming a mother to Mitt solidifies the knowledge of the existence of sexual difference and gender roles, which she desperately tries to abolish.

In the story Mitt suddenly dies. Mitt's death can also be read as an expression of the intensity of the dread Lelia experiences when she becomes a biological mother. The cause of his death: suffocation. Mitt's life comes to a complete circle – he dies on his seventh birthday.¹⁷³ During his birthday party he dies playing with his white friends in the backyard of his grandfather's house in Queens. His white friends jumped on top of him; the activity started as an innocent game, but turned fatal. Being underneath his white friends, Mitt, the half-Asian and half-white boy, could not utter a word. He was unable to scream and reclaim his breath. Inside of him there existed a psychic representation of the irresolvable struggle between silence and speech and the impossible integration of racial difference between his Asian-American father and his white mother, whose worlds could not intersect. Mitt, the concrete example of Lelia and Henry's union, could not bring together their differences. As well, his biracial subjectivity is unable to refute the discourse of difference that categorizes individuals into various stereotypes based on racial and ethnic differences. After his death Henry describes the following sentiments:

¹⁷² Freud argues that the process of becoming a biological mother allows the woman to overcome her disappointment and penis envy since the baby becomes a substitute for the penis. In other words, after having a baby, the woman will recognize that she no longer needs to desire a penis since she now has its equivalent, a baby. Freud would argue that reproduction completes the process for the woman to become a feminine subject. See, "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" (1924). Also, see Nancy Chodorow. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*.

¹⁷³ In Chinese culture, the number 7 features prominently in some aspects of life. For example, the seventh day of the first moon of the lunar year is known as Human's Day, which is considered the birthday of all human beings universally. Similarly, on a death, a special ceremony is held on the 49th day after death, that is, 7 X 7 days, signifying birth (7) and the final parting, death (7). As well, in Genesis, the world was created by the seventh day.

Lately I keep seeing him in Lelia's arms, the way he looked so different from her when he was just born, the shock of his black hair, the delicate slips of his eyes. His face would change soon enough, but he looked so fully Korean then (if nothing like me), and Lelia, dead exhausted and only casually speaking, wondered aloud how she could pass him so little of herself. Of course it did not concern her further. Though I kept quiet, I was deeply hurting inside, angry with the idea that she wished he was more white. The truth of my feeling, exposed and ugly to me now, is that I was the one who was hoping whiteness for Mitt, being fearful of what I might have bestowed on him: all that too-ready devotion and honoring, and the chilly pitch of my blood, and then all that burning language that I once presumed useless, never uttered and never lived.... After Mitt died, it was like we were wading knee-deep in kerosene. Suddenly your speech is a match (285).

In this passage Henry communicates his struggle of being an American, an Asian Pacific American (and Korean-American) and a man, when he predicts what Mitt would experience in the future. Henry is the one who represents visible racial difference, and who gives Mitt access to not just one but two distinctly different languages, English and Korean, while Lelia desperately attempts to disavow it. Although Lelia's association indicates that nonwhite speakers often speak English with an accent, which she sees as a sign of deficiency, Henry is the one who gave Mitt native fluency in two tongues without the sound of abnormality. In a way, by erasing Mitt from the story, Lee offers a resolution to the irresolvable nature of the conflicts that exist between Lelia and Henry. Mitt's cause of death, suffocation, implies that language could not name his parents' struggle of having to face difference, which he inherited, and it finally took his breath away.

In talking about Mitt and his death, Lelia reacts vehemently when Henry uses the word, "accident" to describe what took place on the day of his death.

"An accident?" she cried, nearly hollering. She covered her mouth. Her voice was breaking. "How can you say it was an accident? We haven't treated it like one. Not for a second. Look at us. Sweetie, can't you see,

when your baby dies it's never an accident. I don't care if a truck hit him or he crawled out a window or he put a live wire in his mouth, it was not an accident. And that's a word you and I have no business using. Sometimes I think it's more like some long-turning karma that finally came back for us. Or that we didn't love each other. We thought our life was good enough. Maybe it's that Mitt wasn't all white or all yellow. I go crazy thinking about it. Don't you? Maybe the world wasn't ready for him. God. Maybe it's that he was so damn happy" (129).

Although Lelia uses the phrase, "the world was not ready for him," to describe how Mitt would have lived as a biracial child who is raised by parents who occupy two distinctly different worlds, she is unable question herself whether or not she was ready to be his mother. Lelia also does not recognize that for Mitt, she was his world because she was his mother. She was the one who set his primary environment for him. Lelia was too busy functioning as the white phallic mother to her students, who allowed her whiteness and gender to stand as the legitimate criteria for being the one who allow them access to the symbolic world. As a result, Lelia's fantasmatic wish to exist as the white phallic mother also influenced the way Mitt experienced his life: just as she treated her nonnative-speaker students, she obsessively taught Mitt how to pronounce words correctly.

Henry realizes how much work Lelia had put in when she was speaking to Mitt when he discovers the tapes that recorded their interaction, the speech lessons Lelia used to give to Mitt. Lelia and Mitt used to play with a tape recorder Henry brought home from work. Lelia sometimes taped their conversation intentionally, but more often than that Mitt pressed the record button without her knowing. Her effort to teach Mitt the correct enunciation is coming from her paranoid thought process, which has to do with her thought associated with his Koreanness, which emerges as a visible sign of his racial difference. Lelia approaches his racial difference as something that has to be erased through proper speech, or that, because of his biracial body, without her careful

instruction, his speech might resemble that of a nonnative speaker. Mitt's act of pressing the recording button can be read as his attempt to gather evidence so that he can inform Henry how perverse and paranoid his mother has been.

After Mitt's death, Henry discovers the tapes. However, in listening, Henry does not explore whether or not Mitt might be suffering from suffocation because of Lelia's paranoid and obsessive approach to teaching him correct pronunciation. And rather than developing concerns for his son, Henry engages in narcissistic regression – he thinks of his childhood experience of not having a mother who was a native speaker of English:¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ In an interview with Young-Oak Lee, Chang-rae Lee speaks about his essay, "The Faintest Echo of Our Language" in which he discusses his relationship to his mother, who was a nonnative speaker of English. When Young-Oak Lee asks him where the title of the essay comes from, Chang-rae Lee responds in the following way:

I made it up. Well, in the essay, it speaks about the power of language as being very central to the relationship of me and my mother, and also I think the essay tries to suggest that it's in speaking the secret languages that we find our identity. That's something that's very important to me obviously, and in that essay I was trying to figure out how that kind of language formed me at that time, that difficult time, but also how it helped me to become a writer (216).

Amerasia Journal 30:1 (2004): 215-227. In the following, Chang-rae Lee writes about his communication with his mother. The story describes the passing of his mother, who is dying of stomach cancer. Chang-rae Lee and his mother communicate with two languages, Korean and English.

"Gan-cha-na," she says. *It is fine.*

"Do you need anything?"

"Ggah," she says, flitting her hand, "*kul suh.*" *Go, go and write.*

"What do you want? Anything, anything."

"*In-jeh na jal-leh.*" *Now I want to sleep.*

"Okay, sleep then. Rest. What?"

"*Boep-bo.*" *Kiss.*

"Kiss" (220).

Kiss

This will be our language always. To me she speaks in a child's Korean and for her I speak that same child's English. We use only the simplest words. I think it strange that throughout this dire period we necessarily speak like this. Neither of us has ever grown up or out of this language; by virtue of speech I locked in a time. I love her, and I cannot grow up. And if all mothers and sons converse this way I think the communication must remain for the most part unconscious; for us, however, this speaking is everything we possess. And although I wonder if our union is handicapped by it I see also the minute discoveries in the mining of the words. I will say to her as naturally as I can – as I could speak only years before as a child – *I love you, Mother*, and then this thing will happen, the diction will take us back, bridge this moment with the others, remake this time so full and real. And in our life together, our strange language is the bridge and all that surrounds it; language is the brook streaming through it; it is the mossy stones, the bank, the blooming canopy above, the ceaseless sound, the sky. It is the last earthly thing we have (220-21).

I went through and listened to the whole box of tapes. It was only the second time I was hearing them, and I noticed again how much care Lelia took while talking with him, not just with the words, but with her manner, so unstudied, calm. I thought how lucky he was to have a woman like her directing his life. It struck me, too, how she spoke to him as though they had all the time in the world (112).

In the above paragraph, Henry expresses the sentiment that Mitt is fortunate to have a mother who would teach him how to pronounce English words correctly and prepare him for the world that might not have been ready to accept him as an American. In addition, Lelia's defensive statement of Mitt being too happy can be read as coming from her narcissistic reaction – he must be happy because he has what other Asian children cannot have: a mother who has a functioning tongue, the tongue that can pronounce English words correctly. Lelia is a parent with a phallus as much as Henry is a parent with a penis; thus, it is possible to say that Mitt has two daddies, the one who seeks to be phallic through her ability to use language as a native speaker and the other whose native fluency attached to his Asian face causes him to experience castration fear. Mitt has difficulty receiving care from both of his parents because they are preoccupied with these concerns. Henry's race and his relationship to both Korean and English induce anxiety in Lelia. It is because, despite her wish to hold on to her fantasmatic conviction that racial difference can be erased through language, when she sees Henry, she realizes that her conviction is not true in reality. This realization functions as inhibition for her sexual arousal. Henry is aware of what her anxiety suggests; thus, utters the following sentence: "Though I kept quiet, I was deeply hurting inside, angry with the idea that she wished he was more white" (285).

"The Faintest Echo of Our Language" in *Under Western Eyes: Personal Essays from Asian America*. Ed. Garret Hongo. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.

If Lelia accepts that Henry, too, is a native speaker of English, her acceptance will threaten her narcissism. It will force her to face the reality that Asian Pacific American men can also be native-speakers of English, and English, not an Asian language, can be their mother tongue. A tongue that produces the correct sounds of English does not have to be connected to a white body. And, faced with Henry, her fantasmatic conviction that the tongue that produces correct sounds can eliminate racial and gender difference begins dissipating. Eventually, Henry's existence forces her to disengage from her fantasy. In a way, Henry's struggle with the external environment becomes a reminder of reality that the correct pronunciation does not erase racial or gender differences. In other words, he functions as the Thing for Lelia, who forces her to disengage from her fantasmatic process. And, becoming aware of Henry's function as the Thing makes her flee from him, to get lost on "the islands" where she can find beautiful men who will speak to her in English with their accents.¹⁷⁵

Lelia's refusal to acknowledge Henry's reality and the reality of many nonnative speakers stems from deeply ingrained internal reasons. Lelia does not recognize that miscommunication occurs not because the word is being mispronounced, but rather, it is because the exchange of information takes place in a discursive manner in which many other forms of communication occur long before the moment when the sounds are uttered. And these exchanges before language simultaneously and ceaselessly resist language, and the resistance silently articulates the meaning produced by perception. Lelia does not understand that speech involves miscommunication and misrecognition

¹⁷⁵Their accents will emerge as a form of sexual attraction whereas Henry's language without accent takes away his sexual appeal. This is another indication that for Lelia working with nonnative speakers of English is sexually arousing. In other words, whereas Henry was able to sexually excite her when they met for the first time, he no longer exists as someone who is "exotic" to her, which does not excite her sexually.

regardless of whether or not one speaks without accent. (And it is also her fantasy that as long as one speaks without accent, the information will be exchanged accurately.) For example, even before Henry utters a word, in the perceptive sphere, his face already speaks the language of a nonnative speaker – he is perceived as an “Oriental” or immigrant to many individuals in the United States. A listener would automatically assume that Henry is a nonnative speaker because of his Asian facial features. Therefore, despite the fact that he speaks without an accent, to the listener he will be seen as a stranger from a foreign land. Henry’s face communicates the notion of difference in the listener’s fantasy – while listening, the listener perceives that he is exhibiting unfamiliar customs and belief systems, not the familiar tones and sounds of the language he or she is accustomed to hearing.¹⁷⁶ The listener will misrecognize the sound of language, just as he or she may not match the instrument and its sound correctly. This misrecognition takes place because the listener is anticipating a particular sound before hearing what kind of sound the instrument will produce. Even when misrecognition happens, the listener and/or viewer can claim that what he or she hears is real; in the same manner, the gazer can insist that what she or he sees is truth. If the acts of listening and gazing are done in this fantasmatic way, both the listener and gazer will hold onto the conviction that what he or she hears and sees is real. This is how the rhetorical conviction attached to “seeing is believing” is born, and this conviction becomes the basis for perceiving racial difference. Lelia listens to Henry’s speech and teaches her students in this manner – she approaches the speakers while engaging in the practice of “seeing is believing.”

¹⁷⁶ As I mentioned in the previous chapters, one of the unethical and problematic views in clinical practice of psychoanalysis is that the notion of difference is often regarded as a sign of pathology.

Although being the object of the gaze in this particular manner negatively affects Henry, he is aware that he can escape it if he covers his face when he speaks. (Or when he is speaking on the phone.) However, this possibility of escaping the scrutinizing gaze by going under disguise is not available to first-generation nonnative speakers: once they begin speaking English with an accent, their accent will begin reinforcing the viewer's fantasies regarding their subjectivity, history, customs, and behaviors. In other words, when first-generation nonnative speakers utter sounds, the listener/viewer's fantasy is perceived as real. And what is conceptualized as reality is often linked to preexisting stereotypes; however, nonnative speakers find themselves unable to communicate this truth to the listener and/or viewer – the more they speak in order to mark their agency, the more they will end up being regarded as what the viewer and/or listener has been imagining is real.¹⁷⁷ Henry is well aware of the pain associated with this viewing practice, and the pain stems from his understanding that it is impossible to disengage from this viewing practice that categorizes Asian Pacific Americans as the Other, as “Orientals.” Eventually, Henry's awareness silences him, and while remaining silent he struggles to find a better way to handle the gaze. Lelia does not understand how Henry uses his silence because she needs to refute the idea that race exists before speech. And the reason she is unable to recognize Henry's struggle is that she, too, is a participant of this gazing practice through which she is attaining *jouissance*.

Through her marriage to Henry, Lelia is forced to come face to face with racial and gender differences. Yet, Lelia continues to assert her power by using her tongue, which produces perfect sounds in English, and which functions as the fantasmatic

¹⁷⁷ Foucault, Michael. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*.

phallus. When Lelia receives the assignment of teaching summer speech courses on the Lower East Side, Henry decides to accompany her. He feels that the school is too “rough” since even the seven-or eight-year-olds carry knives.

We decided that I should go with her. Besides, I’ve been an assistant before. Luckily, the school officials we check in with don’t seem to care. They greet her and then look at me and don’t ask questions. They can figure I am part of her materials, the day’s curriculum. Show and tell (348).

Then Henry describes how he functions as Lelia’s assistant.

I like my job. I wear a green rubber hood and act in my role as the Speech Monster. I play it well. I gobble up kids but I cower when anyone repeats the day’s secret phrase, which Lelia has them practice earlier. Today the phrase is *Gently down the stream*.... At the end of the session we bid each kid goodbye. Many freelancers rotate in these weekly assignments, and we probably won’t see them again this summer. I take off my mask and we both hug and kiss each one. When I embrace them, half pick them up, they are just that size I will forever know, that very weight so wondrous to me and awful. I tell them I will miss them. They don’t quite know how to respond. I put them down. I sense that some of them gaze up at me for a moment longer, some wonder in their looks as they check again that my voice moves in time with my mouth, truly belongs to my face (348-349).

Lelia makes Henry wear a green mask that conceals his racial features. Although in her fantasy Lelia believes that native fluency can erase racial difference, in the passage above she communicates her awareness that speech cannot eliminate racial difference, and it is because of her awareness that Henry’s face is being covered up. Underneath the green mask, Henry’s tongue (which produces perfect sounds in English) and his racial features are being disguised. The green mask is functioning as the Lacanian veil, underneath which the truth will wait for its revelation.¹⁷⁸ Henry knows that in order to instill hope in the children he needs to expose the truth underneath the mask: his face and his tongue

¹⁷⁸ For Lacan, concealment suggests that there is an object behind the veil, and since it is hidden, the object is simultaneously desired but also remains unattainable. See “The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of its Power” in *Ecrits*.

can produce native sounds. Therefore, at the end of the lesson he takes off his mask and hugs the students. Through this tender gesture Henry suggests that they too can be native speakers one day despite the limitations others place on them. Henry does this because he is aware that Lelia should not be the one communicating this information to them. And in doing so, Henry challenges Lelia's wish to instill whiteness in her students through correct pronunciation.

Her wish to cover Henry's face with the green mask is an expression of her awareness that native fluency cannot erase racial difference. Her decision to cover up Henry's face stems from her manipulative attempt to inform her students that one who speaks English with native fluency cannot look like Henry. When her students are leaving the lesson, she says that everyone has been a good "citizen." This statement is an ultimate expression of her being in the position of "having," and her students who are nonnative speakers are put to use so that she can gratify herself by becoming phallic. Her expression also suggests that she is behaving like an immigration officer whose approval influences the fate of her students, whether or not they will one day become citizens of the United States, depending on how well they are able to use English. While uttering such sentences, Lelia does not recognize that in reality immigrants, especially immigrant children, hear a statement such as this as a reminder that their parents' and their status in the United States is tenuous. It reinforces the idea that in order to stay in the United States as citizens they have to be able to speak English as native speakers. Lelia utters a statement that can be traumatic to her students, but this truth does not concern her.

After hearing Lelia's comment, Henry notices the line of quiet faces. He then acknowledges that Lelia's students are unable to respond to her assertion of power.

Henry's quiet recognition also illustrates the nature of his interaction with Lelia: He sees that she utters a phrase based on her wish to gratify herself. Henry notices what she is doing, but does not share his awareness with her. He then quietly addresses the problem by attempting to undo the problem Lelia has created by taking off his mask and hugging them. This act of unveiling suggests that he does understand what it means to be treated as the one who is not having. He is attuned to what her students are experiencing in silence. Then, in the next moment, Lelia begins calling out each student's complicated un-English sounding name as if to shed the light back on herself. Her gesture demonstrates that even in languages other than English she can and will try to appear as a native speaker. Henry says, "I hear her speaking a dozen lovely and native languages, calling all the difficult names of who we are" (349). In Henry's statement, he is questioning the following: Will Lelia see her students as native speakers of English one day? Just as the way she regarded Henry's racial features, she fears that her students' racial features will mark them as nonnative speakers. Thus, in order for them to become native speakers, they have to participate in the practice of blinding themselves from seeing their racial difference – they have to entertain the idea that their racial differences can be erased.

Lelia's gestures towards Henry and her students consistently suggest that in order to be seen as native speakers, the speakers have to be white. By pronouncing their unfamiliar and also difficult names, she is demonstrating the power attached to whiteness: she can utter the sounds of foreign languages as a native speaker. This is her way of displaying her white tongue, the ultimate and powerful tongue that can not only pronounce English words perfectly, but can also pronounce the sounds of just about any

language. Or, she might be pronouncing their names incorrectly, but she does not have to fear the consequences of the exposure associated with pronouncing the names incorrectly, because she is not an immigrant or a person of color. This gesture communicates the sentiment that she can do what her immigrant students cannot. Her action suggests that through flexing and erecting her tongue and by uttering words in foreign languages, Lelia belittles nonnative speakers and insults their intelligence. She flashes her tongue, which is her phallus, in front of them. She is ultimately saying: I can do you what you cannot do, I am speaking your language to you because I have the phallus and you do not.

The Death of the Mother and His Ahjuhma

In the novel, there are two maternal figures other than Lelia: Henry's mother who dies of liver cancer when he is ten, and the woman who comes from Korea to take care of him and his father.¹⁷⁹ After her mother's death, his father brings home a caretaker, whom both Henry and his father called Ahjuhma, from Korea. She is the one person who does not submit to Lelia's fantasy and perverse way of attaining pleasure.¹⁸⁰ She is a nonnative speaker, but she despises Lelia's English-speaking tongue. In fact, Ahjuhma entirely rejects Lelia's conviction that speech will alter one's experience of "not-having" to "having." Ahjuhma's lack of access to language functions in such a way that she is utilizing silence as a tool to express her need to exist outside of the signifying chain where her gender and racial difference will forever be regarded as lacking.

¹⁷⁹ Chang-rae Lee's mother died when he was 25 years old. She died of stomach cancer. In *Native Speaker*, Henry's mother dies of liver cancer, but at a much earlier age. In traditional Chinese medicine, the diseases of the liver are believed to be caused by anger. Although, Chang-rae Lee does not indicate any further reference as to how Henry's mother lived her life in the United States, her cause of death informs the reader of how unexpressed and suppressed anger affected her and in the end took her life at a young age.

¹⁸⁰ The Korean word, "Ahjuhma" means aunt. Henry does not call her by her real name. This is a cultural phenomenon – individuals often choose not to call each other by their given names, but refer to each other according to their titles such as wife, husband, teacher, doctor, and so on, in order to show respect.

Ahjuhma arrives at New York's JFK airport from Korea with two huge suitcases. When she arrives at the house, Henry finds her standing next to two small bags and a cardboard box full of glass jars and tins of pickled vegetables and meats (62). Henry realizes at this moment that Ahjuhma transported homemade food thousands of miles from Korea. He says: "[T]he stench of overripe kimchee shot up through the cardboard flaps and I nearly dropped the whole thing" (62). His father informs Henry that she is there to take care of him, and that is her sole purpose of being in the United States.

"Hen-ry," he now said, accenting as always the second syllable, "you know, it's difficult now. Your mommy dead and nobody at home. You too young for that. This nice lady she came for you. Take care home, food. Nice dinner. Clean house. Better that way."

I did not answer him.

"I better tell you before, I know, but I know you don't like. So what I do? I go to store in morning and come home late, nine o'clock, ten. No good, no good. Nice lady, she fix that (63-64).

Ahjuhma chooses to stay in a small room behind the kitchen. She never engages in a conversation with Henry, nor does she express her thoughts and feelings to him. In fact, she only speaks when it is absolutely necessary. The only sound Henry hears her make is the "sucking noises," which she makes through the spaces between her teeth when she finishes her breakfast (64).

Ahjuhma was the quintessential example of how a woman should be to Henry's father. Like his biological mother, she keeps a clean house, does not speak, nor does she show her emotion. She regards her place as in her kitchen and thus becomes annoyed when Henry lingers in the kitchen too long. After her arrival, Henry quickly learns the new house rules. He is to allow Ahjuhma to take care of the house, but not to ask questions; he is to respect the personal distance she has created for herself. He is aware of not challenging her wish to be invisible. Henry feels the need to respect Ahjuhma's way

and feels protective of her especially when his white friends are visiting the house after school. When recognizing Henry's friends entering the house, Ahjuhma would quickly disappear from the kitchen and from her work, because they made her feel nervous, and because Henry's friends disrespect her, calling her "Aunt Scallion" because she smells of dried fish and sesame oil and garlic from cooking.

Since Ahjuhma is always making herself invisible, Henry considers her as someone whose purpose in life is to appear as though she does not exist:

Sometimes I thought she was some kind of zombie. When she was not cleaning or cooking or folding clothes she was barely present; she never whistled or hummed or made any noise, and it seemed to me as if she only partly possessed her own body, and preferred it that way. When she sat in the living room or outside on the patio she never read or listened to music. She did not have a hobby, as far as I could see. She never exercised (65).

Ahjuhma asserts her presence through making herself invisible to Henry and his father. Henry is aware that Ahjuhma prefers to keep her distance, concealing her personal life from him and his father. However, Henry is curious; thus, in order to fulfill his curiosity, he starts developing his own fantasy of what happened to her prior to coming to New York:

I imagined that something deeply horrible had happened to her when she was young, some nameless pain, something brutal, that a malicious man had taught her fear and sadness and she had had to leave her life and family because of it (66).

Henry understands that forcing Ahjuhma to speak about her history is a sign of disrespect, therefore he allows her to maintain her autonomy, and he attempts to get closer to her through using his imagination and fantasy. However, Ahjuhma's self-imposed invisibility and her attempt to remain silent make Lelia anxious. It is because Ahjuhma appears as the quintessential example of a woman who is "not-having."

One day Lelia is no longer able to manage her anxiety, so she asks Henry to intervene, to see if Ahjuhma will speak to her. Lelia has Henry act as interpreter so that Lelia and Ahjuhma can finally communicate. Lelia's wish is to alter Ahjuhma from being a silent figure to a woman who speaks. However, Ahjuhma refuses to participate in Lelia's interrogation. After having tolerated numerous attempts, Ahjuhma finally responds. As Ahjuhma is speaking, Henry translates every word she is speaking to Lelia. Ahjuhma says: "There is nothing for your American wife and me to talk about. Will you please leave the kitchen. It is very dirty and needs cleaning"(70).

Henry remembers another incident in which Lelia approached Ahjuhma in a similar way:

One afternoon Lelia cornered the woman in the laundry room and tried to communicate with her while helping her fold a pile of clothes fresh out of the dryer. But each time Lelia picked up a shirt or a pair of shorts the woman gently tugged it away and quickly folded it herself. I walked by then and saw them standing side by side in the narrow steamy room, Lelia guarding her heap and grittily working as fast as she could, the woman steadily keeping pace with her, not a word or a glance between them. Lelia told me later that the woman actually began nudging her in the side with the fleshy mound of her low-set shoulder, grunting and pushing her out of the room with short steps; Lelia began hockey-checking back with her elbows, trying to hold her position, when by accident she caught her hard on the ear and the woman let out a loud shrill whine that sent them both scampering from the room. Lelia ran out to where I was working inside the garage, tears streaming from her eyes, we hurried back to the house, only to find the woman back in the laundry room, carefully refolding the dry laundry. She backed away when she saw Lelia and cried madly in Korean, *You cat! You nasty American cat!* (71)¹⁸¹

The reason Lelia tries to gather information about Ahjuhma is a reflection of her wish to impose on Ahjuhma the American way of living. Or, it is also possible to say that Lelia is tempting Ahjuhma into speech, to allow her to have a phallus through twisting her

¹⁸¹ (Author's italicization.)

tongue. She is used to the idea that nonnative speakers will follow her directions to try to have a functional tongue, but Ahjuhma does not even blink at Lelia's suggestion.

Ahjuhma is the only one who refuses Lelia in this adamant way, which angers Lelia. Simultaneously, Ahjuhma's behavior creates anxiety in Lelia because she sees Ahjuhma as suffering from "not-having," yet she does not want to become the one who is "having." Lelia misunderstands Ahjuhma's silence as passive aggressive and also masochistic unwillingness to move outside her stifling feminine gender role. Ahjuhma fights back in order to stop Lelia from disrespecting her agency. Ahjuhma's insistence on silence indicates another important idea: she is refusing to succumb to the linguistic system, which perpetually assigns meanings to her race and gender. In particular, her refusal to utter English words can be regarded as her wish not to be regarded as a nonnative speaker, who will be seen as suffering due to not-having (or because she lacks the ability to speak English correctly). Ahjuhma's expression of her wish to be left alone comes as a shock to Lelia, because it shows her that although she and Ahjuhma are both women, their struggles are entirely different. Through her interaction with Ahjuhma, Lelia begins recognizing that nonnative speakers do not see themselves the way she sees them. They are people with their own histories, subjectivities, and agencies; and, to some, Lelia appears extremely problematic. Furthermore, although Lelia is unable to recognize it, Ahjuhma's silence is, indeed, her speech, expressing her strongly felt need to live her life without becoming the subject of Lelia's, as well as others', Orientalizing gazes.

Final Remark: Analytic Hour with Dr. Luzan

Orientalists see Asian Pacific Americans in various ways – they not only see them as “strangers from a different shore,” whose languages, customs, and behaviors are different from them, but they also seek to utilize Asian Pacific Americans as the object, the thing, with which to satisfy their libidinal aggressive and sexual needs.¹⁸² Henry’s behavior towards Lelia and his reluctance to confront Lelia’s perversion both suggest that he does not think she will be able to internalize his view. On a surface level, Lelia functions as a benevolent, helpful person who is helping nonnative speakers enter the English-speaking world. In this sense, Lelia functions not only as a speech therapist, but also an analyst who instills the belief that symbolic work through speech will be beneficial for relieving symptoms. In contrast to how she sees her students who are nonnative speakers, as those who are eager to be introduced to the world of symbols and “correct” sounds in order to facilitate articulation of feelings and thoughts, Lelia sees Henry as resistant to participating in the process of becoming a speaking subject (or in this sense, he is seen as a subject who is unwilling to attain relief from his symptoms). While feeling utterly frustrated, Lelia fails to understand that Henry maintains his silence and he uses it as a way of communication, because he recognizes that words cannot express everything.

While Lelia perceives Henry’s utilization of silence as a resistance to communicating, Henry’s wish for symbolic work is subtly expressed through his relationship to Dr. Luzan. In Dr. Luzan’s office, (although his purpose is to spy on Dr. Luzan), Henry begins to speak about his internal world. Henry complies with Dr. Luzan’s

¹⁸² See Robert G. Lee. *Orientalists: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999.

request to speak freely without having to worry about what he thinks of him (181). In one of the meetings, Dr. Luzan asks Henry if he had any heroes when he was a child. In response to this question, Henry says that he used to have an “invisible” brother who had no name. Henry says: “I told him how I didn’t know the subtle nuances or meanings of Korean names, even though I knew quite a few, that it would have been naming someone purely by sound” (205). Henry felt his brother should not have an American name because everyone else had one. He did not want his brother to be ordinary; in fact, he wanted his brother to be exceptional and perfect. His brother would know how to protect himself from racism because he knew “karate, kung fu, tae kwon do, jujitsu. He could beat up the big black kids if he wished, the tough Puerto Rican kids, anyone else who called us names or made slanty eyes.” His imaginary brother also excelled in school, proving the stereotype that Asians are good with science: “He knew all about science, about model rocketry, chemistry sets,” however, he was also able to blend in with other kinds because he did do things such as collecting “baseball cards” and knowing American history well. He was also able to impress white students with his flawless English – he was the “lead in the school play” and participated in “public speeches.” His parents were so proud of him because, despite his racial difference, he was “better than anyone” (205).

Henry tells Dr. Luzan that this imagination, of having the perfect invisible brother, used to terrify him: “In the daytime I could feel him near me, sense not so much his friendship but his vigilance and guidance, the veil of his cover. But at night, alone in bed my stomach would burn, ache anxiously for his well-being” (206). He then shares his fear of his brother disappearing – dying “tragically, down in a lake or slip and fall off a

cliff; it would not be his fault, it wouldn't be anyone's, just that it would happen without warning or reason" (206). Ironically his imaginary fear associated with losing his brother, someone important in his life, becomes truth later when Henry loses his son, Mitt, suddenly. As a child his fear would make him "coil in the bed, the points of [his] knees jabbing back the stabs of worry in [his] stomach and chest" (206).

After sharing this story, Henry speaks about the way he experienced the sessions with Dr. Luzan:

Luzan always preferred that I speak to him in skeins such as this; he urged me to take up story-forms, even prepare something for our sessions. His method with me was in fact anti-associative, and he asked me to look at my life not just from a singular mode but through the crucible of a larger narrative. He said he could learn much about me from the way I saw myself working in the world. Is this what I have left of the doctor? That I no longer can simply flash a light inside a character, paint a figure like Kwang with a momentary language, but that I know that greater truths reside in our necessary fictions spanning human event and time? (206)

Dr. Luzan's instructions to Henry are different from the traditional psychoanalytic approach, because they emphasize that his speech should not come from free association. Dr. Luzan also offers a different therapeutic setting from the traditional psychoanalytic neutral position: shaking hands, hugging, and sharing his family history (208). What free association promotes is the moment of exposure, the experience in which the subject will come closer to his or her or unconscious. Although traditional psychoanalytic theory and technique emphasize the importance of free association, by describing Dr. Luzan's technique in this way, Lee might be suggesting that the experience of exposure through engaging in free association can be too difficult for second-generation Asian Americans who are suffering from transgenerational trauma.¹⁸³ With Dr. Luzan, Henry speaks about

¹⁸³ The notion of trauma can also be thought of as opening; thus, although it produces pain, the experience of it will be beneficial to the subject. However, Dr. Luzan's approach suggests that he does not agree with

his thoughts and feelings without having to worry about encountering a discriminatory and Orientalizing gaze that attempts to assign meanings to his body.

Henry enters a therapeutic relationship with a first-generation Asian Pacific American analyst who does not carry out a problematic practice of attaining gratification through Orientalizing Asian Pacific American patients.¹⁸⁴ Henry's anxiety results from his inability to name the discomfort and pain associated with being the object of the fetishistic gaze of Orientalists combined with his wish to satisfy his familial obligations by being respectful to his father's high expectations. Henry's experience of psychoanalytic treatment with Dr. Luzan creates an awareness in him that expressing thoughts and feelings openly offers relief. Henry says: "There I was again, being a good son, good boy, good citizen, assuring authority. But what I wanted to tell [Dr. Luzan] was that he had saved my life in ways he never imagined, or ever could" (207). However, after completing his report on Dr. Luzan, Henry terminates his treatment. Later he discovers that Dr. Luzan died in a drowning accident. It is another tragic incident, similar

this Freudian point of view. So, in a way, Dr. Luzan is an analyst who does not use Freudian technique in his practice.

¹⁸⁴ Psychoanalysis requires the analysand to be engaging in the practice of free association. This argument implies that nonnative speakers, or immigrants who do not yet have access to English, may not be able to benefit from the treatment. If that is the case, in what ways can the nonnative speaker of English, or a person who is bi-racial as Mitt, find a way to prevent him or herself from suffocation, which could also come in the form of silencing? Perhaps, they will encounter someone like Lelia who will function as a substitute figure for an analyst who will help them carry out the symbolic work in order to attain a relief from symptoms such as depression or/and anxiety. As well, it is also from someone like Lelia that first-generation Asian Pacific Americans will have to find hope, because she will help them attain their dream of becoming native speakers. Chang-rae Lee's work illustrates that race and language establish discursive relationships with one another, and often it is difficult to address the struggle of first-generation Asian Pacific Americans and second-generation Asian Pacific Americans in a traditional psychoanalytic or therapeutic setting. Specifically, some psychoanalysts who are unaware of their own Orientalist motivation will end up offering a therapeutic environment in which both first- and second-generation Asian Pacific Americans will be fetishized. The absence of Asian Pacific American history, or the explanation that Orientalism creates a negative impact on therapeutic work with Asian Pacific Americans is another example of how psychoanalysis has disavowed the subjectivity of people of color, specifically Asian Pacific Americans.

to the one that took Mitt –suffocation and drowning, where the breath is taken away, are the incidents that take the lives of people who are important to Henry. Mitt and Dr. Luzan were not suffering from suffocation, but in the end they died of suffocation. Both Mitt and Dr. Luzan offered hope to him: Mitt, who showed him the possibility of living in a racially integrated world, and Dr. Luzan, who allowed him to experience that the expression of thoughts and feelings would be met with understanding. With these two deaths, along with Lelia's gesture of covering Henry's face with the mask of the green monster, what is Lee's message to the reader?

One possible answer to this question is the following: for Asian Pacific Americans, second generation and first-generation alike, the external world perpetually prevents them from partaking in the practice of self-expression through the English language. Lelia represents a figure that views Asian Pacific Americans as the thing, and through her character the reader becomes familiar with the complex negotiations that Asian Pacific Americans must facilitate in order to be self-protective. However, the not-so-obvious message Lee leaves behind is the understanding that both Henry and Lelia use each other for survival, and the way they do so is by using each other's racial and gender difference as the thing. Henry's racial difference functions as a wall which allows both Lelia and Henry to keep their distinct internal worlds away from each other. Using each other's racial and gender differences, they concretely defend against the existence of their own psychic truths. And as a result of this wall, they are both invisible to each other. In the end, when Henry is wearing the mask of the green monster, he is not forced to do so, instead, he is actively participating in the act of covering his face and speaking English. Thus, both Henry and Lelia are maintaining their perverse relationships to each other and

the world around them. They are both using each other as the thing to avoid encountering the Thing, the knowledge that they are both affected by their own internal struggles that predated their first encounter. Their relationship to each other must be read as their resistance to knowing their own internal truth, and the distance that they keep from each will continuously mark them as invisible to each other. Furthermore, their resistance will prevent them from seeing the world around them, which presents promises for the future. Mitt's death symbolically speaks of their blindness to see that their world is moving towards a future where integration of differences is possible.

Chapter Three

Perversion, Fetishism, and the Use of the Black Body: A Reading of James Baldwin's
"Going to Meet the Man"

Moreover, the diagnosis of communal neurosis is faced with a special difficulty. In an individual neurosis we take as our starting-point the contrast that distinguishes the patient from his environment, which is assumed to be 'normal.' For a group all of whose members are affected by one and the same disorder no such background could exist; it would have to be found elsewhere. And as regards the therapeutic application of our knowledge, what would be the use of the most correct analysis of social neurosis, since no one possesses authority to impose such a therapy upon the group? But in spite of all these difficulties, we may expect that one day some one will venture to embark upon a pathology of cultural communities.

–Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Time, as a dimension of life, is rejected by the pervert.

–Chessequet-Smirgel, *Creativity and Perversion*

Lynchings, even where they have been the accepted form, have always disturbed many Americans. This is not simply because they are barbaric, inhumane acts, but because they inherently disavow a right Americans hold dear – the right to due process before the law.

– Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon uses lynching as an example to delineate the link between the expression of aggression and sexuality.¹⁸⁵ He writes the following:

In the United States, as we can see, the Negro makes stories in which it becomes possible for him to work off his aggression; the white man's unconscious justifies this aggression and gives it worth by turning it on himself, thus, reproducing the classic schema of masochism.... For the majority of white men the Negro represents the sexual instinct (in its raw state). The Negro is the incarnation of a genial potency beyond all

¹⁸⁵ Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

moralties and prohibitions. The women among the whites, by a genuine process of induction, invariably view the Negro as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations ... We have shown that reality destroys all these beliefs. But they all rest on the level of the imagined, in any case on that of a parallogism (176-177).

In this chapter, I will continue to stay with Fanon's argument that the expression of aggression against people of color and the reason racism refuses to dissipate can both be examined by psychoanalysis. While staying with Fanon, but pushing his argument further, I turn to the examination of the traumatic effect of witnessing a lynching by reading James Baldwin's short story "Going to Meet the Man."¹⁸⁶ Baldwin suggests that the practice of racism installs irreparable scars in white participants, which come back in the form of perverse symptoms. The psychosexual development of Baldwin's main character, Jesse, is significantly hindered by watching the lynching of an African American man at a young age.

I will first examine the nature of Jesse's psychosexual arrest from the Freudian point of the Oedipus complex. I argue that his psychosexual development is negatively influenced because he is unable to attain resolution of the Oedipus complex, because as a child he saw and understood that castration was carried out in reality, in his external environment. However, while engaging with the Freudian point of view, using the idea of the Oedipus complex, I will also demonstrate that the conceptualization of the Oedipus complex as a solely psychic and fantasmatic phenomenon begs for a radical rethinking. Baldwin illustrates that for African Americans, castration was a realistic rather than fantasmatic occurrence that had to be feared. I highlight the historical significance of castration and seek to incorporate it in the scene of psychoanalytic theory making.

¹⁸⁶ James Baldwin. "Going to Meet the Man" in *Going to Meet the Man: Stories*. (New York: Vintage Books), pp. 227-249.

If American psychoanalysts continue to treat castration as fantasmatic experience, they are engaged in disavowal because castration did occur in American history. I argue that such a theoretical stance is built based on a perverse or fetishistic logic for the following reason: the treatment of castration as imaginary or fantasmatic not only discourages the examination of violence that racial difference produced, but also conceals the important truth that the view of castration as such only works for whites. For African Americans, and some people of color, castration cannot function as a solely imaginary or psychic experience.¹⁸⁷ In addition, when psychoanalysts facilitate this disavowal, they conveniently disregarded that the word, “castration” will have the potential of producing injury in African Americans every time it is uttered. This awareness is an important theoretical and clinical insight. Although white Americans no longer remember, the word still evokes the injurious memory in African Americans.¹⁸⁸ In other words, even though psychoanalysts do not wish to treat it as such, the concept of castration fear is highly racialized; therefore, when they carelessly use it without recognizing the historical significance, it is an indication that the injury continues to carry its effect while the

¹⁸⁷ Fanon would argue that if African Americans in the South are attempting to consider castration as a practice that is not going to happen in reality, they would undoubtedly then develop symptoms because they are facilitating misremembering based on the motivation to be white. Such an act is not truthful to their history and subjective truth. For Fanon, black children’s attempt to identify with whiteness is not a sign of abnormality –it is a sign of their ego strength, which allows them to carry out self-preservation in the white world. However, Fanon suggests that if this splitting is pushed too far, meaning if black children and adults begin to think of themselves as white, perverse symptoms will occur. For example, if blacks believe that they are whites, this belief system indicates the working of psychic process that refutes the existence of the reality in which they are not whites and they will not be regarded as whites. See, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 143-150.

¹⁸⁸ Fanon would argue that although white Americans have forgotten that castration occurred regularly, African Americans would find it impossible to forget, because the logic behind the justification for castration, the creation of socio-economic hierarchies based on perceived notion of racial difference, is still very much alive today; thus, African Americans do not have the time to push it into the unconscious. Fanon argues: “Since the racial drama is played out in the open, the black man has no time to make it unconscious.” In other words, although the white man and woman are involved in this practice every day, they successfully push their awareness of the practice to the unconscious. For Fanon, racism happens when the racist is not conscious of the violence. See *Black Skin, White Masks* (150).

intrinsic link between psychoanalysis and whiteness continues to exist as unchallengeable truth.

As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, psychoanalysts' resistance to examining issues of race has to be seen as their having difficulty theorizing and incorporating the notion of difference. They are preoccupied with the idea of examining the notion of difference through the psychic process through which the individual attains the understanding of the self (I)- other (mommy) differentiation. The understanding of the self, "I am different from mommy," is achieved as a result of experiencing primary and secondary narcissism, which will set up the stage for the next developmental stage in which another crucial difference is introduced. This is the stage in which the subject will learn to differentiate the psychic environment from the external environment, and the one who facilitates this process of differentiation is the third person in the family equation, the father, and this stage is analogous to the Oedipus phase. However, the examination of difference other than in the intrapsychic realm described above must also be an important part of psychoanalytic practice. To disregard the examination of the impact of the external environment upon the individual's internal environment would be to refute Freud's idea, because for him, psychoanalysis has always been a discipline that examines the conflict between the internal and external environments. It is also the case that according to a post-Freudian point of view, clinical practice of psychoanalysis can deconstruct the binding of psychic energy that attempts to lock individuals in inertia or undifferentiated states where the difference between fantasy and reality is vigorously

disavowed.¹⁸⁹ To offer an explanation of how and why particular phenomena such as lynchings took place should be an important psychoanalytical project. Freud would argue that such task would be linked to remedying “communal neurosis.” Although Freud is aware that the investigation of “communal neurosis” requires the analysis of the specific external communal environment, having struggled with cancer, and being forced to leave Vienna and immigrate to London during the war, he leaves the investigation of communal neurosis for someone in the future.¹⁹⁰ Examining the interrelatedness between the external and internal environment – in this sense, the communal environment can be thought of as the external environment at a macro level and the domestic space can exist as a micro level within the communal environment, fostering the development of the primary and secondary narcissism – is an important psychoanalytic project.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Alan Bass. *Difference and Disavowal: The Trauma of Eros*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000 and *Interpretation and Difference: The Strangeness of Care*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006.

¹⁹⁰ Freud spent much of his later years thinking about the effect of the external environment on the individual psyche. The climate after 1933 was difficult for psychoanalysis in Germany: books on psychoanalysis were put on the black list by the Nazis, confiscated and destroyed. In March 1938, Hitler entered Vienna. Marie Bonaparte and Ernest Jones went to Vienna to expedite Freud’s emigration, and with the help of the American ambassador in Paris, William C. Bullitt, Freud was able to leave Vienna and arrived safely in London on June 6, 1938. At the time of emigration, Freud had been suffering from cancer of the jaw. The condition was first discovered in 1923, reoccurred in 1936, and finally took his life on September 23, 1939. Freud passed away at his new house at 20 Maresfield Gardens. Towards the end of his life Freud devoted himself to the project of applying his psychoanalytical viewpoint to historical events and phenomena that produced destructions, the undeniable effect of the aggression in all of us. *Civilization and Its Discontents* was Freud’s early attempt at examining the relationship between the individual to society. He left to future generations of psychoanalysts the project of understanding “communal neurosis” and this is the project that psychoanalysts must take up in order to bring psychoanalysis to the next generation. Although examination of racist practices like lynching deserves psychoanalytic investigation, American psychoanalysts systematically avoid engaging in the project of applying psychoanalytical thinking to examination of race and the effect of racism on individuals.

¹⁹¹ In Freud’s work, primary narcissism refers to the child’s attempt to use him or herself as a love object before choosing external objects. Freud conceptualizes primary narcissism as the stage before the installation of the ego. This argument is supported by Jean Laplanche who argues that as Freud understood thumb-sucking, human beings begin their psychosexual development from autoeroticism, and the discovery of the object which takes place in secondary narcissism is, technically speaking, rediscovery of the object. However, this argument is contested by Melanie Klein who argues that the child forms object-relations from the very beginning of life; therefore, she does not distinguish primary and secondary narcissisms. See J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New

As Philip Dray explains in the cited passage, the justification for lynching involves the psychic process of disavowal.¹⁹² When disavowal – registering and repudiating undesirable information – is introduced into a subject’s day-to-day psychic functions, the repudiated information enters into the unconscious part of the ego (or the preconscious) and comes back in the form of symptoms.¹⁹³ And disavowal as a psychic process creates an impact which will continue to exist timelessly, as Chessequet-Smirgel eloquently explains. In other words, the working of disavowal and the experience of timelessness concurrently influence the process of de-remembrance of the historical truth that the white Southerners in Baldwin’s story wish to facilitate. Freud teaches that the wish to forget is always motivated by guilt, hostility and repressed sexual wishes, all of which the subject is unable to address openly because doing so will put the subject in the place where he or she will be overwhelmed by anxiety.

In the story, the protagonist, Jesse, exists in a community in the South where the practice of lynching African Americans is practiced regularly.¹⁹⁴ This overt sadistic expression of white community members against African Americans produces perverse symptoms in Jesse, whose method of attaining sexual satisfaction has to always involve aggression against African Americans. Baldwin’s description of Jesse’s perversion delineates a particular socio-historical context that determined the treatment of African

York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 1967. Jean Laplanche. *Life & Death in Psychoanalysis*. Trans. by Jeffrey Mehman. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970.

¹⁹² Philip Dray. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

¹⁹³ This definition of disavowal, taken from Alan Bass, will be used in this chapter. See *Difference and Disavowal*.

¹⁹⁴ I will go so far as to say that the practice of lynching still silently permits other forms of perverse practice because its effects on the psychic level have not been fully articulated psychodynamically. Therefore, various forms of utilization of racism still exist where the body of the subject is racialized and utilized in the way that offers the opportunity for white individuals to attain gratification. I am thinking specifically of the Asian fetish; see my examination of this topic in my second chapter, “Invisibility and Not-Having: Tongue Twister and the Green Monster – A Reading of Chang-rae Lee’s *Native Speaker*.”

Americans by white Southerners. While describing the sadistic way in which Jesse seeks to attain sexual fulfillment, Baldwin suggests that Jesse's perversion is not unique to him; it is, indeed, an example of what Freud defined as, "a pathology of cultural community."

Jesse's psychic reality indicates his need to use African Americans in order to attain sexual gratification, and while he is doing so, he escapes into his fantasy where he attempts to disengage from his external reality in which horrific acts such as raping, killing and castration of African Americans are regularly executed.¹⁹⁵ His external reality, which condoned violence against African Americans, sets up an interesting psychic reality for Jesse: in his sexual practice he commits violence, but in fantasy, he tries to escape from the inhuman practice that takes place in his community. However, although Jesse tries to escape from violence in reality, ironically, while engaged in his fantasy, he permits himself to engage in sadistic sexual expression. Jesse's reaction to violence in fantasy and reality expresses an important idea: for him violence in reality and fantasy carries different meanings: violence in his communal environment triggers fear; however, in his fantasmatic space, the recognition of fear leads to sexual arousal. Jesse's flight from his external reality into his fantasmatic internal world should be seen as an example of disavowal at work. He and his fellow white community members attempt to resolve the conflict between experiencing compassion and concern towards the welfare of African Americans and being respectful of the external world that demands the subjugation of African Americans. As compared to authors such as William Faulkner and

¹⁹⁵ I am using the distinction between the external environment, which describes Jesse's social setting, and the internal environment, which is comprised of fantasies and memories from the past. In psychoanalysis, especially Freud's work after 1923, the intersection of the two environments comprises the subject's psychic reality. See, *The Ego and the Id* (1923). *S.E.* 19. "Neurosis and Psychosis" and "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis" (1924). *S.E.* 19.

W. E. B. DuBois, whose works attempt to illustrate the psychic reality of African Americans in the South, Baldwin's rendering of Jesse's perversion illustrates the weight of slavery, the inevitable consequences white Southerners face if they disavow this historical past.¹⁹⁶ In other words, Baldwin's work illustrates the psychic toll that results when disavowing the reality that during slavery (and still beyond slavery) whites used African Americans for the attainment of pleasure.

During and beyond Reconstruction, African American men were lynched when perceived as expressing sexual interest in white women. Yet white men raping African American women was regarded as permissible under the law. This fact suggests that the expression of desire is hegemonically constructed as unidirectional, meaning, whites have been allowed to express their sexual desires openly by using people of color as the thing, but people of color were prohibited from doing the same.¹⁹⁷ Lynching was not only the way white Southerners controlled black men's sexuality, it also was a way to rule and preserve white women's sexuality and to own African American women's sexuality through making it available to whomever wanted it. Furthermore, the rhetoric of anti-miscegenation only worked for the preservation of white women's bodies because when the same rhetoric is applied to African American women, it condoned committing violence upon them and emphasized the "communal" aspect of their sexuality.¹⁹⁸ For example, while emphasizing that "race mixing" as undesirable to white women, when it comes to African American women, the rhetoric suggested that miscegenation is good for

¹⁹⁶ See W.E.B. Du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York: Penguin Books, 1898. William Faulkner. *Light in August*. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.

¹⁹⁷ According to Angela Davis, one way that African Americans expressed their sexuality was through music. For example, she pays attention to the way in which blues functions as the expression of sexual desire that was not allowed to express otherwise in the public space. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York: Pantheon, 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Philip Dray. *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003.

African Americans because when African American women became pregnant as a consequence of being raped by white men, it would “help” the black race by introducing white blood into their future generations.¹⁹⁹ This sentiment is expressed in Jesse’s sexuality: while inflicting violence, Jesse shouts at a young man the following: “You lucky we pump some white blood into you every once in a while – you women! Here is what I got for all the black bitches in the world – !” (235). It is understandable that castration became an important part of lynching, because it informed African Americans that the whites had the power to take away their sexuality and lives. However, on a more fantasmatic level, lynching expressed the white men’s wish that, by castrating African American men, they had the power to preserve their sexuality and race by making sure to protect their white penises. The whites in Jesse’s community used castration to assert power and control on the manifest level, but in a deep libidinal, or latent level, castration provided an opportunity to use African American men, instead of themselves, as the target of their sadistic impulses for the purpose of self-preservation.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ The justification of miscegenation between African American women and white men is a peculiar mix of biblical and Darwinian interpretations. For example, based on a biblical interpretation that African Americans are not humans, Charles Carroll argues that the way to obliterate the racial features of African Americans is through the practice of white men taking African American women as their concubines. Such a practice, he argued, would allow the extinction of the racial features of African Americans. Lester Ward argues that as members of a lower race, African Americans instinctively acted on a desire to sexually interact with members of a higher race, whites. In his writing he expresses his sympathy and understanding towards whites’ anger towards African Americans’ evolutionary process. Charles Carroll. *The Negro a Beast, or “In the Image of God”* (1900) Reprint. Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing Company, 1969. Lester Ward. *Psychic Factor of Civilization*. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1897.

²⁰⁰ For Freud, the notion of self-preservation is closely connected to what he calls “economic significance.” Economic significance describes how the psychic apparatus seeks to function by maintaining the energy at as low a level as possible. Thus, when tension is elevated, the psychic apparatus seeks to lower it by discharging it. He explains that the elevation of tension is displeasure and the lowering of tension is pleasure; what becomes conscious as pleasure and displeasure is “a quantitative and qualitative ‘something’ in the course of mental events.” *The Ego and Id*, (1923). *S.E.* 19, p. 22. However, for Melanie Klein, the notion of self-preservation is connected to the primitive process by which the infant learns to defend against danger triggered by the mother’s breasts. In this defensive psychic process the infant differentiates breasts into good and bad by splitting the image of the breasts so as to preserve the good breast and expel the bad. For Klein, splitting is an essential process for the infant to thrive as it becomes the foundation for

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Going Beyond the Freudian “Thing”: Re-Examination of The Oedipus Complex

In Bed with Grace

Baldwin begins and ends his story with Jesse in bed with his wife, Grace. Jesse’s thought process in bed while lying next to Grace indicates that although he attempts to assert his “masculine” mannerism, he appears to be in a rather castrated position. For Jesse, to stay in this position is not a choice he has made consciously – his passive position can be argued as stemming from the repression of the Oedipus phase. Although Freud argues that repression of the Oedipus complex produces pathological effects on the subject, Jesse’s struggle to initiate sexual intercourse with Grace marks the existence of a historicity that requires investigation beyond a Freudian interpretation.

Grace asks Jesse, “What’s the matter?” Although Jesse responds to her by saying that he does not know why he cannot initiate sexual intercourse, his defensive laughter reveals that he does know the answer; therefore, he feels the need to put up a defense. He then begins nervously talking to Grace about an event that took place earlier in the day. His speech expresses his hope that in doing so he will not have to disclose the reason he is not able to engage with her sexually. And by continuing to talk, he is hoping to maintain his concealment – he keeps his fantasmatic sexual object distinct from his realistic sexual partner, Grace. As he continues to talk, Grace remains indifferent to his

higher form of object-relation in the future. Melanie Klein. “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms” in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works* 1946-1963. (London: Vintage), pp. 1-24.

speech, lying next to him and pretending as if she were already asleep. However, she knows the reason her husband is not able to engage with her sexually. This night is like many others – Jesse’s reluctance to have sex with Grace happened before and will happen again. Grace is probably aware that Jesse’s difficulty stems from his inability to think of her as a “nigger” when he engages with her sexually. While tossing and turning next to her, Jesse has the following thought:

Sometimes, sure, like any other man, he knew that he wanted a little more spice than Grace could give him and he would drive over yonder and pick up a black piece or arrest her, it came to the same thing.... The niggers. What had the lord Almighty had in mind when he made the niggers? Well. They were pretty good at that, all right. Damn. Damn. Goddamn (230).

For Jesse, the attainment of sexual fulfillment only comes after experiencing a level of built up tension caused by the increase of aggressive affect which simultaneously comes to exist as a result of witnessing two significant moments in his life: the primal scene—the scene in which Jesse lies in bed hearing his parents make love the night of the lynching—and the scene of the castration of the black man.²⁰¹ These two incidents set the stage for his psychosexual development, which constructs his sexuality in such a way that for him the attainment of sexual fulfillment must accompany sadomasochistic thoughts and actions, and the objects as well as the recipient of libidinal expressions are African American men and women.²⁰²

²⁰¹ The primal scene refers to the scene of sexual intercourse between the parents which the child accidentally observes. Or, the child might be gathering information regarding the sexual activities of the parents using fantasies. However, because the child is unable to comprehend the meaning behind sexual intercourse, he or she regards the act as a form of violence; specifically, he or she develops the view that the father is hurting the mother. See Sigmund Freud. “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis” (1918) *S.E.* 17.

²⁰² According to Freud, someone who displays such a psychosexual investment is a sadist. However, Freud also suggests that while being a sadist, the subject is also attaining masochistic pleasure by forming an identificatory relationship with his or her masochistic object-choice. Although Freud’s theoretical position gives us an important idea that the two opposing positions – the one who holds the power to inflict violence and the other who receives violence – are intertwined, the reason Jesse’s psychosexual investment came to

Jesse senses Grace's silence and interprets it as an indication that she demands to know the reason he is unable to have sex with her. Eventually, Jesse mentions that his difficulty stems from the stress caused by his interactions with African Americans. In order to support his argument, he describes an event that took place in the earlier part of the day involving his job as a sheriff, one responsible for bringing order to the "chaos" created by African Americans who are organizing and asserting their will as free people. Jesse explains that they are always standing in front of the courthouse, singing, in order to articulate the injustice done to them by the white community members.

"All that singing they do," he said. "All that singing." He could not remember the first time he had heard it; he had been hearing it all his life. It was the sound with which he was almost familiar – though it was also the sound of which he had been least conscious – and it had always contained an obscure comfort. They were singing to God. They were singing for mercy and they hope to go to heaven, and he had even sometimes felt, when looking into the eyes of some of the old women, a few of the very old men, that they were singing for mercy for his soul, too. Of course he had never thought of their heaven or of what God was, or could be, for them; God was the same for everyone, he supposed, and heaven was where good people went – he supposed. He had never thought much about what it meant to be a good person. (235)

Although Jesse says the singing is the reason he is unable to engage with her sexually, in doing so, he is simultaneously trying to eliminate Grace from his thoughts. In addition, by talking about the singing to her, he attempts to conceal from her what it actually

exist in such a way requires an analysis of how his communal external environment influenced it. In addition, in his communal environment, African Americans are not allowed to engage in sadistic practices against white community members, so again, the expression of desire is unidirectional. Freud consistently maintained his theoretical stance that not just one, but both of the opposing libidinal forces have crucial roles in psychic development.

As you know, we call it sadism when sexual satisfaction is linked to the condition of the sexual object's suffering, pain, ill-treatment and humiliation, and masochism when the need is felt of being the ill-treated object oneself. As you know too, a certain admixture of these two trends is included in normal sexual relationships, and we speak of perversions when they push the other sexual aims into the background and replace them by their own aims (104).
Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Lecture XXXII* (1933). S.E. 22.

signifies for him. Jesse knows that once he starts to describe the singing in speech it loses its lingering effect, which consistently reminds of him the conflict between his concerns for African Americans and his need to use them. He is aware that language allows him to carry on a lie, whereas psychic imagery does not – he keeps talking in bed, hoping that by continuing to do so, he will eventually be able to get rid of the tension rising from his psychic imagery.²⁰³

For Jesse, the singing discursively links past and present moments, which elucidates the conflict between two themes that permeate his psychic reality: his awareness of the immorality associated with using African Americans as the target of his sadistic sexual impulses and the impossibility associated with disengaging from this practice.²⁰⁴ Although the previous passage reveals his idea that African Americans can also be good people and that there is only one God and one heaven for all such people regardless of racial difference, as soon as Jesse comes across this awareness he becomes frightened. It is because the awareness forces him to step out of his retreat and to encounter the truth. However, Jesse's reaction is to get rid of his awareness. The narrator describes Jesse's thought process in the following way:

He tried to be a good person and treat everybody right: it wasn't his fault if the niggers had taken it into their heads to fight against God and go against the rules laid down in the Bible for everyone to read! Any preacher would tell you that. He was only doing his duty: protecting white people from the niggers and the niggers from themselves (235-6).

²⁰³ One can say that what Jesse wants to do at this moment is to enter his autoerotic fantasmatic world where the notion of difference does not exist.

²⁰⁴ Although Jesse is specifically speaking of the singing that took place earlier in the day, when speaking of the singing, he is simultaneously remembering the singing that took place when he went to see the lynching for the first time as a child. This is precisely the reason hearing the sound of singing creates discomfort in him. I will further discuss this point in the next section, "The Primal Scene and the Lynching: The Freudian Notion of 'Primal Fantasy.'"

For Jesse, the singing has a significant meaning – it functions as a constant reminder of the existence of “the other world,” or the irrefutable truth that despite his immediate reality where the community is carrying out disavowal, the welfare of African Americans does matter.

Jesse’s reaction to the singing contains the implicit message that he recognizes the unsolvable conflict between the truth and his reality. And when encountering the conflict, he seeks to escape to his fantasmatic space, or, to use John Steiner’s term, to conduct psychic retreat.²⁰⁵ In other words, as soon as he becomes aware of the conflict between his behavior that he knows is immoral and his two other wishes – the wish to use African Americans in order to attain sadistic sexual gratification and the wish to maintain his identification with the rest of his community members by continuing to harm African Americans – he seeks to escape into his fantasy.²⁰⁶ In his fantasmatic world his affective experiences towards African Americans – appreciation, concern (or love), and aggression – do not create conflicting internal experiences; instead, they get joined together and transformed into a way for him to attain sexual satisfaction. Jesse uses the description of the singing as the opportunity to drift away into his fantasmatic world.

²⁰⁵ John Steiner. *Psychic Retreat: Pathological Organizations in Psychotic, Neurotic and Borderline Patients*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

²⁰⁶ William Carrigan lists the reasons some whites became the victims of lynching in Texas. For example, a man named Wood (first name unknown) was lynched in McLennan County on May 20th 1862 for being a “Yankee abolitionist.” The cause of his death was not determined, but William H. Addams was also put to death in McLennan county because of “[b]eing a Yankee and refusing to leave the county” on September 30, 1868. Local archives recorded many cases of execution of white men, however the reasons and the ways they were put to death still remain unknown. The mystery of their deaths brings into question whether or not they were engaged in the anti-lynching movement. Although Carrigan’s account may not be sufficient to determine why these white men were put to death, we do know lynching was frequently performed on whites, sending a clear message about the cost of transgressing the law of racial segregation. William D. Carrigan. *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836-1916*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), Appendix A.

After describing the singing to Grace, Jesse shifts his attention to the boy who was in jail, whom he beat. Although he knows that she is not listening, Jesse tells Grace what he said to the boy:

“You are going to stop your singing, I said to him, and you are going to stop coming down to the court house and disrupting traffic and molesting the people and keeping us from our duties and keeping doctors from getting to sick white women and getting all them Northerners in this town to give our town a bad name –!” (232-33)

In this description, another concealment is revealed: Jesse does not tell Grace that he used his cattle prod on the young man’s testicles, expecting to hear him scream. He then remembers a sense of disappointment when the boy did not scream. Jesse eventually had to stop himself from carrying out the torture because he recognized that his aggression, stemming from his fantasmatic wish to experience the attainment of *jouissance*, could actually kill the boy. This is the moment when Jesse becomes aware of the power of his own aggression – it is strong enough that he can actually kill another human being – for the attainment of sexual fulfillment. Jesse decides not to proceed because he knows, internally, that he does not condone the torture of African Americans. Nevertheless, the image of suffering African Americans produces sexual excitement in Jesse. He does not tell Grace about beating the young man because he knows he will experience sexual arousal if he continues talking about the incident.

While lying in bed and going through a free-associative process, Jesse then begins remembering the day he attended the lynching – a day when his father said, “You will never forget this picnic” (243). In the meantime, Jesse recognizes that Grace is still awake, but still pretending to be asleep. When he realizes that she is still conscious, he stops talking and saying things out loud. His speech now turns to an internal voice and

begins recalling the day of the picnic. This switch suggests that Jesse is aware of what does or does not influence his sexual arousal is connected to the day of lynching.

Furthermore, and more importantly, the reason he stopped talking is because what Jesse witnessed at the picnic is something he cannot verbalize – it will be kept in his psychic world and continues to accumulate fantasmatic meanings. There is a sense of secrecy around the day of the lynching; thus, the memory of the day will come back and haunt him in the form of sexual perversion in his later life. He cannot verbalize to himself or to Grace the rationale behind the intense pleasure he experienced when seeing a black man being hanged and castrated.²⁰⁷

The Primal Scene and the Lynching: The Freudian Notion of “Primal Fantasy”

Jesse’s associative internal dialogue eventually leads him to remember the day before he attended the picnic. It was the day when he witnessed the primal scene, the day he discovered adult sexuality. The two moments, the witnessing of primal scene and witnessing of lynching, are linked in such a significant way that they become the foundation of Jesse’s sexuality. As he lies in bed next to Grace, Jesse returns in his memory to the night of the lynching. Just as he is experiencing difficulty falling asleep now, he was having difficulty falling asleep then. The linking of the present and past

²⁰⁷ In *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud introduces the concept of abreaction by arguing that language serves as a substitute for action. By speaking, the subject is able to give a voice to a tormenting secret, which always functions as the source that creates the symptoms. However, it was also Freud who first argued that the act of remembering invites misremembering or repetition. While paying attention to the Freudian notion of “talking cure,” it was Jacques Lacan who reminded us that the process of remembering through speech cannot help the subject remember what he/she wishes to remember, since it does not allow the subject to speak about the content of the unconscious. Freud argues that by the time the subject speaks, the subject has gone through the impossibility established by the work of repression which seeks to eliminate undesirable information. Every time language is used, interpretation of the content is at the mercy of the law of the father who constitutes and enforces repression so that certain information will never be articulated.

indicates that Jesse experiences the present moment simultaneously with his infantile pre-genital past experiences. He remembers being awake in his bed as a child that night. He felt a particular sensation, the mixture of emotions—curiosity and fear of discovering a world he was not supposed to enter—that overwhelmed him. He heard the silence of the night, and then suddenly the inexplicable terror took over him. He had trouble falling asleep:

His father switched off the lights. The dog moaned and pranced, but they ignored him and went inside. He could not sleep. He lay awake, hearing the night sounds, the dog yawning and moaning outside, the sawing of the crickets, the cry of owl, dogs barking away, then no sound at all, just the heavy, endless buzzing of the night. The darkness pressed on his eyelids like a scratchy blanket. He turned and turned again. He wanted to call his mother, but he knew his father would not like this. He was terribly afraid. Then he heard his father's voice in the other room, low, with a joke in it; but this did not help him, it frightened him more, he knew what was going to happen. He put his head over the blanket, then pushed his head out again, for fear, staring at the dark window. He heard his mother's moan, his father's sigh; he gritted his teeth. Then their bed began to rock. His father's breathing seemed to fill the world (240-41).

The darkness of the night made him aware of his vulnerability, because in that moment Jesse realized that he existed in the fearful world alone. He then waited for the passing of time, signified by the disappearance of the darkness of the night. He listened to the sound of silence and became increasingly aware of each sound entering in his psychic space. And while being drawn to the sound of silence, Jesse experienced the darkness of the night as swallowing up his parents, and their disappearance signified the existence of a world he was prohibited from entering. In the next moment, their departure from his infantile world began to draw him to his fantasmatic world where he desperately tried to accumulate understanding as to what type of activity they were engaged in. His fantasmatic thoughts were occasionally interrupted by the frightening sounds his parents

were making, which resembled the sounds of the dogs coming from outside of the house. The association between the sounds coming from his parents' bedroom and that of animals coming from outside created a terror, reminding him of the existence of a world in which frightening and savage practices were being carried out. And if the participants of this horrifying practice happened to be his parents, how was he to understand the meaning behind their violence in a world he is prohibited from entering? Did this perceptive experience of violence and secrecy around sexual intercourse become the lesson that influenced his sexual development later in his life?²⁰⁸

Jesse's parents took him to see the lynching the day after he witnessed the primal scene. His two fears, one associated with watching the lynching and the other associated with experiencing the primal scene, are just about to consolidate his psychosexual development. This is the moment where the link between his experiences of fear and pleasure gets established, which becomes the template for the development of his perversion. The genealogy of his perversion can be located in Jesse's recognition of his genuine feelings and concerns for African Americans, which often emerge in his feeling towards his friend, Otis. On the way to the lynching, which he calls the day of a "picnic," Jesse notices Otis's absence and wonders about whether or not Otis will join him there. Jesse then realizes that he has not seen Otis for a few days. The following passage reveals Jesse's desperate need to understand the reason for Otis's absence:

"We didn't see Otis this morning," Jesse said.

²⁰⁸ In "On the Sexual Theories of Children" Freud explains how children view sexual intercourse between their parents as a "sadistic view of coition," when they witness the primal scene. They see sexual intercourse as something that the stronger participant is forcefully inflicting on the weaker. They conflate the act of love as an act of violence. Children also see their mothers' rejection of their fathers' sexual interests, since she is fearful of becoming pregnant again, as their defending against an act of violence. In "On the Sexual Theories of Children" (1908). *S.E.* 9, pp. 220-221.

He did not know why he said this. His voice, in the darkness of the car, sounded small and accusing.

"You haven't seen Otis for a couple of mornings," his mother said.

That was true. But he was only concerned about *this* morning.

"No," said his father, "I reckon Otis's folks was afraid to let him show himself this morning."

"But Otis didn't do nothing!" Now his voice sounded questioning.

"Otis *can't* do nothing," said his father, "he is too little."

The car lights picked up their wooden house, which now solemnly approached them, the lights falling around it like yellow dust. Their dog, chained to a tree, began to bark.

"We just wanted to make sure *Otis don't do nothing*," said his father, and stopped the car. He looked down at Jesse. "And you tell him what your Daddy said, you hear?"

"Yes sir," he said (240).

In the darkness of the car, the voice is the only thing he hears. Seeing the absence of African Americans in his community creates an intuitive understanding in him that the "picnic" he is going to attend is to witness a specific type of punishment for an African American man. The absence of African American community members suggests that they are furious; also, they are afraid of being a part of it. As his father said, Jesse then realizes that Otis is not going to be there because he is too small – he is not able to go there alone. Otis is African American – the lynching is something that excites and entertains the white community. The sentences from his father, "Otis can't do nothing.... Otis don't do nothing," echo in the car.

Jesse's constructs his fantasmatic meaning of the primal scene through recalling the fear he experienced at the "picnic" where he witnessed castration being performed on an African American man. In this moment, he intuitively understands that the fear he experienced must be linked to the attainment of sexual gratification. In other words, the fear does not deter him from seeking sexual gratification; instead, it actually pushes him

towards libidinal cathexis. On the day of the lynching, Jesse looks around and sees his external environment, which has turned into a world comprised of only whites. In order for Otis to participate at the picnic, he would have to be the victim of a lynching, and Otis is too small to sexually violate white women. Through the word, “nothing” Jesse’s father expresses that the only form of sexuality for African American men is to not engage in sexual activity with anyone, and if they do, they will be regarded as expressing the power to control the bodies of both white and African American women. And such power, the power to control the sexuality of women, should only be given to white men.

In the car, while still worrying about Otis, Jesse hears the singing of his parents’ friends who also came to see the lynching.²⁰⁹ He feels the heat of the sun, and then he experiences two very confusing emotions, happiness and fear. He wants to ask why he feels this way, but he cannot find anybody to answer this question for him. Typically, Otis was the one Jesse consulted whenever he became aware of a peculiarity associated with the world he lived in. Jesse’s relationship to Otis has allowed him to understand the different world in which Otis, his family, and the rest of the African Americans lived. However, on this particular day, Otis is not there to inform him about what is to occur based on his understanding of the world. Through his relationship to Otis, Jesse has been aware of his external world, reality, in which there are two different worlds divided according to race. Jesse experiences the disappearance of this reality – he is now standing alone in the white world where he is expected to behave like everyone else. He is happy

²⁰⁹ Jesse is remembering this moment while being in bed with Grace. He gets to this moment by first speaking about singing that he experienced earlier in the day. This linking of the present and past events indicates the working of the psychic process in which the remembrance of the present is always influenced by the past. In addition, the two scenes of singing are marked by racial difference. The signing here is an expression of joy and excitement of whites who are just to about to use the body of an African American man in order to attain *jouissance* whereas the singing he speaks of earlier is the expression of sorrow of African Americans, who sing because they cannot legally engage in such practices nor can they facilitate transgression by externalizing their aggression against the lawmakers.

because he is with his parents, but he is also afraid because he knows that his people are going to lynch one of Otis' people. However, at the lynching Jesse learns to disavow the fear associated with witnessing inhumanity in order to prolong the libidinal sensation, the feelings of love, fulfillment, and contentment that come with being with his parents and seeing them excited and happy.

When Jesse got to the site of the lynching, he intuitively understood that an important part of the man's body was to be cut off, or in adult language, that castration would be performed as a part of the lynching. When Jesse saw the man's sexual organs being cut off and his entire body set on fire, he experienced extreme fear; however, he quickly came to the conclusion that his affective experience did not match the joyful facial expressions and body language of the white adults:

[H]is mother and father greeting and being greeted, himself being handled, hugged, and patted, and told how much he had grown. The wind blew the smoke from the fire across the clearing into his eyes and nose.... The sounds of laughing and cursing and wrath – and something else – rolled in waves from the front of the mob to the back. Those in front expressed their delight at what they saw, and this delight rolled backward, wave upon wave, across the clearing, more acrid than the smoke. His father reached down suddenly and sat Jesse on his shoulders (245).

In this moment, despite experiencing fear, Jesse had to attend to his sensing of the communal pressure which gestured him to immediately disengage from his internal experience and learn to experience the lynching as he, a white boy, was not in similar danger. This task demanded that Jesse disavow the residual feelings particular to a child going through the Oedipal phase: fear and love towards his parents; however, in addition to those, he was also pressured to disregard his concerns for his African American friend, Otis. And as a result, the castration fear did not get worked through properly; thus, it ended up getting repressed. When Jesse's castration fear was suddenly repressed, it

became incorporated into his unconscious where it began creating discomfort, because the fear demanded an answer to his fearful question of whether or not he would ever become a victim of castration. In order to prevent him from experiencing castration fear (or in the more general sense, the fear of death and dying, the Thing), rather than being able to work through and sublimate the feelings of rivalry he felt towards his father, Jesse began engaging in the perverse practice of holding onto the mental image of the black man from the day of lynching, who was the victim of castration.

Baldwin introduces the primal scene before Jesse goes to the lynching. Jesse's experience of the primal scene instills the understanding that his father was committing a "violent act" upon his mother, which is a typical picture the Oedipal child creates in his or her imagination. Just before Jesse enters the scene of lynching, he was keenly aware of his father's body, especially, his father's tongue:

His father's lips had a strange cruel curve, he wet his lips from time to time, and swallowed. He was terribly aware of his father's tongue, it was as though he had never seen it before. And his father's body suddenly seemed immense, bigger than a mountain (244).

Although he is unable to see his father's penis, when he sees his father's tongue, he sees it fantasmatically. In other words, he sees his father's tongue as penis. Jesse's father looked masculine and powerful, as compared to Jesse's feelings of fear and vulnerability – his father has a big penis and he has a small penis. At this moment, Jesse begins to fear his father because he recognizes that his father, who can participate in the castration and killing of African Americans, can castrate him if he so wishes. This is the moment the threat of castration becomes very close to reality for Jesse: he could be the target of his father's aggression and violence unless he gives up his mother as his sexual object.

The Rhetoric of Communal Neurosis: Psychic Conflation – Paranoia of Black Body versus the Castrating Potent Father

In order to cope with the awareness that the white adult community members are the ones committing inhumanity, when he becomes an adult, Jesse starts to convince himself that there must be a justification as to why African Americans have to endure the suffering. Jesse's internal narrative touches upon suspicions that African Americans are organizing in order to harm whites. Historically speaking, Jesse's paranoia and suspicion reflects a defensive stance held by white Southerners as their sense of control began to dissipate after Emancipation.²¹⁰ As African Americans were no longer held in bondage, whites believed African American men would seek revenge by sexually violating white women.²¹¹ By putting the word "Washington" in the following passage, Baldwin silently asserts that Jesse Washington (and Jesse Thomas), as well as many victims of lynching, were put to death because of the suspicion and paranoia of the white Southerners:

Although the niggers were scattered throughout the town – down in the hollow near the railroad tracks, way west near the mills, up on the hill, the well-off ones, and some out near the college – nothing seemed to happen in one part of town without the niggers immediately knowing it in the other. This meant that they could not take them by surprise. They rarely mentioned it, but they knew that some of the niggers had guns. It stood to reason, as they said, since, after all, some of them had been in the Army. There were niggers in the Army right now and God knows they wouldn't have had any trouble stealing this half-assed government blind – the whole world was doing it, look at the European countries and all those countries

²¹⁰ The paranoia also speaks about the commonly felt sentiment that African American men were dangerous because they used guns and weapons while participating in World War I in Europe as soldiers. See Dray, pp. 247-251. And this sentiment was also shared during the time of the Spanish American War.

²¹¹ For a similar argument and detailed analysis of how the Southerners thought castration was an important part of lynching, see W. Fitzhugh Brundage. *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia: 1880 – 1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. Carrigan argues that as compared to blacks who were often lynched because they were seen as raping white women, whites were never accused of such a crime. When whites became the victim of lynching, they were accused of committing crimes such as cattle and horse theft, harboring a fugitive slave, fence cutting, or murder. They were never put to death because of others' perceptive knowledge that they committed rape. The paranoid notion of black men and sexual deviance became the justification for castrating black men when lynching took place. See Carrigan, Appendix A.

in Africa. They made jokes about it – bitter jokes; and they cursed the government in Washington, which had betrayed them; but they had not yet formed a posse (237).

This passage describes Jesse's wish to answer to the question of what African Americans will do when finally given the opportunity to unleash the anger accumulating all these years. The thought of the retaliation of African Americans frightens Jesse so much that he must find a way to get rid of the fear as a form of self-preservation, and so he engages in sadistic thought processes that turn his fear into aggression. The narrative indicates the possibility that African Americans have dynamite and guns, and Jesse's white community members are becoming paranoid that African Americans were now gaining power. Although the narrative in the paragraph utilizes the pronoun "they" to describe the feelings of the whites to whom Jesse looks to for help and guidance, Jesse shares their feelings of fear and suspicion. As the narrative progresses, he quickly loses control. Jesse no longer speaks as a part of the collective and his thoughts turn into uncontrollable paranoia – he becomes obsessed with what African Americans are capable of doing.²¹²

²¹² During and beyond Reconstruction, white Southerners justified lynching based on their unsubstantiated paranoia that African American men would come after their white women. Lynching was a way to instill the notion of safety – white men used it as deterrence, functioning as a reminder of the consequence of sexual misconduct such as rape and miscegenation involving white women. The focal point of lynching pointing out African American men's sexuality, which they sought to take away because it enhanced the already existing paranoia that African American men would use their penises to externalize their rage. Whites castrated African American men in public because they thought that the most dangerous part of African American men was their sexual potency. Orlando Patterson writes the following: "[A]s the flames devoured the flesh and soul of each Afro-American victim, every participant in these heinous rituals of human sacrifice must have felt the deepest and most gratifying sense of expiation and atonement." Orlando Patterson. *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries*. New York: Basic Civitas, 1998. Patterson also suggests that the strong association between lynching and cannibalistic tendencies cannot be ignored. Lynching often involved picnics. Although the etymology of the word "picnic" has nothing to do with "picking" or "nigger," sonically, the association between the two words is quite strong. The preparation of food often involved the method of barbecuing. Based on the haunting history, it is not coincident that the South's most popular form of outdoor entertainment involves barbecuing of animal flesh. Dray writes:

As a cookout, human victims were also butchered and roasted, often with members of the crowd offering suggestions on technique. The act of castration, a horrifying component of many lynchings, was at least mechanically familiar to most Southern participants, men accustomed to the slaughter of fowl and livestock and such practices as the gelding of horses. While attendees at

The paranoia associated with African Americans' ability to fight back using their penises not only establishes a particular discourse around the usefulness of castration, but it also allowed white Southerners to contain their castration fear as something that existed solely as a form of fantasy for white men. According to a Freudian point of view, this containment allowed the setting up of an environment where children were able to work through their fantasies associated with the primal scene (meaning their questioning what their parents do sexually) by introducing themselves as partners of their parents in their fantasies with or without foreseeing punishment from the powerful and potent father. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, the child's unwillingness to let go of the fantasies of primal copulations creates difficulty with regard to the installment of the superego.²¹³ For Freud, the anticipation of punishment, which can come in the form of castration fear, is intrinsically linked to the insertion of the reality that informs the subject that certain practices, even though they seem pleasurable, cannot be put to practice in the external environment. Such awareness comes to exist after the installation of the superego, which

lynchings did not take away a plate of food, the experience of having witnessed the event was thought by many incomplete if one did not go home with some piece of cooked human being; and there is much anecdotal evidence of lynch crowds either consuming food and drink while taking part in the execution, or retiring en masse immediately afterward for a meal (81).

Although Baldwin does not describe eating at the scene of the lynching, historically speaking, it was an important part of lynching. The picnic or lynching shows the callous excitement of the whites—the attitude and excitement of the whites terrifies Jesse and makes him repress his emotional response. The viewing of castration was gratifying for white Southerners because of two reasons: through cutting African American's genitals, they were able to release their built up aggressive impulses, as well as expressing ownership of white women's sexuality.

²¹³ According to Freud, if the child is seeking to take the same sex parent as the love object by identifying with the opposite sex parent, the result will be the negative Oedipal complex, which will invite a level of deficit in the superego structure. Currently, this view has been challenged by many theorists. See Benjamin, Jessica. *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination*. New York: Pantheon, 1988 and *Like Subject, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995 and Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter*. New York: Routledge, 1993. Ken Corbett. "Faggot = Loser" in *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, vol. 2 (2001), pp. 3-28. Harris, Adrienne. "Gender as a soft Assembly: Tomboys' Stories" in *Ibid*, vol. 1 (2000), 223-250. Louise Kaplan. *Female Perversions*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991 and "Further Thoughts on Female Perversions" in *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, vol.1 (2000), pp. 349-370. Juliet Michael "Reflections on Ethel Spector Person's: The Sexual Century" in *Ibid*, vol. 2 (2001), pp. 243-260. Young-Bruehl, Elizabeth. "Beyond 'The Female Homosexual'" in *Ibid*, vol. 1(2000), pp. 97-124.

later becomes an important springboard for understanding concepts such as compassion, morality, and ethics.

One of the crucial meanings behind castrating African American men is that through developing the perception of their potency as dangerous, white Southerners sought a way to project the primal fear associated with their potent father onto African American men. According to Freud, the prolongation of the psychic imagery of the potent father and the fear of castration by him beyond childhood indicates the unsuccessful outcome of the Oedipal period. Failure to attain resolution of the Oedipus complex will lock the subject in infantile sexuality since the sublimation of infantile libidinal investments could not be facilitated. Also, if this failure creates difficulty for the subject in comprehending the notion of the sexual difference, the female body will perpetually trigger castration anxiety. This failure also becomes the basis for the development of perversion because the understanding of sexual difference did not get installed, thus maintaining the perception of phallic monism. Consequently, the subject will not fear castration as a consequence of maintaining his infantile libidinal attachment to the mother. It seems possible to say that the act of castrating African American men is the white man's way of seeking resolution to the unresolved Oedipus complex: they do so by first utilizing their perceived notion of African American men's sexual potency and conflate it with the potent and castrating father in their fantasy. And by castrating African American men, white men are carrying on the magical thinking that they are, in fact, castrating their potent father, which will ultimately prevent them from having to experience castration.²¹⁴

²¹⁴ In "The Weaning of the Oedipus," Hans Loewald indicates that one of the achievements from the successful resolution of the Oedipal period is that the child develops the ability to facilitate the psychic

Suppose, in Jesse's community, white men are struggling to attain resolution of the Oedipus complex, then their desire to castrate African American men can be argued as an expression of their wish to get rid of the notion of difference, which was originally attached to the notion of sexual difference. The logic works in the following way: when they see an African American's racial features, they perceive that it is triggering the notion of difference, which automatically links the experience back to the castration fear. Hence, introducing African Americans into the perceptive field achieves the conflation of racial difference and sexual difference; as a result, African Americans and their racial difference end up being marked as the signifier of castration fear, which Jesse's community members try to get rid of. In other words, Jesse's white community members' wish to get rid of African American men is not because they are dangerous, having the ability to violate the white folks, but because they trigger castration fear, because for them racial difference functions as the reminder of sexual difference. Baldwin's work reminds us that when the memory of lynching is disavowed, it may reemerge in the sexual practices of those who participated. African Americans could not escape the memory of lynching, not only because the injuries that the lynching produced cannot be forgotten, but also the justification of lynching still exists in various forms to this day.

killing of the parents, which he calls "parricide." This fantasmatic process allows the child to separate from the parents, which enables his or her independent psychosexual growth. Loewald uses the term "parricide" to describe the process of eliminating the imago of parents from the psyche. Hans Loewald *The Essential Loewald: Collected Papers and Monographs*. (Maryland: University Publishing Group, 2000) pp. 387-398. Instead of moving towards the resolution of the Oedipus complex in this intra-psychic way, white Southerners, through lynching, fantasized that by castrating African American men, the psychic conflation of their potent father, they could prevent their dangerous father from castrating them. Therefore, instead of working through the Oedipus complex by killing off a devastating image of the father in their fantasy, white Southerners facilitated the actual killing of African Americans. According to Loewald's point of view, the resolution of the Oedipus cannot be attained without involving the working through of the psychic process – it cannot be replaced by the actual castration of men perceived to be threatening. If Loewald's theory is correct, as long as lynching was practiced, white Southerners were unable to attain the resolution of the Oedipus complex, which led to superego deficit from where perverse symptoms found their expression.

The anti-lynching movement that finally put the end to lynching and the subsequent racial justice movements focused on remembering and recording incidents of injustice so as to build the case against those who violated the rights of people of color.²¹⁵ African Americans are remembering the history accurately so as not to fall ill. The history, as painful it might be, must be remembered accurately; if not, the psychic toll will be enormous, as it is in the case of Jesse.

The Phenomenon of Phallic Monism

Jesse's understanding of adult sexuality was significantly influenced by going to the lynching and encountering the primal scene on the same day; as a result, his infantile libidinal wish, to take his mother as the sexual object as his father would do, can not be properly worked through. As a result, his childhood castration fear will influence his thoughts and behaviors well into his adulthood. The castration fear then begins hindering Jesse from internalizing the existence of the sexual difference; thus, he will increasingly see the male and female bodies within the phenomenological perspective of "having and not-having."²¹⁶ The fantasmatic exploration of "having" or "not-having," or not castrated and castrated, perpetually recalls castration fear because phallic monism is that the subject believes that women used to have a penis but lost it later.²¹⁷ If Jesse were

²¹⁵Charles Flint Kellogg. *NAACP: A History of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Vol. I 1909-1920*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967.

²¹⁶ In his *Difference and Disavowal*, Alan Bass argues:

Within the fantasy of phallic monism castration is a perceived "fact." As a result of this initial process, there is subsequent oscillation between the two positions implicit in phallic monism – castrated, not castrated. These two positions intrinsic to phallic monism, therefore, function as perceptual, wishful-defensive substitute. (31)

²¹⁷ According to Janine Chassiquet-Smirgel, phallic monism is a theoretical stipulation by a boy that all human beings, women included, have a penis. She argues that this belief fundamentally contradicts the wish to castrate women until at least the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. She defines phallic monism as a means of healing a part of the narcissistic injury that results from the child's feelings of helplessness. And

struggling to internalize the existence of sexual difference, watching the castration of the African American man offers an important resolution: Jesse is now taught that the ones who deserve such treatment were not white women – white men without a penis – but African American men. This perceptive knowledge produces a peculiar knowledge of sexual difference based on racial difference: as soon as the perception of racial difference is introduced in the scene of castration fear, the phallic monist belief that a woman used to have a penis but lost it because she did something wrong suddenly disappears.

Therefore, when the perception of racial difference is introduced, the female body no longer functions as a white male body without a penis. In other words, instead of the typical expression of a fetishist who struggles to hold onto the perceptive reality of a woman with a phallus (phallic monism, in which the representation of the phallus could be feet, far, shoes, and so on), a racist as a fetishist (because they go hand-in-hand) installs the discourse of racial difference as a way to disavow the existence of sexual difference.²¹⁸ In other words, the creation of racial difference must be articulated as a fetishistic attempt to concretize the skin color as the signifier with which a fetishist seeks

because of the feelings associated with sexual maturation in particular, the child's sexuality becomes not just sexuality, but psychosexuality, which tries to resolve the impossibility associated with attaining incestuous infantile sexual wish. *Creativity and Perversion*. (London: Free Association Books, 1985), pp. 46-54.

²¹⁸ In fetishism, race must be thought of as the thing which the subject seeks to utilize in order to cover up the internal experience of castration fear; it brings up the fear of encountering death and dying, the Thing. At the end of the story, Baldwin exposes Jesse's perversion as resulting from his experience of encountering the Thing. I argue that what exists at the core of his perverse symptoms is the conflict between his wish to prolong his utilization of African Americans as the thing and his awareness that he should not be engaged in such practice. However, Jesse is stuck in an environment where transgressing the demands of his communal external environment also brings the possibility of death and dying upon him, since those who transgressed were put to death by lynching. As I argued in my introduction, the difference between the Thing and the thing is that the Thing alludes to the imagery that is attached to the fear of death and dying, which could also include castration fear, and the thing is what the subject utilizes in order to avoid experiencing feeling that encountering the Thing will produce. It is my argument that race or development of racism functions as the thing.

to justify the utilization of people of color and their bodies as a means to attain the relief from the castration fear that accompanies the knowledge of sexual difference.

For Jesse, the attainment of the resolution of castration fear is facilitated by being engaged in the discourse of phallic monism, which becomes the foundation for his preoccupation with the racialized body. This view suggests that for him the body of African American men can also function as protection against his father's aggression (or facing the aggression of other white adult community members), which can be linked to the perception of losing his penis when he maintains his erotic feeling towards his mother. Furthermore, Jesse's utilization of African Americans as the thing reinforces two types of violence that are gender specific: African American men will be castrated and African American women will have to endure sexual violence.

Freud would postulate that Jesse's failure to attain resolution of the Oedipus complex would negatively influence his capacity to internalize the superego. Bass would argue that the failure will be linked to the disavowal of sexual difference, which is also linked to the process of dedifferentiating reality and fantasy altogether. If this were the case, then the perception of his mother's body will create castration fear, which he needs to disavow by introducing a substitute, the thing, African Americans. In addition, it is also possible to assume that one of the reasons Jesse is having difficulty engaging with Grace sexually may be that her white body reminds him of his mother's body, and the psychic link inevitably produces castration fear.²¹⁹ Although in Jesse's external world,

²¹⁹ In "Fetishism," Freud argues that a man suffering from fetishism still believes that the woman possesses a penis, but this penis is no longer the same penis as it was before: "[S]omething else has taken its place, has been appointed its substitute, as it were, and now inherits the interest which was formerly directed to its predecessor" (154). Therefore, as long as the thing, or the object functioning as the substitute for the lost penis is utilized, he can continue disavowing the perceptive knowledge attained from the "scotomization" that women have a penis. Freud, writes:

that is to say, in reality, the ones who suffer castration are African American men, when Jesse is with his wife in bed, he might be engaging in the fantasmatic thought that Grace, a white woman, used to possess a penis. Bass would suggest that Jesse's belief in this phallic monism results from his wish to eliminate the difference between memory (external reality) and perception (the internal fantasmatic world).²²⁰ According to Bass, when the subject seeks to maintain a blurring between the two, he or she does so by utilizing a concrete thought process. The act of blurring, which Bass refers to as the work of negative hallucination, has a traumatic effect on sexuality because the libidinal fulfillment needed for self-preservation cannot be carried out as long as he or she is blurring the difference between memory and perception.²²¹ Bass would argue that the reason the subject cannot differentiate the two, or has difficulty maintaining self-preservation by recognizing the need for libidinal fulfillment, is because of the

I announce that the fetish is a substitute for the penis... To put it more plainly: the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and – for reasons familiar to us – does not want to give up.

What happened, therefore, was that the boy refused to take cognizance of the fact of his having perceived that a woman does not possess a penis. No, that could be not true: for if a woman had been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger; and against that there rose in rebellion the portion of his narcissism which Nature has, as a precaution, attached to that particular organ... It is not true that, after the child has made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He was retained that belief, but he has also given it up. In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception and the force of his counter-wish, a compromise has been reached, as is only possible under the dominance of the unconscious laws of thought – the primary process (153-54).

Sigmund Freud. "Fetishism" (1927). *S.E.* 21.

²²⁰ Bass (32-33).

²²¹ In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud informs us that an infant, who has to wait for the arrival of the milk, will engage in hallucination so as to bring back the memory of the previously satisfied state. Hallucination works in such a way that it will temporarily rescue the infant from experiencing pain resulting from hunger. However, if the infant continues to hallucinate and the milk does not arrive in reality, then the infant will be left hallucinating and begins to utilize hallucination as a realist method—instead of crying for example—with which to get the food. The prolongation of this hallucinatory state is connected to the perception of the adult subject while engaged in fantasy: that his or her needs are getting met, while in reality they are not. (179-184).

fundamental trouble associated with recognizing the difference between reality and fantasy.²²²

Jesse's trouble engaging with Grace sexually is an indication that the difference between memory and perception, or the difference between his mother and Grace is blurred, which triggers castration fear in him. And in order to defend against the fear brought on by this blurring, Jesse needs to introduce concrete thinking, utilizing African Americans as the thing, which will then function as substitute for the missing phallus in fantasy that triggers castration anxiety. In other words, Jesse's psychic structure suggests that he is oscillating between memory, which informs him that the ones who suffer castration are African American men, and perceptive reality, which suggests that he, too, can lose his penis as his mother or Grace did. In order to end the tension caused by oscillating between the two psychic experiences, Jesse seeks to blur the difference between memory and perception altogether.²²³ One of the ways in which he manages to blur the difference between memory (the real experience of seeing a black man castrated) and perception (phallic monism – the fantasmatic conviction that women used to have a penis) is by transferring aggressive affects he feels towards African American men onto African American women (who share the same racial features) in the form of violent copulation.

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²²² *Three Essays* (31).

²²³ Bass would argue that the blurring of the difference between perception and memories occurs in dreams, and all dreams are made possible by the working of hallucination. Bass also connects the subject's experience of hallucinatory moments with the specific psychic experience called dedifferentiation. I will further explore the concepts of dedifferentiation and concreteness in a later section where I introduce post-Freudian perspectives on the notion of difference.

Historical Analysis versus Psychoanalysis

In post-Freudian psychoanalysis, castration fear is viewed as a psychic phenomenon that installs the existence of not only the sexual difference but also the difference between fantasy and reality.²²⁴ However, in contrast to the Freudian emphasis on the fantasmatic nature of castration anxiety, history teaches us that castration fear did not exist in the realm of fantasy for many individuals, specifically for African Americans.²²⁵ Freud's disinterest in observing the world around him resulted in a split between psychoanalytic observation and historical observation, or the view that psychoanalytic observation is the investigation of the psychic world whereas historical

²²⁴ Castration fear indicates the experience of encountering the reality in which the subject's recognition of the difference between the sexes instills the idea that reality is different from fantasy. This realization comes to exist as a result of the introduction of the third figure, who will promote the installation of the superego. I will offer further elaboration of this argument when I introduce Alan Bass's conceptualization of fetishism and disavowal later.

²²⁵ Gary Tayler notes that when Freud published his paper "On the Sexual Theory of Children" in 1908 in Vienna, another medical doctor, Richard Millant, published a book called "Eunuchs Throughout the Ages" in Paris. Gary Tayler. *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002. Richard Millant. *Les Eunuques à Travers les Ages* (1908), a "histoire générale de l'eunuchisme et des eunuques" (4). In the book, which is the thirteenth volume in a series called, "Sexual Perversions," Millant describes the practice of castrating males to make them eunuchs in various parts of the ancient Greco-Roman world, as well as the contemporary practice that continued well into the late nineteenth century. The English word, "eunuch" comes from the ancient Greek word, expressing a compound meaning of "bed," especially "marriage bed" and "to hold, keep, or guard." They were guardians of the marriage bed, serving as the protector of "those precious uteruses" against men who sought a sexual relationship with the wives of powerful men. The husbands trusted eunuchs because they were incapable of impregnating their wives, and eunuchs consequently functioned as the regulator of reproduction by policing female sexuality. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. For example, Tayler informs us that as late as 1871, boys were being castrated and sold as slaves in Afghanistan (23). He cites various historical data suggesting that eunuchs often held powerful and important functions and social rank. Tayler notes that only a few hundred miles from Freud, unemployed Ottoman eunuchs were still meeting on the streets of Istanbul in 1931 to reminisce about the "good old days" (23). So then how did Freud come to develop the theory of castration complex, which relies on the theoretical frame that castration fear functions solely as a fantasmatic psychic process through which the child will understand sexual difference? In Freud's days, the history of eunuchism was readily available, which should have informed him that the practice of castration did, indeed, exist in reality. Tayler suspects that Freud developed the Oedipus complex based entirely on the interpretation of a single exemplary dramatic text, *Oedipus the Tyrant* (24). It is almost as though he did not know castration was still practiced in his time because he did not pay attention to the historical data. Or, as I argued in the previous section, he was not interested in engaging in the analysis of the communal external environment. Tayler argues that Freud's only reference was the mythological example of castration of Uranos by Kronos.

observation is the examination of the external world. And the existence of this split continues to prevent Freudian psychoanalysts from developing a theoretical position that incorporates the socio-historical analysis of castration fear and how such phenomena influenced the subject's psychosexual development and intra-psychic processes. It is worthwhile to ask the following question: although Freud saw the examination of the external environment and its impact on the individual psyche as an important psychoanalytic investigation, why have post-Freudian psychoanalysts resisted engaging in a historical observation of lynching?²²⁶

As Baldwin suggests, throughout and beyond slavery in the United States history, castration was regularly practiced as a part of lynching because white Southerners thought it could deter African American men from expressing sexual interest in and having sex with white women. The incorporation of this historical fact would have required American psychoanalysts to recognize that castration was a dreadful reality for African American men and women.²²⁷ The way in which this fact is disavowed in

²²⁶ There have been many studies that attempt to examine the Holocaust historically using psychoanalysis. See Daniel Jonah Goldhagen. *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. New York: Random House, 1996; *Healing Their Wounds: Psychotherapy with Holocaust Survivors and Their Families*. Ed. by Paul Marcus and Alan Rosenberg. New York: Praeger, 1986; Michael Nelken. *Hitler Unmasked: The Romance of Racism and Suicide*. Glastonbury Connecticut: Darkside Press, 1997; and David S. Wyman. *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938 -1941*. New York: Pantheon, 1985. However, as I argued in the Fanon Chapter, the examination of the effect of racism on people of color has largely escaped the consciousness of psychoanalysts. It is my observation that the link between racism and psychoanalysis outside of the rhetoric of Judaism is almost non-existent. The notion of trauma in the field of psychoanalysis is strictly linked to the experience of the Holocaust, though genocide has been organized and controlled by governments, in many places in the world, and is still happening today. Examples abound: the U.S. government's treatment of Native American Indians; U.S. and Southern law that promoted lynching and the Jim Crow legal structure; Stalin's whole *oeuvre* of repression and racial decimation; the destruction of the Armenian people at the hands of the Ottomans; Japanese invasions of Korea and China in the 1930's; the Israeli treatment of Palestinians; and the so-called religious and ethnic cleansings that took place in Sudan, the former Yugoslavia, and Tibet. As indicated in Fanon's disappointment with regard to Adler and Freud, Freudian analysts' reluctance to analyze the effect of genocide beyond their examination of the Holocaust deserves an explanation.

²²⁷ This investigation should not only be limited as the task for American analysts. However, the responsibility must fall upon American psychoanalysts the most, because they will be treating patients who are African Americans; therefore, they are ethically responsible for understanding American history

psychoanalytic theory-making indicates that the current theoretical position on the Oedipus complex, which still does not recognize the fact that there exist or have existed people who feared castration in reality, fails to incorporate ways in which racism affects psychosexual development of all parties involved. And the theoretical attempt to disengage from the examination of external reality (not just psychic reality) marks the clinical utilization, theorization, and teaching of Freud's theory as having a fetishistic structure. Baldwin's description of Jesse's perversion offers a historical context that has been omitted from the post-Freudian psychoanalytic discourse. His work provides an opportunity to join psychoanalytic and historical observations; this story brings the disavowed African American history into a form that can be put under the scope of psychoanalytic observation.

By describing Jesse's psychic world, Baldwin reveals that the remembrance of lynching is carried in two distinct forms of historical reality or consciousness based on racial difference: one based on the perspective of whites and the other on the remembrance of African Americans.²²⁸ In Jesse's external environment, the acts of violence upon African Americans were recognized as undesirable to whites' egos; therefore, they had to be repudiated. In this way, disavowal involves two different thought processes, recognition and repudiation; thus, it is anything but removal of a memory.²²⁹ Consequently, the psychic determination to carry out disavowal injures not

correctly and incorporating the understanding into the utilization and conceptualization of psychoanalytic theory. In addition, the record of lynching suggests that African American men were not only the ones defined as black. Others who received such categorizations were Native Americans and Mexicans. See William Carrigan. *The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836-1916*.

²²⁸ For examining the concept of dual consciousness further, see Paul Gilroy. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993.

²²⁹ In *Psychology of Everyday Life*, Freud defines forgetting as one of the parapraxes. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud writes that forgetting should not be thought of as a destruction or annihilation of the

only the ones who systematically become the target of violence in the first place, but it also violates others in the future who will experience and learn distorted history. In “Going to Meet the Man,” Baldwin allows the reader to experience what Derrida calls “a chance encounter” with the victims of lynching.²³⁰ This subtle yet crucial gesture makes sure that the reader will know the consequences of lynching.

Jesse Washington

Baldwin’s choice of the main character’s name, Jesse, signifies two victims of lynching who lived in the post-Reconstruction era in Waco, Texas. Their names were Jesse Washington and Jesse Thomas. My reading suggests that Baldwin’s use of the name Jesse may be a reference to these two widely publicized cases of lynching. And by using the name Jesse, Baldwin attempts to claim that he was inspired by the historical fact, and that the significance and history of lynching must not be erased from American history.²³¹ Of the two, Jesse Washington’s case was known to be among the most

“memory-trace.” Rather, everything is preserved in the psychic apparatus; thus, when suitable circumstances occur, the content will find a way to express itself. In examining the concepts of repression and disavowal, James Strachey indicates that the concept of “disavowal” becomes increasingly important for Freud and he begins utilizing the concept interchangeably with concepts such as denial and repression. Traces of his interest in the concept of disavowal can be found in his earlier paper, “Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning” (1911), *SE*, 12. “The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis” (1924); “The Economic Problem of Masochism” (1924), *SE*, 19. “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes” (1925), *SE*, 19. In particular, in his later paper “On Fetishism,” Freud differentiates between the concepts of “repression” and “disavowal.” He argues that there needs to be a sharper distinction between the vicissitude of ideas that are different from the affects that emerge when the subject experiences castration fear: repression (*verdrängung*) will refer to the ideas that come along when the experience happens and disavowal (*verleugnung*) will refer to the affects attached to the ideas. *S.E.* 21, p.153.

²³⁰ A close examination of Derrida’s description of “chance encounter” will be offered in the following section.

²³¹ According to Freud, as well as Heidegger and Derrida, the function of time is closely allied with the work of delay. Alan Bass introduces the significance of time in the development of perversion. In psychoanalysis particularly, the notion of trauma is strictly connected to the experience that escapes language at the moment when the experience takes place. Thus, meaning is assigned retrospectively, and it is because of this system of delay, experience will be registered as traumatic. I will return to the notion of trauma and function of time later in this chapter. Jesse Washington was murdered by lynching on May 15th,

gruesome incidents of racial violence in the United States, characterized by a long, drawn-out execution by stoning, cutting, castration, and burning.²³² Although Baldwin does not make a reference to Jesse Washington's lynching, his depiction of the lynching in the story resembles the description of the lynching of Jesse Washington. Phillip Dray describes the day of the lynching in the following way:

As he was prodded and dragged along, Washington was kicked, stabbed, hit with bricks and shovels, and had most of his clothes torn off, then was forced naked onto the pyre. The chain around his neck was looped over a tree limb, and he was jerked into the air. His body was sprinkled with coal oil, as were the boxes and scraps of wood below. There was a momentary delay when it was discerned that the tree itself, which adorned the city hall square, would be destroyed by the fire, but by now the crowd was huge and pressing in from all sides – students from Waco High on their lunch hour, secretaries, and businessmen had wondered over to take in the event – and there was no stopping what was about to occur.

Washington was lowered down one last time so that participants could cut off his fingers, ears, toes, and finally his penis, then with the crowd's delirious roar of approval the oil-soaked boxes were lit and Washington's body began to be consumed by the flames. "Such a demonstration as of people gone mad was never heard before," recorded the Waco Times-Herald. When Washington was dead, a man on a horse lassoed the charred remains and dragged them through town, followed by a group of young boys. The skull eventually bounced loose and was captured by some of the boys, who pried the teeth out and offered them for sale (218).

An estimated crowd of fifteen thousand witnesses attended the lynching, and it was by far the most vividly photographed lynching in United States history. Photographs taken by Fred Gildersleeve became widely available and were sold as a set of postcards which many whites kept as a form of souvenir.²³³ However, despite the readily available

1916. Despite the national attention Jesse Washington's case generated, Jesse Thomas was lynched a few years later on May 26th, 1922. Both incidents took place in Waco, Texas.

²³² Carrigan cites the following sources throughout his work when he describes the details of Washington's lynching. James M. SoRelle, "The Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 86 (1983): 517-36. Rogers M. Smith. "The Waco Lynching of 1916: Perspective and Analysis," Master's thesis, Baylor University, 1971.

²³³ Some of Gildersleeve's pictures were included in the introductory sections of Carrigan's *The Making of a Lynching Culture*.

photographs which later functioned as evidence to support the elimination of lynching by The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, many witnesses of the lynching attempted to deny their participation and downplayed the scale of violence. Gildersleeve's pictures clearly show the mob leaders, who were easily identifiable because they did not wear masks when they put Jesse Washington to death. A single investigator from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Elisabeth Freeman, was able to name all of the mob leaders shortly after the incident, and, based on Freeman's report, the NAACP launched a full-scale investigation of the incident. As a result, the Jesse Washington case became the cornerstone for a federal anti-lynching bill.²³⁴

Gildersleeve's pictures became important evidence in articulating the crude brutality of lynching and also the effects of lynching on humanity. These pictures allowed an unconscious sadistic wish to surface to the level of consciousness, articulating the horrific nature of human potential – the link between harming others and pleasure – and to some, the realization of this human potential was more horrific than the details of Jesse Washington's murder. Despite national attention, Waco residents and other Texans were still reluctant to regard the mob leaders as deserving punishment under criminal law.²³⁵ In

²³⁴ Dray (215-219).

²³⁵ According to Carrigan, soon after Jesse Washington's case caught national attention, some white Wacoans began facilitating the process of misremembering the incident. They wanted to eliminate the imagery of Waco as a racially charged city where brutal lynchings frequently happened. However, even though white Wacoans were interested in reconstructing the image of the city by facilitating forgetting, doing so was difficult since Jesse Washington's lynching was witnessed by fifteen thousand viewers and documented by numerous photographs. Still, a persistent effort was made by the ones who wished to forget and gradually over the years, the reported number of people who attended the lynching started decreasing. The number fifteen thousand was based on a white suffragist, Elisabeth Freeman's, report to the NAACP. See William Carrigan. *The Making of a Lynching Culture* (193). In 1968 a white author, William Curry, reported the number to be only a thousand. See William Curry. *History of Early Waco with Allusion to Six Shooter Junction*. Texas: Texan Press, 1968. And in 1983, it was lowered again to four hundred. See Patricia Ward Wallace. *Waco: Texas Crossroads*. Woodland Hills: Windsor Publications, 1983. In the

the end, although the lynching violated Texas law, none of Jesse Washington's murderers were prosecuted.²³⁶ Later on, many white Wacoans began making efforts to forget the Jesse Washington lynching by insisting that Waco was a peaceful city. Baldwin's character Jesse's effort to forget speaks of the working of disavowal, similar to the disavowal made by many of the white residents of Waco, and therefore Baldwin's work, combined with Freudian theory, can be used to suggest that in Waco, and indeed in the whole American South, "a pathology of cultural community," as a Freudian would conceptualize it, may have led to the manifestations of perversions such as that experienced by Jesse in "Going to Meet the Man."²³⁷

meantime, while downplaying the magnitude of the incidents, white Wacoans began saying that the fear experienced by African American men and women was imagined because Waco was a peaceful city.

²³⁶ Although *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, and *The New York Times* severely condemned the lynching, only a few Texas newspapers denounced the lynching. In particular, thoughts and questions concerning Jesse Washington's lynching continued to appear in *the Nation* throughout 1916. For example, the day after the incident, *Waco Semi-Weekly Tribune* published an article stating that the lynching was justified since black criminals were "freaks of nature"; thus, Jesse Washington deserved to be put to death. The article also asserted that lynching was necessary to protect white women. Lynching was used a way to put black men in their "place." *Waco Semi-Weekly Tribune*, May 17, 1916.

²³⁷ Jesse Washington was the chief suspect in the murder of fifty-three year-old Lucy Fryer, the wife of a white farmer in Robinson, a small town seven miles south of Waco. Washington was a developmentally challenged eighteen-year old. Shortly after his forced confession, he was transferred to the Dallas County Jail by McLennan county sheriff, Samuel S. Fleming. James M. SoRelle writes that a black journalist, A.T. Smith, editor of the *Paul Quinn Weekly*, was arrested and convicted on criminal charges after he printed allegations that Lucy Fryer's husband was the one who committed the murder. See "'The Waco Horror': The Lynching of Jesse Washington" in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 86 (1983).

In Dallas, a jury of twelve white men deliberated for only four minutes and sentenced Jesse Washington to death. William Carrigan describes what followed right after the deliberation:

As officials prepared to remove Washington, an unidentified white man shouted, "Get the Nigger," and members of the crowd seized and dragged Washington from the McLennan County Courthouse. He was beaten and stabbed as the mob proceeded to the bridge that spans the Brazos River. The crowd changed directions, however, when its leaders heard of a fire intended for burning Washington at city hall. Bricks and shovels continued to pelt Washington, and his body soon became covered in blood. Then one of his ears was cut off and he was castrated. As the fire grew, Washington tried unsuccessfully to get away. The mob threw a chain over a tree and pulled him off the ground. When Jesse Washington tried to grab the chain above his head, his fingers were severed, leaving him to slap at his nose. He was then lowered into the fire several times and then raised so the crowd, now numbering in the thousands, could see his remains. "A mighty shout rose in the air" each time. Eventually, a man on horseback tied the rope to the body, pulled the corpse around City Hall Plaza, and paraded it through the main street of Waco. It was finally dragged to the town of Robinson, put in a sack, and hung for public display in front of a blacksmith's shop. (1-2)

Carrigan takes the quote from *Waco Times-Herald*, 15 May 1916.

William Carrigan argues that the lynching of Jesse Washington was a defining moment of racial violence in the United States. He calls Jesse Washington's killers "violent, brutal sadists who took pleasure in torturing another human being"(2). What made Washington's case unforgettable was its gruesome nature and scale – fifteen thousand people coming to "celebrate his death"(2). Fred Gildersleeve's pictures captured the large mass of people. Their facial expressions and body language indicate a peculiar sentiment: by watching Jesse Washington's slow execution, viewers found a way to collectively externalize their sadistic impulses. Jesse Washington became the thing that the white viewers were able to use, rather than using themselves, as the target of their own aggressive thought processes and sadistic impulses. Psychoanalytically speaking, this particular form of externalization is linked to tension release, which allows the build-up of uncomfortable stimuli to leave their bodies, and can thus be gratifying. In other words, the experience of watching Jesse Washington was joyful because the viewers were able to use Jesse instead of attacking themselves with sadistic impulses. I would argue that this specific way of using African American men as the thing to release sexual and sadistic tensions illustrates some of the primary causes of the social construction of race. The need for the construction of racial difference produces fetishists who will then use people of color in order to release built-up aggressive and sexual tensions so that they can experience *jouissance*.

Unconscious Time and External Time: The Phenomenology of Cure, A Dialogue with Derrida

As Jesse lies in bed, he continues to conflate the present (his memory of the beating of the prisoner) with the past (the childhood memories of witnessing lynching and the primal scene). I read Jesse's experiencing of time as Baldwin's attempt to link the story, which will be read by the reader in the present moment, with the past, which is marked by two dates, May 15, 1919 and May 25, 1922, the dates of the Washington and Thomas lynchings. Freud reminds us that the time is a crucial factor in the development of symptoms. He writes, "We have learnt that unconscious mental processes are in themselves 'timeless.' This means in the first place that they are not ordered temporally, that time does not change them in any way and that the idea of time cannot be applied to them."²³⁸ Chassequet-Smirgel and Bass both support Freud's argument. Bass, in particular, argues that the function of unconscious time informs the way fetishism will come to exist. For example, he argues that time in the unconscious sometimes requires protection from the conscious; unconscious time registers external stimuli as a "quasi-traumatic internal stimulus" that disrupts the working of the pre-existing internal time frame. Furthermore, he argues that the reason time remains unconscious is because the psychic apparatus attempts to get rid of the difference between its understanding of what is internal versus external in order to maintain previously existing and familiar psychic process, and to avoid experiencing something new. In sum, the psychic apparatus registers new experiences as traumatic. And fetishism is a defense against experiencing of trauma. As compared to the traditional Freudian conceptualization of trauma, which

²³⁸ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). (S.E. Vol. 19), p. 28.

relates to the moment of phallic monism (in which the subject perceives the existence of sexual difference as a reminder of potential castration), Bass conceptualizes trauma as a tension-raising experience that can lead to change or opening. In other words, for him trauma, or traumatic experience, is what breaks the chain of fetishism, and simultaneously, trauma is experienced when delay is at work.²³⁹ Bass writes:

Such tension-raising time can appear to be nonexistent once conscious time is conflated with time itself. But this is still a negative definition. More positively, we already know that the temporal form of pain or trauma is delay (85).

By “negative definition,” Bass is indicating negation – that unconscious time is *not* time conceptualized in the external sense. He is also suggesting that unconscious time stores the content through the temporal differentiation between tension-raising external time and tension reducing internal time. Bass argues that the temporal form of pain or trauma is caused by delay (the immediacy of pleasure seeking internal stimuli is met with the obstacle of delay, which creates pain and signals the arrival of trauma). Therefore, unconscious time must be conceived as the time that seeks to achieve “the temporal differentiation” of delay.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Alan Bass. *Difference and Disavowal*. Derrida conceptualizes fetishism as a specific chain, which he refers to as *Glas*:

As soon as the thing itself, in its unveiled truth, is already found engaged, by the very unveiling, in the play of supplementary difference, the fetish no longer has any rigorously decidable status. *Glas* of phallocentrism.... If the fetish is all the more solid, has all the more consistency and economic resistance as it is doubly bound to contraries, the law is indicated in the very subtle case and in the appendix (226).

Jacques Derrida. *Glas*. Trans. by Richard Rand, et al. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

²⁴⁰ Bass pushes Freud’s conceptualization of pleasure principle, arguing that what Freud offers in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is the theory of tension reduction, which is facilitated by the death instinct. Bass argues that Eros, which is linked to the elevation of tension, runs concurrently with the death instinct, which is connected to the pleasure principle and is essentially tension reducing. In sum, life, as compared to death, is a tension-raising experience, which some individuals resist experiencing. He writes:

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) Freud introduced Eros as a drive which brings “vital differences” into the psyche. To use the vocabulary of disavowal, Eros is the basis of the unconscious tendency to register difference. Simultaneously Eros binds, integrates with environment, with “reality.” Crucially, it does not conform to Freud’s usual model of the drive as

Bass's argument suggests that unconscious time allows the subject to stay close to the pleasure principle. This idea gives us a way to understand why certain moments may never materialize as a form of conscious memory. The timelessness of memory in the unconscious exists in such a way because it allows the prolongation of tension reduction, thus it is pleasurable to the subject.²⁴¹ Baldwin's usage of the name, Jesse, can be read as the domination of unconscious time – in Jesse, the presence of unconscious time, the signifier of repudiated dates and memories, continuously influences his adult sexuality.²⁴²

inherently tending towards tension reduction. Rather, as Eros introduces "real" difference and binds, it raises tension level. But raised tension levels are also the essence of pain and trauma. Part of the unknown source of the general sensitiveness to differentiation is the link of difference to tension, pain, and possible trauma (xi).

I read Bass's argument of reality as life. And the experience of difference that accompanies pain and trauma as the subject's inevitable experience of life because to be in reality, to live, to experience life itself, cannot be disengaged from learning something new, which pushes the subject away from familiar territory, and this experience is something that he or she will register as painful or even traumatic. Alan Bass.

Interpretation and Difference: The Strangeness of Care.

²⁴¹ In order to understand the negative effect of repressed memories that become part of the unconscious, not only Bass's reading of Freud's work, but Derrida's reading of Paul Celan's poetic description of the date is useful. Derrida postulates that the insertion of a date can be seen as a marker of the existence of multiple heterogeneous events. Baldwin's choice of the name Jesse can also be read as his attempt to link the present moment (the character's experiencing of lynching) and the past (the Washington and Thomas lynchings).

²⁴² In "Shibboleth," Derrida observes how Celan pays attention to the inscription of invisible, perhaps unreadable dates. "[A]nniversaries, rings, constellations, and repetition of singular, unique, *unrepeatable* events: unwiederholbar, this is his word." Jacques Derrida "Shibboleth" in *Acts of Literature*. Trans. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 374. (Author's emphasis.) Celan's poem, "A la pointe acérée" uses the metaphor of an object, a sharp one, which triggers the fear associated with the gesture of cutting, or to use a Freudian term, castration. However, Derrida is not interested in the poem's direct connection to the metaphors of "surgery," "circumcision," or castration – he is interested in how Celan seeks a way to decipher the content after it becomes unrepeatable (374). For Derrida, as for Freud, the experience of castration in fantasy is something that will certainly come back as a form of repetition. He is interested in knowing what type of things from our past come back in memory, which also become a problem for the future. Disavowal guarantees the present moment and saves the subject from remembering the fearful affect, but it does not guarantee the future. For Derrida, the way to examine how certain issues become a problem in the future is through a gesture toward poetry, but not by poetry, and the citation of a date carried out by poetic language will be useful for this examination. The date offers a location where the content can exist until it encounters the other. Derrida argues that through the insertion of a date, the content becomes unrepeatable or unreturnable, since when it enters this place, a crypt, it does not leave. It remains there until the other discovers it. In "Going to Meet the Man," Baldwin poses the question of what shape and form consequences of the Thing will return in the future after disavowal has been carried out. Derrida would answer by focusing on what he calls the "poetic trace of dating" (Derrida, p. 377). The notion of singularity expressed by a date has a double function, masking and marking the heterogeneity of the event, and the two processes have their own methods that do not correspond to the linguistic system. Derrida articulates such processes with the word "shibboleth." In describing the meaning of the word "shibboleth," Derrida offers the following explanation.

For Derrida, the poetic language of dating also offers a moment when the other experiences what he calls “a chance encounter.” To demonstrate his argument, he turns to Celan who cites several dates in his works in order to commemorate Jacob Michael Lenz. The first is 1909 and the other the night of May 23-24, 1792, the date of Lenz’s death in Moscow. Celan mentions another date, January 20, and writes, “the Lenz who was walking through the mountain.” Derrida asks, “Who was walking through the mountain, *on this date?*” He then imagines how Celan would respond to his question:²⁴³

He, Lenz, Celan, insists, he not the artist preoccupied by questions of arts. He, as an “I,” “er als ein Ich.” This “I” who is not the artist obsessed by questions of art, those posed him by art – Celan does not rule out that it may be the poet; but in any case it is not the artist (378).²⁴⁴

This act of imagining corresponds to a particular kind of encounter between Celan and Lenz, a kind of co-signing that occurs on a January 20th. In the passage above, Derrida sees Celan’s imagination as a chance encounter with Lenz, who gives himself out to Celan, the other, who will find Lenz on another January 20th in the future. The concept of future encounter expressed in this context is intrinsically connected to the notion of

Shibboleth, this word I have called Hebrew, is found, as you know, in a whole family of languages: Phoenician, Judaeo-Aramaic, Syriac. It is traversed by a multiplicity of meanings: river, stream, ear of grain, olive-twist. But beyond these words, it acquired the value of a password. It was used during or after war, at the crossing of a border under watch. The word mattered less for its meaning than for the way in which it was pronounced. The relation to the meaning or to the thing was suspended, neutralized, bracketed: the opposite, one could say, of a phenomenological *epoché* which preserves, first of all, the meaning. The Ephraimites had been defeated by the army of Jephthah; in order to keep the soldiers from escaping across the river (*shibboleth* also means river, of course, but that is not necessarily the reason it was chosen), each person was required to say *shibboleth*. Now the Ephraimites were known for their inability to pronounce correctly the *shi* of *shibboleth*, which became for them, in consequence, an “unpronounceable name”; they said *sibboleth*, and, at that invisible border between *shi* and *si*, betrayed themselves to the sentinel at the risk of death. They betrayed their difference in rendering themselves indifferent to the diacritical difference between *shi* and *si*; they marked themselves as unable to re-mark a mark thus coded (399-400).

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, (Author’s emphasis).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

hospitality, or a gift for Derrida.²⁴⁵ Therefore, January 20th is a marked external date around which multiple encounters on past and future January 20ths will be facilitated. In this way, a date, which functions externally as a singular date, will internally bring different individuals, locations, and histories together. While expressing the notion of singularity, a date functions as marking, or to use Derrida's notion, incision and circumcision around which meetings between not just two but many individuals will take place:

The only one: singularity, solitude, secrecy of encounter. What assigns the only one to its date? For example, there was a 20th of January. A date of this kind will have allowed to be written, alone, unique, exempt from repetition. Yet this absolute property can be transcribed, exported, deported, expropriated, reappropriated, repeated in its utter singularity. Indeed, this has to be if the date is to expose itself, to risk losing itself in readability. This absolute property can enunciate, as its sign of individuation, something like the essence of the poem, the only one (379).

Despite the existence of multiple encounters within the singularity of a date, concepts such as clarity, distinction, sharpness, and readability force the understanding of the significance of the date. The date exists in its entirety – both internally and externally – but, to speak of it or to make it readable and decipherable, the singularity will have to be there. Therefore, when the date is announced, it “effaces itself in its very readability.”

Derrida continues:

But if readability effaces the date, the very thing which it offers for reading, this strange process will have begun with the very inscription of the date. The date must conceal within itself some stigma of singularity if it is to last longer – and this lasting is the poem – than that which it commemorates. This is the only chance of assuring its spectral return. Effacement or concealment, this annulment of return belongs to the

²⁴⁵ See Jacques Derrida. *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford California: University of California Press, 2000. For Derrida, a gift is something that cannot be reciprocated. For example, receiving a gift means that the giver will neither expect nor anticipate the return of the favor. Derrida would argue that if the exchange is not carried out in this manner, one is not giving a gift.

movement of dating. And so what must be *commemorated*, at once gathered together and repeated, is, at the same time, the date's annihilation, a kind of nothing, or ash (396).²⁴⁶

Therefore, in order for the date to protect itself from its own effacement, it has to conceal its internal heterogeneity. Derrida writes that this concealment takes place at the moment the date is pronounced. The insertion of singularity is also done through the poetic language of dating, which will function concomitantly as a method for protecting the internally existing heterogeneous memories, contents, encounters, and affects from the very effacement the act of dating produces. The insertion of singularity will transfer what has been cut off to an inaudible space, a crypt, where the poetic language begins to leave traces, communicating the particularity of the date. The traces left behind are a gift to the other, which proclaims all of the contents of the date without facilitating "denial or disavowal."²⁴⁷

Poetic language facilitated by dating is a gift from the author to the reader, the gift of death. Baldwin's gift to the reader is to provide an awareness that once the remembrance of what took place is carried out through language, meaning how the witnessing of lynching and the primal scene on the same day has impacted Jesse, his perverse symptoms will most likely lose their significance. Although Baldwin does not

²⁴⁶ (The author's italicization.)

²⁴⁷ Derrida actually uses the word, "disavowal" (382). Derrida reminds us that the poetic language of dating is a gift which absolves the particularity of the date so that its utterance may "resonate and proclaim beyond a singularity which might otherwise remain undecipherable, mute, and immured in its date – in the unrepeatable" (395). In this inaudible space, the date speaks to the other through poetic language. This encounter takes place in a crypt where what cannot be spoken, read, or deciphered awaits the other. This is the notion of ethical encounter for Derrida. The meeting carried out in this manner is a chance encounter; thus, it can never be staged or orchestrated. Poetic language silently awaits an encounter with the other; Derrida would say the date functions as a "specter" when an ethical encounter takes place (394). For Derrida, a chance encounter functions as an encounter with ash, the signifier of that which disrupts repetition, allowing an ethical encounter described above, to which the other will encounter the remainder of what it used to be, but not with a ghost or a symptom. Therefore, it is death that awaits a chance encounter, but it is a kind of death that does not hand over power to the ghosts who will speak about what used to exist in terror, or perverse symptoms, which will grab hold of the future by distorting the memory of the past.

give a date in “Going to Meet the Man,” his story can be read as a story of a white man who witnessed the lynching of Jesse Washington on May 15th, 1919. Around this proposed invisible date, Baldwin and his reader will have an encounter with Jesse Washington. And on May 25, 1922, Baldwin and his reader will meet again and encounter Jesse Thomas, but this time the chance encounter will allow the meeting between Jesse Thomas and Jesse Washington. For Derrida, a date functions as a marker that creates a certain residual affect. A date is a circumcision, or something that happens “one-and-only time.”²⁴⁸ However, “Going to Meet the Man” is not about these two men, it is about a white man named Jesse. Although the story is not directly about two African American men, Baldwin inserts the lives of two men in the singularity of the name, Jesse. And through Jesse’s perverse symptoms, Baldwin allows the effect of disavowing these two significant dates to speak for itself. In this sense, the name functions poetically just as Derrida’s date. Or, the name functions as simultaneously a reminder of and substitute for the date, demanding that the reader recognize its significance without facilitating disavowal. The poetic function of the name is to allow the return of Jesse Washington and Jesse Thomas so that they can speak about their dreadful experience. They come back in the form of symptoms in Jesse because their histories have been repressed in a part of the white Southerners’ unconscious memory.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 374.

²⁴⁹ Although Derrida offers a way to bring back content that has been cut off due to the insertion of dating, utilizing the poetic language of dating, Baldwin does not offer a date in the story because he anticipates that the insertion of one specific date will invite the problem of systematic forgetting and disavowal of African American history. As seen by the Waco residents’ wish to forget Jesse Washington’s lynching, the construction of history is tied to systematic forgetting. By not inserting the date, Baldwin asserts that although evidence of lynching is recorded in history, its psychological effects cannot be accurately described by giving specific dates. I read Baldwin’s decision to use the name Jesse as indicating his wish to ensure the accurate remembrance of what took place on those two dates. For Freud, symptoms are the language of the body, which demand utterance even though the conscious mind does not want to give in to

* * *

The Day of Lynching

At the site of lynching his father puts Jesse on his shoulders and holds his ankles; when Jesse hears the man scream, he clutches his father's neck.

The flames leapt up. He thought he heard the hanging man scream, but he was not sure. Sweat was pouring from the hair in his armpits, poured down his side, over his chest, into his navel and his groin. He was lowered again; he was raised again. Now Jesse knew that he heard him scream. The head went back, the mouth wide open, blood bubbling from the mouth; the vein of the neck jumped out; Jesse clung to his father's neck in terror as the cry rolled over the crowd. The cry of all the people rose to answer the dying man's cry. He wanted death to come quickly. They wanted to make death wait: and it was they who held death, now, on a leash which they lengthened little by little (246- 247).

He knows that the man will be put to death. Initially, Jesse empathizes with the fear of the dying man and wishes him a quick death: "The cry of all the people rose to answer the dying man's cry. He wanted death to come quickly. They wanted to make death wait: and it was they who held death, now on a leash which they lengthened little by little" (246-247). Then Jesse comes to realize that the people around him want to prolong the death as long as possible, and he learns to see the man's death as a form of entertainment for him, as it is for his parents and the others there at the picnic. Jesse struggles to understand the reason behind their cruel behavior – he wants to know what the man did in order to deserve this punishment, but he cannot ask his father for fear of alienating his father.

this demand. Derrida reminds us that the Freudian notion of symptom formation is shibboleth, to which only the language of the body will have access.

The both of them are standing as one – Jesse holding his father’s neck between his legs, almost as though he is holding a big penis.²⁵⁰ As the man is lowered into the fire, Jesse notices his mother’s bright eyes and sees how beautiful she looks. He experiences a suspension of reality – he forgets about the suffering of the dying man. He notices that his mother’s mouth is open, which signals libidinal excitement to him.²⁵¹ He then thinks to himself, “She was more beautiful than he had ever seen her, and more strange” (247). Jesse perceives in his mother’s facial expression the forbidden knowledge of how she looks when she is sexually fulfilled. And while he is fixed on his mother’s blissful state, his gaze travels to the body of the dying man. He then says that the man is “the most beautiful and terrible object he had ever seen till then”(247). At this moment Jesse comes to understand how to resolve the question of what to do with regard to his libidinal investment in his mother. The way he learns to sublimate it is through forming identification with the rest of the white men. At this point, one of his father’s friends approaches the hanging man with a long and bright knife in his hand and Jesse wishes he were the man holding the knife: “One of his father’s friends reached up and in his hands he held a knife: and Jesse wished that he had been that man” (247).

Jesse expresses his desire to be the one given the power to castrate the man, which would ultimately transform him from the passive subject who fears of castration to the active castrating figure. Baldwin writes:

It was a long, bright knife and the sun seemed to catch it, to play with it, to caress it – it was brighter than the fire. And a wave of laughter swept

²⁵⁰ Jesse is holding his father’s head at this point; “head” often means penis in colloquial English. I will examine the metaphor of Jesse’s father’s head as a bigger and more powerful penis and the significance of holding it, as well as the bonding experience that comes with this moment in the following section, “Homoerotic Bonding and the Subsequent Reaction Formation.”

²⁵¹ George Batille examines the link between death and eroticism in *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986.

the crowd. Jesse felt his father's hands on his ankles slip and tighten. The man with the knife walked toward the crowd, smiling slightly; as though this were a signal, silence fell; he heard his mother cough (247).

In this scene, the man with the knife is conducting a form of foreplay in order to sexually arouse the viewers, but the arousal is soon dissolved by the defensive laughter. However, the collective laughter does not succeed in repressing Jesse's mother's sexual excitation. At the sight of the man's penis, and the association between it and the knife, Jesse's mother gives a symptomatic hysterical cough, which can be read as the sign of her emerging libidinal aggressive and sexual wishes, which seeks the immediate attainment of gratification. This is the moment his nurturing mother transforms herself into a woman with burning libidinal needs. Jesse's gaze is also keenly focused on the dying man. It is almost as though he is searching for the meaning behind his mother's arousal:

Then the man with the knife walked up to the hanging body. He turned and smiled again. Now there was a silence all over the field. The hanging head looked up. It seemed fully conscious now, as though the fire had burned out terror and pain. The man with the knife took the nigger's privates in his hand, one hand, still smiling, as though he were weighing them. In the cradle of the one white hand, the nigger's privates seemed as remote as meat being weighted in the scale; but seemed heavier, too, much heavier, and Jesse felt his scrotum tighten; and huge, huge, much bigger than his father's, flaccid, hairless, the largest he had ever seen till then, and the blackest (247-248).

The man with the knife is a designated pleasure giver for Jesse's community. Everyone is focused on his cue, the more he delays the process of *jouissance*, the stronger the viewer's libidinal needs push forward. In noticing the weight of the black man's penis Jesse experiences his scrotum tightening; this is the moment that undoubtedly establishes his perverse sexuality: his experiencing of pleasure originates from first forming identification with the dying man's experience of castration. Then, his aggression, fear, and the excitement of looking at the big penis lead him to getting an erection. Jesse waits

for the moment when the “huge, huge, much bigger than his father’s” penis is to be cut off. In anticipating the arrival of this moment, his father’s penis begins to lose its power, because in this moment he recognizes that there exists a penis that is bigger than his father’s; consequently, this recognition prolongs the tightening of his scrotum and his erection. However this “flaccid, hairless, the largest he had ever seen” penis is also “the blackest” penis he has ever seen. In Jesse’s adulthood this scene functions as the enigmatic signifier that gives erection. In other words, without the signifier of the black penis getting cut off, he may find it difficult to sustain his erection.

As Jesse continues to experience the physical sensation of his erection, his father’s friend proceeds; once again, the man with the knife engages in foreplay by caressing the penis with the knife. In this moment, Jesse catches the man’s eye:

The white hand stretched them, cradled them, caressed them. Then the dying man’s eye looked straight into Jesse’s eyes – it could not have been as long as a second, but it seemed longer than a year. Then Jesse screamed, and the crowd screamed as the knife flashed, first up, then down, cutting the dreadful thing away, and the blood came roaring down. Then the crowd rushed forward, tearing at the body with their hands, with knives, with rocks, with stones, howling and cursing. Jesse’s head, of its own weight, fell downward toward his father’s head. Someone stepped forward and drenched the body with kerosene. Where the man had been, a great sheet of flame appeared. Jesse’s father lowered him to the ground (247).

The dying man’s eye informs Jesse that the time has come for him to go through the painful execution, which will be initiated by the mutilation of his genitals. When Jesse catches the man’s eye, he is no longer in his fantasmatic world where castration had an entirely different meaning – it only functioned as a signifier of punishment; thus, the actuality of its occurrence was never be proven. In this moment, Jesse is in reality where he accurately understands the meaning of castration – it is the horror of mutilating and

killing another human being. When Jesse comes across this understanding, he is unable to contain his fear; thus, he ends up screaming, and his scream was joined by others, who also understand realistically that the unspeakable atrocity is now being committed upon another human being.

After the man's body is set on fire, Jesse's father takes Jesse from his shoulders and puts him on the ground, indicating that he had already seen the important part of the lynching. When Jesse's father tells him he will never forget this picnic, the knowledge he attained from viewing the lynching becomes the ideological template with which he begins to see how he would save himself from castration fear. When the lynching is finally over Jesse notices his father's face was "full of sweat, his eyes were very peaceful" (248). Jesse's father's facial expression is an expression of post-coital satisfaction. After seeing the lynching and experiencing his father transitioning from exhibiting bodily excess to a state of calm, Jesse intuitively understands that his father's libidinal needs were being satisfied. Simultaneously, Jesse recognizes that his father was able to attain *jouissance* because by watching the lynching he was no longer troubled by the question of whether or not he would face castration. Jesse then understands that the meaning behind watching the castration of the black man is that his father wanted to assure him that neither Jesse nor his father would have to experience castration. This is the moment Jesse forms an empathetic, homoerotic bonding relationship with his father. Baldwin writes: "At this moment he loved his father more than he had ever loved him. He felt that his father had carried him through a mighty test, had revealed to him a great secret which would be the key to his life forever"(248). Jesse's father unveils the secret to Jesse that white men do not get castrated. When this knowledge gets instilled in Jesse he

proceeds towards his life while holding onto the understanding that his sexual interest in his mother will not cost his penis. Concurrently, he will maintain his love towards his father, which is invested in the experience of homosexual bonding from the day of lynching. His father will not only not punish Jesse for maintaining his love towards his mother, but also his father will not punish him for developing homoerotic feelings towards him. Jesse gets an erection while sitting on his father's neck, which his father surely notices, but his father does not seek to push him away, which can be taken as the ultimate sign of homosexual bonding. Watching the lynching and the enigmatic effect of this moment in his psychic world instills the understanding in Jesse that even though he maintains his infantile erotic wishes towards his parents, his father will not punish him by castrating him.

As an adult, in order to function as a responsible white member of his community, Jesse disavows the crucial moment from the lynching: the moment when he and others screamed, which is also the moment when he accurately understood the truth that the man was going to be mutilated and put to death. Jesse's disavowal continues to function as his attempt to disengage from the reality that African Americans are subjected to wrongful death. Jesse's perversion stems from the disavowal of the day of the lynching, and his disavowal is motivated by the need for self-preservation at the communal level. Thus, just as his father tells him on the way to the picnic, Jesse becomes a sheriff and takes an active role in making sure that his friend, Otis, and other black people, would not "do nothing."

Passive to Active – the Mastery of Castration Fear

Although Jesse developed the idea that he would not experience castration because the ones who are castrated are African American men, he still holds on to the fantasmatic conviction that castration can happen to him. In other words, his “rational” understanding does not prevent him from fearing castration because he has not reached the resolution of the Oedipus stage. Since he is still locked in infantile sexuality, Grace’s body triggers castration fear; in order to control this fear, Jesse defensively introduces the image of African Americans so that he can turn his fear into aggression, which subsequently produces sexual excitation. His sexual desire is concretely linked to the image of African Americans’ experiencing of pain, and by seeking to prolong his sexual arousal in this particular manner he reassures himself that castration will not happen to him. Unfortunately, this process works in an opposite direction from attaining resolution of the Oedipus stage – in fact, it forever keeps him in infantile sexuality, which maintains his libidinal ties to his parents in the Oedipal triangle.

Although his external reality suggests that he does not have to fear his father’s ability to castrate him, Grace’s white female body reminds him of the possibility of castration, and the way he seeks to relieve himself from this fear is by remembering that he will not suffer castration because he is not an African American. One can say that this is how Jesse turns neurotic castration fear into a perverse practice: by recalling the image of an African American man being castrated, Jesse attempts to gain mastery over his castration fear, and as long as he does so, he thinks he can get rid of his castration fear (this process indicates his investment in pre-genital infantile sexuality continues to provide gratification for him). While Jesse’s sadistic libido seeks fulfillment by sexually

dominating African American women, the source of aggression is attached to his wish to inflict physical violence upon African American men. When Jesse was beating the boy in jail, he eventually makes the boy unconscious. At this moment he realizes he is shaking worse than the boy had been before he became unconscious:

He was glad no one could see him [shaking]. At the same time, he felt very close to a very peculiar, particular joy; something deep in him and deep in his memory was stirred, but whatever was in his memory eluded him. He took off his helmet. He walked to the cell door.

“White man,” said the boy from the floor behind him.

He stopped. For some reason, he grabbed his privates. (233)

Jesse did not mean to kill the boy, but he is now unconscious; thus, Jesse does not know if the boy is still alive. This uncertainty produces the uncontrollable trembling in Jesse. After noticing that his physical reaction had something to do with his past memory, though he does not say that he is remembering the moment when the man was just about to be executed, he attempts to leave the cell as if to flee from the past memory. However, the boy does not let him – when he calls Jesse, “white man,” Jesse immediately grabs his genitals. Although he attempts to disavow his memory of the day of the lynching, his body remembers well that for him African American men’s suffering is ultimately linked to experiencing of pleasure. It is because the attainment of sexual pleasure goes back to the day when he first caught the dying man’s eye – this is the moment when his perverse sexuality got established.

However, Jesse’s sadistic wish can also be seen as resulting from his defense against his concern for the man being castrated. He imagines himself as that man, but this masochistic thought process is too frightening. In order to master the fear associated with the memory of castration and the internal psychodynamic associations that come along with it, Jesse begins recalling the fear in order to experience the knowledge that he can

escape castration in the end.²⁵² For Jesse, mastery over the experience of unpleasure concerning castration fear works in two different ways. First, he recalls the primal scene in which he fantasizes that his father possesses the power to castrate him, but he quickly reassures himself that he will not have to face retaliation from his father even though he maintains his libidinal tie with his mother. In this sense, he and his father are equal – he can satisfy his mother equally with infantile sexuality as his father with his penis.²⁵³

The perverse thinking that he and his father are equal is further enhanced by the conviction that he and his father can preserve their penises because they are white. Jesse and his father develop this understanding without specifically naming what they are psychically experiencing, and the intimacy associated with this exchange provokes sexual arousal in Jesse. In addition, the fantasy of the psychic space he shares with his father creates a world in which sexual difference no longer exists because his mother

²⁵² This wish to attain mastery recalls Freud's famous description of the "fort-da" game that a one-and-a-half year-old child invented. The child threw a wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it, an object representing his mother, over the edge of his curtained cot in order to make it disappear. He then uttered a loud, long drawn-out sound of "o-o-o-o," accompanied by the word "fort" (gone). He then pulled the reel out of the cot by pulling the string and expressed a joyful utterance of the word "da" (there). *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, pp.14-7. He would repeat the game in order to experience the pleasure he attained from the second act. According to Freud, the motive of the game is to allow the child a sense of mastery over the unpleasurable experience of letting go of the loved object, the mother. The child creates the game in order to turn this unpleasant experience into a pleasurable one through repetition. The child transforms himself from the passive recipient of unpleasure into an active producer of both unpleasure and pleasure.

²⁵³ In her *Creativity and Perversion*, Janine Chassequet-Smirgel argues that as a child a man who suffers from perversion believed that his infantile sexuality and his prepubescent penis were equal to if not better than his father's. Therefore, he thought he was a perfect partner for his mother and thus did not feel envious or frightened of his father. This child even thought he had the capacity to castrate his father if he wanted to. As a result of this fantasmatic thought process, his psychic evolutionary process was halted – his ego ideal remained attached to a pregenital mode, instead of cathecting to the image of the genital father and his attributes. Chassequet-Smirgel argues that the person suffering from perversion feels there is no need to attain sexual maturity because he is convinced that pregenitality is equal or even superior to genitality (29). One of the problems associated with Chassequet-Smirgel's argument is that for her the only subjects suffering from perverse symptoms are men. This person maintains "the perverse illusion" in favor of the choice of the short path: "merging with the mother is going to take place here and now, without the need for evolution and growing up." The long path leads to the Oedipus complex and genitality as opposed to the short path. Therefore, in his psychic world, the dimension of time or "dilatatory time" does not exist. This rejection of time frame is extremely important when conceptualizing the logic of perverse symptoms. I will further discuss this with Alan Bass's theory of disavowal and concreteness in the following section.

disappears. In order to maintain the conviction that his and his father's penises are safe, Jesse psychically displays his and his father's sexual organs as a way of reminding him that just like his father, Jesse could use his penis however he wanted with his mother, but he would never have to worry about castration. African American men's experience of castration offers a discursive site where Jesse is able to gain mastery over his castration fear. He transforms his status from a passive subject fearing castration to an active participant of a castration ceremony, all while engaging in a particular homoerotic bonding experience with his father. In other words, after Jesse transforms from a passive subject to an active participant, his father's penis no longer functions as a threat; instead, it provokes various fantasies about what Jesse could do with his father, whether that be watching the lynching together and sharing this aggression, both of which are connected to the attainment of *jouissance*. However, Jesse represses this moment of homoerotic bonding in order to develop as a heterosexual man.

Homoerotic Bonding and the Subsequent Reaction Formation

Watching the lynching allows Jesse to believe that he and his father both possess penises that deserve preservation, and this knowledge functions as the figure of family tradition. This recognition invites various homoerotic fantasies, as his father was no longer functioning as a threat, but appearing as the one who he "loved more than he had ever loved him" (248). According to a Freudian prospective, Jesse's pronounced love towards his father and his thoughts of his mother being beautiful suggest that Jesse could still be holding onto both homosexual and heterosexual infantile libidinal attachment (or using Freud's language, masculine and feminine attachment) to his parents. However,

when he recalls the image of the men at the lynching in adulthood, one suspects that he is seeking to experience the pleasure he and his father collectively enjoyed around the idea of the preservation of their penises, while holding on to his libidinal impression of his mother's sexuality as something to which both he and his father would have equal access.

Jesse developed as a heterosexual man, which suggests that he had to defend against the homoerotic feelings he experienced towards his father as a child. He maintains this defense by using African American women, like others in his community, so that he will not have to continue experiencing uncomfortable, tension-raising feelings associated with his father. In order to mask the homosexual feelings he has towards his father, Jesse uses African American women's bodies as the site where he can attain libidinal satisfaction. He does so by first envisioning the man he saw at the lynching, which not only elevates his aggression, but also sparks homoerotic feelings towards his father. Jesse then seeks to defend against these homoerotic feelings by turning the body of the man he saw into a female body in his fantasy by focusing on the racial attributes of African Americans, which allows him to eliminate the existence of sexual difference altogether.²⁵⁴ After this "body-switch" has been facilitated, he then proceeds to externalize the aggression he feels towards African American men (which has a libidinal tie to his homoerotic feelings towards his father) onto African American women by sexually violating them. He utters the following to a young boy who talked back to him when he visited his grandmother: "You lucky we pump some white blood into you every once in a while – your women! Here is what I got for all the black bitches in the world –

²⁵⁴ This process informs us that the elimination of sexual difference can be facilitated by focusing on racial attributes. I elaborated on this process in the chapter on Chang-rae Lee's *Native Speaker* when I considered the notion of Asian fetish.

!”²⁵⁵ (235). Although Baldwin does not explicitly describe how Jesse violates African American women by the word “pumping,” it suggests that the violence is committed through ejaculating his semen into their bodies. This is the moment Jesse’s aggression finds a new home in African American women’s bodies.

When Jesse went to the lynching as a child, his initial experience was as a passive observer. However, he learned to turn this experience into a more pleasurable one by becoming the active participant. Jesse mastered his fear of castration by forming identification with the victim, the experience of which allowed him to elevate fear in fantasy, but he simultaneously knew he could end this fantasmatic process whenever it became too frightening. Although Jesse was deeply engaged in this process, utilizing African Americans in this dehumanizing way continued to worry him. Jesse has difficulty engaging in sexual intercourse with Grace because her white body produces a fantasmatic link to his mother’s body, which recalls his initial experience of the primal scene where his father still possessed the power to castrate him. And in order to get out of this psychic experience, Jesse needs to experience aggression, and the experience of aggression for Jesse is always linked to the day when he went to the lynching with his father. This is another way he saves himself from being the passive Oedipal victim; he becomes, instead, the active agent of castration.

When he is able to acquire enough aggressive affect, which concurrently signals sexual excitation, he begins engaging with Grace sexually. However, he does so while keeping the psychic image of suffering African American men in mind. Jesse’s way of

²⁵⁵ Incidentally, this is the boy Jesse beats in the prison cell. At the time he uttered the following sentence he held himself back from beating him. He was fearful of his own uncontrollable monstrous rage. Instead of proceeding to beat the boy Jesse utters this sentence. Now the boy is grown, Jesse proceeded to fulfill his wish, to “pistol whip him until the boy’s head burst open like a melon.” The scene of the beating is another moment when past and present moments come together (235).

engaging with Grace sexually stems from his experiencing of sexual tension and getting rid of it by having sex with her, and in order to do so, he facilitates the act of “race switching”: he not only turns Grace into an African American in order to prolong his sadistic wish, but he also asks her to think of him as an African American man.

He thought of the boy in the cell; he thought of the man in the fire; he thought of the knife and grabbed himself and stroked himself and a terrible sound, something between a high laugh and howl, came out of him and dragged his sleeping wife up on one elbow. She stared at him in a moonlight which had now grown cold as ice. He thought of the morning and grabbed her, laughing and crying, crying and laughing, and he whispered, as he stroked her, as he took her, “Come on sugar, I’m going to do you like a nigger, just like a nigger, come on sugar, and love me just like you’d love a nigger”(249).

He asks Grace to love him just as she loves a “nigger” meaning he would like her to experience sexual satisfaction. This is another moment when Jesse’s experience of the past enters.²⁵⁶ Jesse proceeds to have sex with Grace as a black man; however, in doing so he re-experiences the fear he felt for the man who was castrated. Through seeking to sexually engage with Grace as though she were an African American man, castrating her as the other white men did to the man at the lynching, Jesse is able to engage in sexual intercourse. Simultaneously, he is also asking Grace to treat him as an African American man, which means he is asking her to see him with a big black penis and use him for the

²⁵⁶ Jesse’s fantasy speaks of the day when he saw the “huge” penis of the dying black man. The white men’s decision to castrate African American men is motivated by their paranoia that once white women have sex with black men, the white women will no longer be sexually satisfied by white men. In other words, his fantasy suggests that in order to sexually satisfy white women, he has to possess a black penis.

Fanon speaks of this paranoia when he mentions that for the white man, the black man can only exist as genitals.

For the majority of white men the Negro represents the sexual instinct, (in its raw state). The Negro is the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions. The women amongst the whites, by a genuine process of induction, invariably view the Negro as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations.

Fanon then says that these thoughts were based on white men’s and women’s fantasy: “We have shown that reality destroys all these beliefs.” *Black Skin, White Masks* (177).

attainment of her sadistic wish-fulfillment and sexual satisfaction. Jesse's fantasy also reveals his masochistic castration wish – he seeks to experience castration as the man did at the lynching.

Jesse is aware that in reality, if he were an African American man and had sexual intercourse with a white woman, he might be castrated. This knowledge allows him to maintain the fantasy of becoming an African American man while keeping Grace's race intact. In this new fantasy, Jesse alone is experiencing race switching, and this process allows him to experience the threat of castration which he uses to attain a sense of relief when the experience of castration fear becomes too much for him. He knows that his experience of castration fear exists only in fantasy because he is not an African American man. In other words, Jesse's psychic process illustrates that fantasy only works when he knows it will not turn into a reality. Jesse's perverse symptoms came to exist as a result of not having an alternative path of self-preservation due to both historical/communal environmental and psychodynamic reasons.

* * *

Conclusion

Jesse's desire to inflict pain on African Americans indicates the thought process that as long as he utilizes African Americans as the thing, he will be able to avoid castration fear. In Jesse's reality there exist two types of sexual objects: a fantasmatic sexual object and a real sexual object. For him, what causes sexual arousal is the

fantasmatic object, not the real and readily available sexual object, his white wife, Grace. The fantasmatic figure that arouses him is the image of subjugated African Americans. And when he experiences arousal through the psychic image of the suffering African Americans, the sexual difference between African American men and woman disappears. However, Jesse is intuitively aware that being in this autoerotic space will not guarantee sexual satisfaction because the objects are only available in fantasmatic ways.²⁵⁷ His fetishistic thought process indicates that he can possess African American women's sexuality while the psychic imagery of African American men's suffering and experience of pain allows him to experience the elevation of sadomasochistic impulses, which he can release in order to attain sexual satisfaction. When Jesse is lying next to Grace, her appearance of whiteness and proper mannerisms do not induce aggressive affect, instead, they frustrate him. However, one cannot forget that although his experience registers on the manifest level as frustration, on the latent level, Grace's mannerism and whiteness are intrinsically linked with his experience of witnessing of the primal scene and lynching.

According to a post-Freudian perspective, perversion can be seen as a result of the elimination of difference and/or it could be the expression of deficit in the superego structure. Baldwin juxtaposes the dreadful event of lynching and the warm nostalgic air in the car. In the car, an enclosed personal space, the existence of racial difference that divided his world from the world of African Americans disappeared.

[Jesse] had not seen a black face anywhere for more than two days; and he now realized, as they began chugging up the long hill which eventually led to Harkness, that there were no black faces on the road this morning, no black people anywhere.... There was no one at the window, no one in the yard, no one sitting on the porches, and the doors were closed (243-244).

²⁵⁷ Alan Bass defines this particular autoerotic fantasmatic psychic space as an "undifferentiated" state.

Jesse's experience of the disappearance of racial difference, which is occurring at the manifest level, triggers his latent wish, the disappearance of sexual difference. As I indicated in the previous section, the disappearance of difference carried out in this way signals the subject's entrance into the world of dedifferentiation where infantile sexuality predominates, represented by autoerotic masturbatory tendencies where the notion of self-other differentials disappears.²⁵⁸ This is a regressed stage where in order to attain sexual fulfillment Jesse uses both himself – when he gets lost in his fantasmatic world where the notion of difference disappears altogether – and people as the thing without human value. It is my argument that Jesse's racism works in two ways: first, through the objectification of African Americans as the thing, he attempts to escape from castration fear. And second, by entering into his fantasmatic and autoerotic world where the notion of difference disappears, Jesse seeks to eliminate his concern for the welfare of the African American members of his community. And, most importantly, the disappearance of racial difference has a direct correlation to the disappearance of sexual difference. Jesse seeks to eliminate concern for African Americans by utilizing disavowal; however, ultimately, his perverse symptoms speak to his awareness that African Americans should not be treated as the thing.

Baldwin situates castration anxiety in a historical context and argues that castration was a horrific reality for African American men; it was also a highly charged fantasmatic moment for whites because by watching castration performed on African

²⁵⁸ Bass argues that autoerotism is the foundation of narcissistic structure, which allows the temporary relief from tension. For example, in order to seek relief from hunger, a baby hallucinates the moment when he or she receives milk. Although in fantasy, the act of hallucination will serve to prevent the baby from experiencing the discomfort, in reality the baby's needs are still not getting met. Therefore, Bass reminds us that hallucination accompanied by autoerotism works negatively, or as he calls it, "negative hallucination." Therefore, when the subject is seeking to attain relief in this autoerotic manner, it is possible to conclude that his or her needs are not getting met in reality. *Difference and Disavowal* (55-67).

American men they were trying to work through their castration fear. These white men first identified with African American men's suffering, but came out of this identification with the reassurance that castration would not be performed on them. What Baldwin's work suggests is that the scene of castration is also where the notion of racial difference gets linked to the notion of sexual difference. In conclusion, I would like to argue that Baldwin's work can be read with the awareness that Freudian psychoanalysis has pushed away the question of racial difference when developing the theory of the Oedipus complex. In other words, even today re-thinking of the theory of the Oedipus complex and re-theorizing of it through the historical analysis of the difference between white men's experience of castration anxiety and that of men of color has not yet been given importance by the clinical field of psychoanalysis. Perhaps, by not engaging in the process of naming and articulating the effect of racial violence on people of color, psychoanalysis has maintained its link to such violence. And the reason issues of race and the articulation of the effect of racial violence on people of color gets easily dismissed from psychoanalytic scholarship has to do with psychoanalysts' resistance to theorizing and understanding the notion of difference. If psychoanalysis as a discipline continues to maintain its disinterest in the work of difference, it shows its theoretical interests as having fetishistic characteristics. As Fanon argues in *Black Skin, White Masks*, I believe psychoanalysis can offer an understanding of the complex psychodynamic phenomena that contribute one's resistance to difference. And, through persistently engaging in the effort to articulate such phenomena, as well as Freud against Freud, the interruption of the chain of fetishism, which seeks to mask the merit of tolerating the psychic tension when encountering difference, will finally be achieved.

Chapter Four

Writing and Racializing Otherness – Letters, Perversion, and Psychoanalytic Process: A Reading of J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*

For it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other.

– Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

In *Foe*, J. M. Coetzee articulates the problem associated with the hegemonic nature of writing, because writing is automatically linked to the preservation of canonicity.²⁵⁹ He approaches this task through the description of a female author, Susan Barton, whose relationship to writing starts from a deeply perverse point of view. The novella opens with Susan's attempts to write a story of the island where she had lived for a year and half with the castaway, Cruso and his servant, Friday.²⁶⁰ In the title *Foe*, which also means enemy, Coetzee draws an immediate connection between his novella and the name of the canonical author, Daniel Defoe, and his master narrative, *Robinson Crusoe*. What *Foe* addresses in creating a link to *Robinson Crusoe* is the question of who gets to write about the experience of the island.

Coetzee describes three stages through which Susan becomes a writer, while utilizing the three letters, *e*, *a*, and *o*. The first stage is characterized by the site of the letter *e* where Susan brings her process as a pervert by forming a dyadic relationship with Friday. The second stage is associated with the letter *a* where she takes a step towards developing a relationship with Foe in order to incorporate his writerly phallus, with

²⁵⁹ See Derek Attridge. *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*. London and Chicago: University of Chicago, Press, 2004.

²⁶⁰ In *Foe*, Robinson Crusoe's name becomes Cruso. The meaning behind the disappearance of the letter *e* will be closely examined in following section.

which she seeks to become a writer. And, the final stage is described as “the home of Friday,” the site of the letter *o* where Susan ends her journey by coming to terms with her own writerly skills while abandoning the concept of writerly lack, a conviction she has held for a long time. She realizes that her writing must be generated from a creativity which stems from imagination and fantasy, and such efforts cannot come from perverse identification to the Western canon (157).

Many critics treat both Susan and Friday as the subject who is silenced by canonicity.²⁶¹ However, my reading suggests there is a clear difference between the two with respect to the question of who is allowed to tell a story. Although Susan is positioned as a subject who can speak and write, Friday is positioned as entirely cut off from these two acts: Friday remains silent throughout the novella. Friday’s silence speaks of the ontological status of the racialized Other, those who are silenced and fetishized by the Western canonical tradition.

Susan’s approach to writing begins with her fetishistic wish to use Friday and his story to transform herself from an ordinary female subject to a writer. However, Coetzee prevents Friday from being utilized as the thing by Susan. The way he does so is by describing him as not possessing a tongue; thus, making it impossible for him to tell his story to her. Another subject Susan seeks to utilize is a notable male author, Foe, because she perceives his writerly skills as indispensable for transforming her memory of the

²⁶¹ Josephine Dodd. “The South African Literary Establishment and the Textual Production of ‘Woman’” in *Critical Essays on J. M. Coetzee*. New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1998; Susan VanZanten Gallagher. “Writing for the Other: Foe” in *A Story of South Africa: J. M. Coetzee’s Fiction in Context*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991; Sue Kossew. “Authorship/Authority” in *Pen and Power: A Post-Colonial Reading of J. M. Coetzee and André Brink*. Amsterdam and Atlanta, Georgia: Editions Rodopi B. V., 1996.

island into a successful book.²⁶² It is clear that Susan's relationship to writing starts from a perverse point of view because she approaches writing from her fantasmatic conviction that she can utilize Friday and Foe as her fetish objects, the thing. However, in the end of the novella, her approach to writing will become more realistic, illustrating her understanding of how to utilize her own writerly skills in order to complete the task of writing a book. In *Foe*, Coetzee demonstrates this very journey Susan will take, but she first identifies with Friday and Foe, and then at the final stage her identification shifts to Coetzee's belief of what writing should accomplish.

Foe takes the reader through a journey that elucidates Susan's growth, which results in strengthening her ability to tolerate the uniqueness of her internal world and psychic reality. This process resembles that of psychoanalysis, thus, it is possible to say that Coetzee is sitting quietly as an analyst who is moving Susan towards the place she must occupy, instead of utilizing a fetishistic thought process as a method to engage in the act of writing. Susan will come to understand that as a female writer she should explore a different point of view from male writers who are in the center of problematic canon-making. Through describing Susan as desiring to produce a canonical text, Coetzee paints the picture that canonical writers are engaged in a perverse practice. And, if female writers are to engage in the process of mimicking such writing, their practice should be recognized as even more perverse. It is because the act of mimicry suggests that female writers are regarding their different point of view as lack, instead of utilizing it as the tool with which to alter the problematic practice of canon-making – a practice

²⁶² For Susan, the definition of memory extends beyond conscious memory – it also includes the unconscious memory that produces the day's residue in dreams.

that is intrinsically linked to hegemony, which is responsible for producing gender and racial differences.²⁶³

Despite both Friday and Foe being regarded as fetish objects—as things—their functions in the story are significantly different. Friday is the Other, towards whom Susan's desire is being driven. By contrast, Foe is the other, the oppressor, a canonical writer, who is regarded as possessing the unquestionable writerly phallus. Foe's existence represents the symbolic law of gender and racial hierarchy. Susan's fetishistic thought to regard Foe's writerly skills as the indispensable phallus is motivated by her wish to transform her ontological feminine status to masculine gender by accomplishing the task of writing her book.²⁶⁴ Yet, the fetishistic thought process that leads Susan to Foe will encounter resistance from him, though he first demonstrates his willingness to be used by Susan.

Although Susan's fantasmatic approach to Friday is motivated by her perception that he is withholding the truth from her, his presence in the story must be regarded as a silent reminder of the tension between the writer who seeks to utilize the subjectivity of

²⁶³Homi Bhabha argues that mimicry produces various problems concerning the authority of colonial discourse. Although he does not conceptualize perversion in his argument, his definition of what mimicry achieves comes very close to what perversion aims to accomplish, which is the elimination of the difference between fantasy and reality. He writes:

[T]he discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that model of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers (86).

When he argues, "Mimicry emerges as the representation of difference that is itself a process of disavowal," he does not elaborate on disavowal of what. However, what he means is the disavowal of difference. *The location of Culture*. New York and London: Routledge, 1994. (Author's italicization.)

²⁶⁴ See Louise Kaplan. *Female Perversion*. New York: Penguin Books, 1991. Susan uses Friday and Foe in order to produce her writing. Therefore, it is possible to say that these two subjects set the chain of fetishism moving. Their function in Susan's fantasy is to maintain this very chain so that she does not have to engage in reality, where she will find that female authors have been engaged in the act of writing.

the Other by racializing him (or her) and the racialized Other's resistance to partake in the process. Through Friday, Coetzee allows the reader to pay close attention to the frustration Susan continues to experience when she tries to use Friday, because he is not giving in to her desire to use him as the thing. Unlike Defoe's Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*, Coetzee's Friday has no tongue: he does not and cannot speak to anyone.²⁶⁵ Thereby Coetzee makes a subtle yet significant statement: speech and language are tools that can be misused and abused by those who use them. Coetzee makes Friday's silence absolute to the point where even the information regarding who cut out his tongue remains unknown to the reader, which creates a discursive site where the physical appearance of his severed tongue can also be questioned.²⁶⁶ Is it possible to believe that Friday is hiding

²⁶⁵ When Daniel Defoe's character, Robinson Crusoe, meets Friday for the first time, he hears Friday's speech and says the following: "[T]hough I could not understand them, yet I thought they were pleasant to hear, for they were the first sound of a man's voice that I had heard, my own excepted, for above twenty five years" (207). After rescuing Friday from his enemy for the sole purpose of making him into a slave, Crusoe begins to teach him how to speak English. Friday's speech is needed because Crusoe wants to make sure that his assumption of Friday as a cannibal is accurate:

Master. Well, Friday, and what does your nation do with the men they take, do they carry them away and eat them, as these do?

Friday. Yes, my nation eat man, too, eat all up.

Master. Where do they carry them?

Friday. Go to other place where they think.

Master. Do they come hither?

Friday. Yes, yes, they come hither; come other else place.

Master. Have you been here with them.

Friday. Yes, I been here. [points to the N.W. side of the island, which it seems, was their side] (216).

In *Robinson Crusoe*, when Friday speaks, he affirms the Western stereotypes that are specifically associated with the Other's cultural practice, religious beliefs, and other savagery practices, including cannibalism. Daniel Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe*. New York and London: Penguin Classics, 1965.

²⁶⁶ In *Robinson Crusoe*, one day Crusoe discovers the footprint of another human being on the beach. It was the first time he even questioned the presence of others on the island, which creates a paranoid reaction in him:

I stood like one thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an apparition; I listened, I looked round me, I could hear nothing, nor see any thing; I went up to a rising ground to look farther; I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one, I could see no other impression but that one. I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot; how it came thither I knew not, nor could in the least imagine. But after innumerable fluttering thoughts, like a man perfectly confused and out of my self, I came home to my fortification, not feeling, as we say, the ground I went on, but terrify'd to the last degree looking behind me at every

his tongue from Susan because he is aware that his speech and language will be used against him due to his ontological existence in her mind as the racialized Other?²⁶⁷

However, despite the knowledge that Friday is unable to speak, Susan continues to try to make him speak. Her demand comes from her expectation of Friday's submission and servitude to her, which attaches itself to the discourse of his racial difference as non-white: he is an African, thus, he should unquestionably satisfy her needs and demands.²⁶⁸

Although the enemy Susan and Friday both face is the hegemony of the Western world, which is created by white men, and the person who embodies that order is the writer, Foe, instead of being critical of the power Foe possesses, Susan expresses her desire to gain access to that power by offering Friday, the subject who became the object of her hegemonic power, to him. Perhaps here Susan appears as subversive, emerging almost as the cutter of Friday's tongue. She will speak for him and erase his subjectivity in order to attain her own gratification. She may feel justified doing so because it is what a notable author, Foe, endorses.

The relationships Susan develops with both Friday and Foe demonstrate that the ontological existence of Friday as the racialized Other goes beyond the Lacanian formulation of the function of the Other when the practice of racialization is

two or three steps, mistaking every bush and tree, and fancying every stump at a distance to be a man; nor it is possible to describe how many various shapes affrighted imagination represented things to me in, how many wild ideas were found every moment in my fancy, and what strange unaccountable whimsies came into my thoughts by the way (162).

In this scene the reader will encounter Friday's presence through his footprint. His footprint, thus, reminds the reader of his origin, which can get washed away by the tide. And, just as the tide can wash away his origin, his origin can also be erased by the writer who seeks to write his story.

²⁶⁷ Derek Attridge mentions that the only reason for believing that Friday does not have a tongue is through Susan Barton's account, which she attained from speaking to Cruso. She tries to look into his month, but she was not able to do it. *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*, P. 85.

²⁶⁸ As examined in the Baldwin Chapter, racial difference triggers a particular fear in the subject because the notion of difference attached to racial difference triggers various psychodynamic reactions, most of which are linked to Oedipality.

introduced.²⁶⁹ It is because Friday, as the racialized Other, receives demands from the external environment that express that his function is not only to drive the desire of the reader or writer alike, but it also puts him in a place of subjugation. In other words, the demands of the external world force Friday to be responsible for the following double movement: he is expected to drive the desire of the reader or writer alike while being forced to become the recipient of violence. When the notion of racial difference is added to the function of the Other, or if the Other is racialized, then the notion of difference automatically demands his or her submission to the act of violence. Through Friday's severed tongue, Coetzee expresses the impossibility associated with articulating this very practice, because it occurs in the hegemonic site where signifiers are often refused, precisely because the articulation will create awareness on the part of the practitioner, who will then be expected to disengage from this problematic practice.²⁷⁰ However, the interpretation of this very practice must be carried out in order to unveil the pervasive link between fantasy and aggression – the nature of this relationship establishes hierarchies amongst individuals based on gender and racial differences.²⁷¹ Furthermore,

²⁶⁹ Jacques Lacan. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981.

²⁷⁰ See Michael Foucault. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988; and *History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. 1*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

²⁷¹ Žižek argues that the very function and expression of fantasy attaches itself to the dominant cultural imagery. Or one can express a similar point of view using a Foucauldian definition of power. According to Foucault, the articulation of the operation of power always encounters resistance. He argues that in order for power to function, the articulation of what it accomplishes cannot be named. Žižek shares a similar point of view, but he argues more specifically about the link between power and fantasy. For him, the reason articulation of the link between fantasy and power is impossible, or the reason the subject wants this practice to remain unconscious, is because it is pleasurable to the subject. Slavoj Žižek. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York and London: Verso, 1989. What I am interested in examining is the link between fantasy and aggression. If the internal aggressive fantasy is not mediated by external demands, then the subject will not let go of the practice of racism. In this sense, internal demands and external practice show no conflict because the internal experience, or fantasmatic thought process, is experienced as realistic. When what is fantasmatic is experienced as realistic, the subject experiences his or her internal experience as realistic. When this experience is applied to the practice of racism, as we have seen in Baldwin's work, the subject cannot find the reason to stop the practice. One can say that the reason the subject cannot stop

by making Friday's tongue disappear from the novella, as well as by describing him as indifferent to Susan's demands, Coetzee attempts to deconstruct, and thus de-racialize, the racialized Other in the Western literary canon.²⁷²

Overall, Friday's indifference to Susan's demands articulates her inability to maintain an ethical stance towards him. When encountering Friday's silence, if the reader identifies with Susan, he or she will question in what ways he or she will make Friday speak. Coetzee illustrates that this particular point of view does not treat Friday ethically. It is because the question justifies the practice of regarding Friday as the thing, and this view allows the reader to sustain his or her curiosity towards Friday. This curiosity (or tension) then has to be lowered by the reader seeking satisfaction via matching what Friday says into what is already existing in their stereotypical and racist understanding of what "Africans" do or say.²⁷³ Coetzee demonstrates that if Friday spoke, this presence as the racialized Other would not be challenged. Therefore, by making Friday exist as a silent figure in the novella, Coetzee interrupts the reader's problematic tendency to racialize him for the attainment of his or her gratification.²⁷⁴ Coetzee's description of

being a racist is his or her reality-testing skill, the ability to know what is fantasmatic and what is realistic, is no longer working. This experience, the blur between the two in order to experience the internal and fantasmatic experience as real, is a typical description of perverse symptoms or perversion. As I have argued in my Baldwin chapter, the reason racism and perversion must be thought of as having an intrinsic tie is because it explains the reason racism does not dissipate. For a racist, the practice of externalizing aggression towards the Other must continue, because it is pleasurable.

²⁷² In addition to *Robinson Crusoe*, there are many other fictional works that elucidate the practice of racializing the Other, I am thinking specifically of the following British canonical works: Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975; Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1965; Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003; E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*. New York and London: HBJ Book, 1924; and Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1987.

²⁷³ Although Friday is described as an African by Susan in the novella, the place of his origin is concealed. It is also my reading that by concealing Friday's place of origin Coetzee invokes the plight of writers in Africa who are excluded from the making of the cultural imagery of their lands, notably under the Apartheid regime in Coetzee's native South Africa.

²⁷⁴ As I mentioned in the previous section, racism is a form of perversion, because the ideas and thought processes that are connected to the racialized Other are generated by utilizing fantasmatic thoughts. For a

Friday's refusal to succumb to this practice should be regarded as equal to the every-day deconstructive task of writers, psychoanalysts, and political activists alike, who are currently engaged in the process of interrupting the practice of racializing the Other so that such practices will one day be entirely stopped.²⁷⁵ Instead of offering Friday speech and language, which inevitably creates the site in which various forms of violence can be committed, Coetzee invites the reader to stay with Susan and learn to tolerate the experience of frustration around Friday's silence.

Although Friday's indifferent presence continues to frustrate Susan, her approach to Friday expresses one other important element: it elucidates the hierarchy relating the feminized Other and the racialized Other and the comparison between the experiences of gender and racial discrimination. By treating Friday as her servant, she reminds herself that she, a white English woman, can and will exist above the racialized Other. Susan's wish to set up this hierarchy comes from the fear of self-annihilation triggered by the experience of facing gender discrimination in England. She experiences the environment of England as a dangerous place, perhaps more dangerous than living on Cruso's island.²⁷⁶ In the novella, as much as the writer Foe and Friday are being juxtaposed to one another, Susan and Friday are also described as two subjects who exist in the margin of England. Through this perception of the shared experience, Susan identifies with Friday's Otherness. Her reason to do so is motivated by the desire for mastery: she establishes a

pervert, the choice between fantasy and reality is always fantasy. Even though racist thoughts are to be argued as based in fantasy, not reality, a pervert will not let go of them precisely because it is in the realm of fantasy that he or she prefers to exist.

²⁷⁵ Derrida's notion of *à venir*, or 'to come', which elucidates the crucial position deconstruction occupies in the political sphere that attempts to develop a discourse of democracy, ethics, justice, and sovereignty, is useful in conceptualizing this point of view. *The Specter of Marx: Of Hospitality: Ann Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford California: University of California Press, 2000; and *For What Tomorrow... A Dialogue. Jacques Derrida and Elizabeth Roudinesco*. Trans by Jeff Fort. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2004.

²⁷⁶ It is possible to regard England as representing reality and Cruso's island as fantasy.

tie to Friday, and then attempts to undo it as a form of gaining mastery over the fear of self-annihilation.²⁷⁷ In other words, Susan maintains her perceived commonality with Friday in order gain mastery over the fear of facing gender discrimination; at the end of the identificatory process she attains the reassurance that facing gender discrimination is better than being the target of racial discrimination. Susan's identification with Friday – and the identification of race and gender battles – ends with Susan's ability to master her fear and gain control over her environment. It also suggests that when identifying with and observing the struggle of the racial Other becomes too anxiety provoking, Susan, as a white woman, will seek to cut off her identification. Therefore, the relationship between Susan and Friday suggests that the commonality between white women and people of color can be thought to exist only in white women's fantasies. When the identification becomes too realistic, or too frightening, white women can sever the link just as easily as cutting off Friday's tongue.

Coetzee gives the novella and the male author the same name: Foe. In doing so, he expresses his view towards Defoe's writing, which he sees as oppressive to the Other and considers his writing to be the enemy of creative process. Defoe's writing is more or less self-congratulatory, a kind of writing that is done for the purpose of attaining perverse gratification. By giving the novella the name of the author-protagonist, Coetzee

²⁷⁷ Freud argues that the function of children's play is linked to his or her wish to gain mastery of fear of losing the object, the mother. He shares his observation of his infant grandson who was holding a wooden reel with a piece of string tied around it. The infant then threw it over the edge of his curtained cot so that it disappeared from his sight completely. As he was doing it, he uttered the expression "o-o-o-o," which Freud interprets as "fort," a German word for "gone." He then pulled the string back towards him, and while he was doing so he made a "joyful" expression "da," which means "there" in German. Freud mentions that his grandson repeated this play in order to experience the pleasure that came with the second part of the act, and as he was doing it, he was also engaged in the act of mastering his fear of losing his mother. Sigmund Freud. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). S.E. 18, pp. 14-17.

critiques Daniel Defoe, the author Susan is aspiring to become.²⁷⁸ Coetzee's view indicates that writing should offer an opportunity to experience openness and willingness to explore the writer's internal world without subjecting the Other to the creative process, to use him or her as the fetish, the thing.²⁷⁹ Coetzee regards Defoe's writing as not creative precisely because it expresses an unethical point of view of the treatment of the racialized Other. As well, Defoe's writing is done in such a way that it blurs the boundary between a creative expression and an expression motivated by his superego.²⁸⁰ Coetzee, in agreement with Derrida, would suggest that writing motivated by the superego (or difference) emphasizes binary opposition, for example, truth versus untruth, or reality versus fantasy, and thus it fails to incorporate the information that can otherwise be

²⁷⁸ In his essay, "Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe" J. M. Coetzee describes Daniel Defoe's writing in the following way:

For page after page – for the first time in the history of fiction – we see a minute, ordered description of how things are done. It is a matter of pure writerly attentiveness, pure submission to the exigencies of a world which, through being submitted to in a state so close to spiritual absorption, becomes transfigured, real (20).

Then, he says the following:

Robinson Crusoe suffers as a result of hasty composition and lack of revision. Its moral is confused. The last quarter of the book, as well as Crusoe's early adventures, could have been carried off by any capable writer.

Furthermore, though the treatment of the emotion shows flashes of power –for instance when waves of depression or loneliness overtake Crusoe – Defoe is still too close to the analysis of the soul and its movements perfected in Christian therapeutics to be properly modern. He does not – at least in this first attempt at book-length fiction – look to a later realism that will reveal inner life in unconscious gesture, or in moments of speech or action whose meaning is unguessed-at by its subject. (20).

Coetzee argues that Defoe's lack of creativity is stemming from his preoccupation with "Christian therapeutics." Although Coetzee does not quite say it, he seems to suggest that Defoe's preoccupation comes from his inability to access his imagination and fantasy, because the interference is created by his superego. J. M. Coetzee "Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe" in *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays 1986-1999*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2001.

²⁷⁹ In this way, Friday's severed tongue can be read as a possibility for a better future, which will come when the interruption of the practice of oppression is done in the present moment. As I argued previously, I read Friday's lack of tongue as a deconstructive gesture.

²⁸⁰ Derek Attridge writes about the concept of openness expressed by Coetzee in the following way: "Jacobus Coetzee is not just an explorer, but a writer too, and much of his writing is as destructive of the other as his gun; it evinces the characteristically self-contradictory claim of the colonizer, both to know everything that needs to be known about the other, and to find the other a wholly mysterious and inassimilable entity" (84, footnote, 20). *Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*.

expressed in the play of *différance*.²⁸¹ Coetzee demonstrates that creative work does not need the notion of truth telling that expresses the view of the hegemonic order, or the writer's religious beliefs; both are expressions motivated by the superego. Instead, the writer should approach writing through accessing his or her psychic world, which contains a psychic process that is unique, resembling hallucination.²⁸² Although writing carried out through hallucination is not entirely divorced from the reality of the hegemonic order, it contains the truth of the subject, which emerges as the representation of his or her psychic reality. Coetzee's view suggests that writing must express the

²⁸¹ I am specifically employing Derrida's notion of *différance* here because of the question of how to read Friday's presence in the story. The word, "difference," will invite Hegelian problematics where Friday's presence will be there to offer a different ontological experience. In other words, Hegelian problematics will end up fetishizing Friday, which is what Coetzee prevents the reader from doing. From a Freudian perspective, the notion of difference gets installed along with the installment of the superego structure, which is specifically the stage of the Oedipal period. In a way, Freud's understanding of the superego assumes that binary opposition equals objective reality; therefore, Freud's inconsistencies should be regarded as symptomatic of the defensive response to *différance*, which is the argument Derrida offers in his reading of Freud. One can say that the Oedipal stage is also the stage where self-other differentiation gets further articulated due to the perceptive acknowledgement of the third figure in the dyad, the father; however, the Oedipal stage has to be viewed as not one concrete stage where such structure gets installed, but it is rather the specific stage where, due to the traumatic nature of the discovery of the sexual difference, the earlier pre-Oedipal trauma will return as a form of enigmatic signifier. See Jean Laplanche. *Life and Death of Psychoanalysis*. Trans by Jeffrey Mehlman. Baltimore and London. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970.

²⁸² In his essay, "Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe" Coetzee puts *Robinson Crusoe* next to writings such as Homer's *Odyssey* and *Don Quixote*. Coetzee critiques Defoe's writing and the idea that he is an inventor of literary realism. In fact, Coetzee says that he does not see how Defoe's realism has anything to do with Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, who are often viewed as the inventors of the realist novel in England. Coetzee argues that Defoe is considered to be a realist because he is an empiricist, and empiricism is one of the tenets of the realist novel. In the following Coetzee shares his view of the writing of Robinson Crusoe:

In the case of Robinson Crusoe one can see Defoe trying – with incomplete success—to bend the story of his adventurer hero to fit a scriptural pattern of disobedience, punishment, repentance, and deliverance...The disobedience that Crusoe claims as his original sin is in fact a precondition of the interest of the story. No one wants to read about docile sons. (19-20).

Freud argues that the intellectual as well as imaginative work that the subject is engaged in at the present moment links him or her back to the past, because the work that is ongoing ultimately arouses his or her major wishes. It is there that the subject begins tracing back his or her earlier memories in which a particular wish was fulfilled. This process becomes the foundation of a daydream or fantasy – for Freud the two are indistinguishable because both carry traces of the past, which becomes the foundation of the future. However, if fantasy becomes "over-luxuriant and over-powerful" then it will lead to the condition under which neurosis or psychosis will emerge. Hence, fantasy can be regarded as the "precursor of the distressing symptoms." It is important to observe that for Freud, the so-called real world always contains the subject's fantasy world. Sigmund Freud. "The Creative Writer and Day-Dreaming" (1908). *S. E.* 9, pp. 143-44.

struggle of what is external and what is internal to the author, while simultaneously articulating and working with the limits of language.

Another critique on Defoe is his description of Robinson Crusoe as the Other. Although in *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe attempts to offer the perspective of a subject who exists in the socio-cultural margins, the allegory of self-reflection and self-effacing gets entirely lost in Crusoe's character. As a result, Defoe's writing becomes a project that endorses narcissism, grandiosity, and omnipotence. The island becomes Crusoe's creation of the other world in which he gets to rule and create his own law and order. Crusoe's status as the creator of his new world and his disconnect from the reality of England can also be read as his retreat into his autoerotic fantasmatic world.²⁸³ It is problematic to regard this gesture, the move towards narcissism and autoeroticism, as the positionality of the racialized Other, whose history, subjectivity, and voice are getting erased every day. In *Foe*, Coetzee expresses his dissatisfaction towards Defoe's work by killing off Cruso in the first section of the novella. Furthermore, he alters Crusoe's name to Cruso by dropping the letter *e* at the end, which resembles castration. This gesture also leads the reader to see that his name, Coetzee contains not just one, but two of the letter *e*, at the end, which demonstrates that his novella, *Foe* successfully takes away the power associated with the master narrative, the creative aspect of which depends on the erasure and dismantlement the origin and history of the Other, Friday.

²⁸³ In order to understand the concept of psychic retreat, John Steiner's argument is useful. He argues that psychic retreat is a process that the subject uses to avoid experiencing the anxiety that results from being in touch with reality. What interests Steiner is the particular anxiety the patient experiences when he or she comes in contact with the analyst who represents the existence of a reality that is different from the reality of the patient. In other words, for Steiner, the avoidance of contact with the analyst is the same thing as the avoidance of contact with reality, and this particular avoidance exists throughout the analytic process. With Steiner's and also Freud's argument in mind, I wonder if a similar type of avoidance, the avoidance of reality, can take place when the author engages in the act of writing that attempts to racialize the Other. John Steiner. *Psychic Retreat: Pathological Organizations in Psychotic, Neurotic and Borderline Patients*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-14.

In *Foe*, Cruso does not get to return to England to tell his story of the island; instead, Friday, along with Susan Barton, goes to England. This creative decision suggests that through Friday (not Crusoe) Coetzee demonstrates the positionality of the Other in the master narrative, while giving Susan (not Cruso) the opportunity to write the story of the island. Although the writing Friday offers is invisible and inaudible, it quietly reminds the reader of the particular nature of writing that entails the experience of violence to the racialized Other and the pleasure derived by the writer.²⁸⁴ And as the reader will see at the end of the novel, although Susan will write her narrative, the potential of this relationship will not cease to exist – it requires a constant effort at deconstructing it.

Foe's first chapter opens with the speech of Susan Barton, not that of Robinson Crusoe. This gesture suggests that he begins his creative process through the discourse of gender difference. In addition, Coetzee's stance on ethical writing, which must not engage in the practice of racializing the Other, speaks about his close affinity with Derrida's point of view. Coetzee engages in a play of letters that is reminiscent of the way Derrida describes the difference between the letters *e* and *a* in his paper, "Différance."²⁸⁵ I have already mentioned Coetzee's alteration of Crusoe's name into

²⁸⁴ The exclusion can also happen while the reader is engaged in the act of reading because he or she will often encounter a moment when he or she wants to disregard the content the author offers and prolong a reading that does not contradict his or her personal and intellectual convictions.

²⁸⁵ Freud's theory of the mind after 1923 is often referred to as the structural theory. I argue that this particular model, rather than his earlier model, the topographic model, can be thought of as the theory that emphasizes *différance* not difference. It is because the topographical model saw the mind as consisting of three separate parts: conscious, preconscious, and unconscious, emphasizing the difference amongst their structures and functions. However, rather than emphasizing the difference amongst those three components, the structural theory stresses the interconnectedness of those three components. The utilization of the terms *id*, *ego*, and *superego* indicates that all three are linked and influence one another. This change created a revolutionary shift in the conceptualization of psychoanalytic technique, because the *ego* was conceptualized as not always conscious, nor was the *id* conceptualized as closed off to the *ego*. This theoretical emphasis offered explanations for the psychoanalytic clinical problem of resistance, which is intrinsically linked to repetition compulsion. And the interpreting what is repeating is a task of

Cruso. In addition to the significance of the letter *e*, two other letters, *a* and *o*, emerge throughout the novella; each letter points out a style of writing that is significantly different from the rest.

Elimination of the Letter *E*

In addition to altering the name Crusoe to Cruso, Coetzee eliminates the letter *e* from Susan Barton's name as well.²⁸⁶ In the following paragraph Susan introduces herself to Cruso when she first arrives on the island; in doing so, she introduces her history and the significance of her name to the reader:

‘ “Let me tell you my story,” said I; “for I am sure you are wondering who I am and how I come to be here.

‘ “My name is Susan Barton, and I am a woman alone. My father was a Frenchman who fled to England to escape the persecutions in Flanders. His name was properly Berton, but, as happens, it became corrupted in the mouths of strangers. My mother was an Englishwoman (10).

deconstruction, because the act of interpretation aims to interrupt what exists at the origin of psychic trauma. Therefore, the structural theory can be thought of as the representation of the work of *différance*, which can be conceptualized as the area that connects three parts of the psychic functions.

²⁸⁶ Another place where the erasure of the letter *e* becomes significant is in the third section of the novel when Susan is teaching Friday how to write. Facing Friday Susan first draws a picture of a house. Then she begins to enounce each letter, h-o-u-s, as she writes the word, *hous*, but interestingly, when she spells the word, she consciously or unconsciously eliminates the letter *e*. After finish writing the word, *hous*, Susan then grabs Friday's hand and asks him to write each letter to spell the word, *hous*. She then erases the picture of the house so as to make sure that Friday will remember the meaning of the word not on the paper, but in his psychic world. The erasure of the letter *e* makes the five-letter word, *house*, into a four-letter word; by doing so, Coetzee demonstrates that the number four has significant meanings in the novella. The number four represents psychic picture of the four individuals involved in her story: Cruso, Friday, Foe, and Susan herself. (Incidentally, the number four is also an important number for Derrida since it points to the significance of four corners that are needed in order to construct a frame to facilitate an examination of hegemonic practice. See *Truth in Paintings*. Trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. In addition, the Derridan reading of Freudian texts suggests that psychoanalysis is a practice that incorporates the existence of four individuals in the room, the patient, his/her parents, and the analyst, not just the three individuals who construct the Oedipal triangle, the patient and his or her parents.) In other words, it is possible to say that Coetzee erased the letter *e* from the word *house* intentionally in order to install the importance of the number four in Friday's psychic world. The word she asks Friday to write is *ship*. She motions Friday to write, but the only letters he is able to produce are *s-h-s-h-s*, and he does so repetitively (145-146). However, Susan says that Friday could have been writing h-f. Although she does not say so, the reader may discern that the both h and f produce silent sounds in English.

In the above paragraph, Susan's narrative indicates the practice of silencing a certain sort of historicity that is regarded as unsuitable to the demands of the external environment, England. Therefore, the newly introduced letter *a* marks the history that once existed, but is now eliminated and fabricated with respect to the hegemonic order. In this regard, through her anglicized fictional name, her subjectivity is also altered. Furthermore, the erasure of the letter *e* in Crusoe signifies the possibility of dismantling the master narrative: Crusoe becomes Cruso, whose existence can only be substantiated in Susan's memory. In addition, as I have already mentioned, the canonical name Crusoe becomes Cruso, implying the possibility of castrating the name of the canonical author.

Coetzee eliminates the letter *e* in order to illustrate the critical move away from the Western literary canon. And, in doing so he suggests that the letter, when it does appear, indicates the practice of racializing the Other, the act of altering one's subjectivity and history, which creates an effect similar to the mutilation of the body, which is what canonicity accomplishes. In *Foe*, Coetzee asks the reader to disengage from the site of letter *e*, the sphere of binary opposition motivated by the superego, the place Defoe occupies. In addition, the name Defoe combines the French preposition, *de* (from) and the English word, *foe* (enemy), which invites a radical departure from the Western canonical writing that continues to utilize the character of the racialized Other. By naming his novella *Foe*, Coetzee attempts to transform the master narrative, which originates *from the enemy* into a story that describes writing that critiques such writing. And in doing so, Coetzee illustrates that for him writing must be carried out outside of the site of the letter *e* – it has to be engaged in the site of non-binary opposition, the space

that contains both the internal and external worlds.²⁸⁷ This space cannot be regarded as either external or internal, though the content of the writing must rely on the writer's internal experience. Susan's desire to write a book should be actualized in the site of the letter *o*. In *Foe*, Coetzee is asking the reader to favor a narrative that illustrates the characteristics of such writing, and he will give an example of such writing in the last section of the novella.

The first section of the novella is constructed as Susan telling her story of the island to Foe; therefore, it is the section of speech. In the second section of the novella, Susan writes letters to Foe, describing her memories of the island while living in England. This section expresses the sentiment that her memory of the island is influenced by her experience of facing destitution in England. In addition, it suggests that the act of writing letters can be seen as a halfway point between speech and writing, which is the process mimicking the initiation of writing a book. However, what is also unique about Susan's letter writing is that it expresses her anticipation of Foe's response to the content she is sharing in her letters. In other words, Susan's letter writing expresses her desire for Foe's writerly phallus. In the third section of the novella, the appearance of the quotations will be met with the emergence of narratives without quotations. The narratives are read as the emergence of her internal thought process, which suggests that Susan begins to link speech and writing together. And in the final section of the novella, Susan offers her narrative that is free of quotations, indicating her ability to engage in her internal imaginative process that is unique to her. And when she reaches at this stage, she becomes a writer.

²⁸⁷ This is the space similar to the dream world. A close examination of this argument will be offered in the following section.

* * *

The First Dyad: Susan and Friday, the site of the letter *e*

Susan begins her writing process by first forming a dyadic relationship with Friday.²⁸⁸ In this dyad, Susan's relationship to reality is described as fragmented. This impression initially jumps out when the reader recognizes her peculiar relationship to time and space. Susan gives the first date, April 15 in the letter she writes to Foe:

‘I have set down the history of our time on the island as well as I can, and enclose it herewith. It is a sorry, limping affair (the history, not the time itself) – “the next day,” its refrain goes, “the next day ... the next day” – but you will know how to set it right (47).

Susan informs Foe that her story of the island cannot offer a time frame – days stretched into months and months stretched into years. However, in a curious way, Susan's experience of the timelessness of her life on Cruso's island matches her experience in England. She recognizes that Foe can install a time frame, so as to set “it,” her confused time frame, “right” through his writerly skills (or his phallus), after which her writing will offer a differentiated view of the past from the present.

²⁸⁸ In order to consider Susan's fetishistic thought process to utilize Friday as an object, I utilize the theoretical basis of contemporary Freudian theory and Kleinian theory. John Steiner, a contemporary Kleinian, calls the practice of holding onto fantasmatic conviction a “psychic retreat,” which for him is a practice of perversion. Although expressing a Freudian point of view, Alan Bass shares a similar point of view: for him, Steiner's notion of psychic retreat is closely connected to the subject's wish to enter the world of dedifferentiation. It is where the difference between internal and external realities is omnipotently defeated, meaning the subject thinks he or she can successfully accomplish the elimination of the difference between fantasy and reality. However, this practice involves the mechanism of disavowal because the subject registers the impossibility of getting rid of the difference, but he or she will rigorously defend against this awareness. For Bass, the act of disavowing entails the practice of first recognizing and repudiating what the subject perceives as tension-raising content. And in order not to experience this very tension, the subject seeks to enter the place of dedifferentiation between the two realities, what is real and what is fantasmatic. The place of dedifferentiation is essentially the place of non-tension, and it is where the subject falsely perceives that elimination of the external reality is possible.

The pronoun “it” can also be interpreted as the concept of time existing timelessly in Susan’s internal world, which can also be argued as her having trouble recognizing her external reality.²⁸⁹ Susan subtly moves the definition of creative process from that which emerges from one’s fantasy and hallucination to a more concrete one. She then equates creativity that is driven from imagination and fantasy as a phallic activity. She experiences creative expression as triggering fear because it occurs in the world of dedifferentiation where the difference between what is real and what is fantasmatic diminishes. For Susan, this experience with dedifferentiation is the encounter with the Thing.²⁹⁰ Susan views Foe as the one who is able to set her narrative right by changing her timeless speech-like narrative into reality-based creative narrative. In this way, she sees him as her better half, the other.²⁹¹ Friday’s indifference to her demands emerge as a form of threat to Susan, because his silence insinuates the possibility that he will not endorse or does not even acknowledge her story as the true account of what happened on the island. In this way, the question of how to treat the lack of Friday’s tongue in her book becomes a crucial problem. If Susan is to make her story truthful and substantial, the circumstances under which Friday lost his tongue must be included in her story. However, since he is unable to speak, she cannot use his narrative. It is also the case that the story behind the lack of Friday’s tongue has to stand as the evidence of his savage nature, and such a depiction of Friday will allow her writing to enter the scene of other

²⁸⁹ The unconscious wish that comes out of phantasy is timeless. There is a difference between fantasy and phantasy – the latter spelling of the word implies fantasy that contains unconscious content. See Susan Isaacs, “The Nature and Function of Phantasy” in *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1948) 29: 73-97.

²⁹⁰ I am conceptualizing the Thing with the capital T as the subject’s experience of encountering with self-annihilation fear – the terrain of the death drive.

²⁹¹ See Freud, “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming.”

Western canonical texts, writings that racialize the Other for the purpose of gratifying the reader.

While being faced with the dilemma of not knowing how to treat Friday's silence, as well as his indifference to her demands, Susan writes to Foe the following: "Could you have made up Crusoe and Friday and the island with its fleas and apes and lizards? I think not. Many strengths you have, but invention is not one of them" (72). In Susan's mind, writers should always tell a story based on their memories, and the form of writing carried out in this way is truthful and substantial. However, ironically, invention is precisely what writers do, especially Foe, because he does not distinguish fabrication from creativity. Despite Foe's approach to writing, Susan seeks his writerly skills because she believes they are the tools that can turn her memory into a book. In approaching Foe, she wishes to express to him that she does not want him to fabricate her story and that he needs to be respectful of her point of view.²⁹² Susan is becoming increasingly aware of Foe's tendency to take over the entire writing process. She begins perceiving his writerly skills as a threat to her writing process. This realization makes Susan anxious, thus, in

²⁹² Perhaps Coetzee is asserting his agreement with the movement, *écriture féminine*. It is a strain of feminist literary theory that originated in France in the 1970s, which elucidates the danger associated with writing done by men that aims to erase the voice of women. *Écriture féminine* also privileges non-linear writing. For Cixous, *écriture féminine* is not only for female writers. James Joyce is an author who employs such writing. See, Hélène Cixous "The Laugh of the Medusa," *New French Feminisms*. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron. Eds. New York: Schocken, 1981. James Joyce. *Ulysses*. Paris: Sylvia Beach, 1922 and New York and London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000. Coetzee's description of Susan's struggle with writing suggests that female writers should function as truth tellers, asking them to speak about their views openly. This act of truth telling will alter the oppressive practice of canon-making in which male writers are often engaged, yet Foe ignores Susan's narrative and begins to write his own narrative. The reader can note the emergence of this threat when Susan's daughter suddenly appears. Such an insertion of another point of view coming from another writer's creative decision-making process clearly makes Susan anxious. Susan begins to anticipate that if her daughter can appear, then other stories, such as the story of Bahia, can also be incorporated into the overall story being written. The existence of her daughter is another form of truth, yet Susan is not interested in incorporating it. Susan is aware that the inclusion of her daughter will force her to write a different story, a story that is perhaps more gender specific. And she concludes that such writing will not enter the Western canon.

order to soothe herself from the anxiety, Susan turns to Friday to seek comfort. Yet, Friday continues to be unresponsive. Susan then utters the following sentences:

‘ “Oh, Friday, how can I make you understand the cravings felt by those of us who live in a world of speech to have our questions answered! It is like our desire, when we kiss someone, to feel the lips we kiss respond to us. Otherwise would we not be content to bestow our kisses on statues, the cold statues of kings and queens and gods and goddesses? Why do you think we do not kiss statues, and sleep with statues in our beds, men with statues of women and women with the statues of men, statues carved in postures of desire? Do you think it is only because marble is cold? Lie long enough with a statue in your bed, with warm covers over the two of you, and the marble will grow warm. No, it is not because the statue is cold but because it is dead, or rather, because it has never lived and never will(79).

In this paragraph Susan expresses a desire for human contact from Friday, but he remains indifferent, which further elevates the tension in Susan. The frustration Susan experiences comes from the awareness that Friday will not respond to her seduction and he will not respond to her wish to subjugate him. Susan sees that the different way Friday responds to her demands and to those of Crusoe as stemming from his awareness of her gender difference.

Fantasy of Gender Switch: Concrete View of Who Writes and Who Speaks

Louise Kaplan explains the thought process of a woman who is seeking to incorporate a great writerly phallus in the following way:

The phallus of the great man has been imagined, created, fabricated by the woman with as much dedication and passion as it requires to compose a symphony, paint a painting, direct a play, invent a machine – any talent that the woman may possess but is afraid to expose to the world. Count Tolstoy was a great writer, a man of wealth and power. His actual greatness did not depend on Sofia's submission to him. Nevertheless, he found it convenient and emotionally gratifying that Sofia should have time to devote herself to her own ambitions only after first giving virtually all

her energies and devotion to supporting his. On her side of the bargain, Sofia invested her already great and tyrannical husband with sexual and moral tyrannies that kept her enthralled and him ensconced in his position of domination (226).

According to Kaplan's point of view, Susan's wish to use Foe's writerly phallus to become an author perfectly qualifies her as a pervert. As well, Susan's way of holding onto fantasmatic thoughts, rather than seeking to become a writer in reality by utilizing her own writerly ability, would also describe her as a pervert. In other words, by seeking to turn Foe and Friday into the thing, Susan is functioning as a fetishist because she is seeking to engage in the task of writing in a fantasmatic way. Such perverse desire functions in three ways: one, it aids her attempt to transform her memory into a form of truth; two, it helps her avoid experiencing the Thing, the fear of destitution, death, and self-annihilation, all of which may result from facing gender discrimination in England, and three, it furthers her perverse desire to become a writer by utilizing the thing, through which she seeks to alter her gender so as to mark her existence in history as a canonical writer.²⁹³ Susan perceives that as long as she uses Friday's story and Foe's phallus as the thing, she can make the task of writing less anxiety-provoking because she is not engaging in the reality that women can write creative prose alone. This reality seems too challenging for her, thus, she escapes into fantasy where her perverse wish stands in for the truth.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ According to Freud, memory traces or mnemic systems are unconscious, and they can only become reactivated once they go through cathexis. The conscious memory differs from memory traces in such a way that by the nature of it entering into the conscious, its contents are already misremembered. J. Laplanche and Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. by Donald Nicolson-Smith. W. W. Norton & Company. (New York: London, 1973), pp. 247-248.

²⁹⁴ Susan's perverse thought process also suggests that she thinks she is engaged in a dialectical movement by using Friday as the thing; in doing so, she can to alter a world that is not open to female writers.

The novella's first and second sections are put in quotation marks, which has significant meaning. First, it allows the reader to see that the act of writing begins from speech.²⁹⁵ Simultaneously, the quotations quietly speak about the establishment of gender roles, suggesting that unlike speech, which is more closely connected to memories, writing a prose narrative is a form of masculine practice.²⁹⁶ Therefore, Susan's speech demonstrates her anticipation of the arrival of a white male writer who will transform her speech into creative prose.²⁹⁷ In the following paragraph, Susan talks to Captain Smith, who rescues Susan and Friday from the island. He suggests to her that since there has not been a story told by a "female castaway," Susan should write it and offer it to the booksellers.²⁹⁸ He says, "It will cause a great stir." Susan replies:

²⁹⁵ According to Derrida, speech exists before writing; therefore, the written word is derived from the spoken word. Furthermore, he argues that the development of language occurs through the interplay between speech and writing, therefore, neither speech nor writing can be described as more important to the development of language. See *Of Grammatology*. Trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

²⁹⁶ In other words, the quotations mimic the psychic writing that Susan is producing, who insistently claims that there was no pen or paper to record her story while she was stranded on the island. This statement suggests the notion that what she is going to tell is solely based on her memory. In addition, Crusoe did not keep a diary, therefore, all she relates is coming from her memory (16). This remark can be read as Coetzee's critique of Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe* is written like a diary, and by saying Crusoe did not keep any diary, Coetzee attempts to erase the existence of the book, *Robinson Crusoe*.

²⁹⁷ What exists in the thought process before speech is a type of writing, which consists of images that are not represented by words. In his article, "Two Principles of Mental Functioning," Freud states that thinking originally starts in the unconscious, which went beyond mere impressions and representations of objects and they become perceptible to consciousness through verbal residues (1911). *S.E.* 12. In *the Ego and Id* (1923), Freud speaks about the connection between unconscious feelings with unconscious ideas. He mentions that for unconscious ideas to function, the connecting link must be created before they become conscious, and in order for them to become conscious, feelings have to be attached to the ideas. He goes on to mention that as far as feelings are concerned, there is no distinction between preconscious and unconscious feelings, because feelings are either conscious or unconscious even though they get attached to word-presentations. Freud mentions that feelings become conscious not because of the "word presentation" but because "they become so directly." (1923) *S.E.* Vol. 19, p. 23.

²⁹⁸ Here Coetzee critiques the assumption that stories are often considered dull when written by a female author. For further discussion of this topic, see Coco Fusco. *English is Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in America*. New York: New Press, 1995. It is appropriate to mention that Virginia Woolf was also interested in questioning why so few works by female writers entered the literary cannon. For example, *In A Room of One's Own*, Woolf imagines that Shakespeare had a sister, Judith Shakespeare. Historically speaking, Judith was a daughter of William Shakespeare, who had a fraternal twin, Hamnet. Unlike her father, Judith was known as illiterate. Woolf creates Judith in her story to indicate that because of her gender she was denied freedom of expression. And the reason there were so few female poets and

“[B]ut what little I know of book-writing tells me its charm will quite vanish when it is set down badly in print. A liveliness is lost in the writing down which must be supplied by art, and I have no art.” “As to art I cannot pronounce, being only a sailor,” said Captain Smith; “but, you may depend on it, the booksellers will hire a man to set your story to rights, and put in a dash of colour too, here and there.” “I will not have any lies told,” said I. The captain smiled. “There I cannot vouch for them,” he said: “their trade is in books, not in truth.” “I would rather be the author of my own story than have lies told about me,” I persisted – “If I cannot come forward, as author, and swear to the truth of my tale, what will be the worth of it? I might as well have dreamed it in a snug bed in Chichester” (40).

Susan’s statement indicates a conflict – she cannot write, but she cannot stand to witness someone else being the author of her story if he will tell lies. However, despite this concern, she ends up following Captain Smith’s suggestion by approaching Foe. Her decision to speak about the nature of her preconscious, which forms a close tie to hegemonic thinking, affirms the deeply rooted establishment of gender (and racial) hierarchies. In other words, the quotations silently mark the authenticity of Susan’s voice. The thoughts expressed in the quotations claim that Susan’s writing contains substance because it is linked to her memory, however, they cannot become a part of the book without the insertion of masculine gender.²⁹⁹ It is in this regard that once again Friday’s presence in the novella becomes significant. If Susan wishes to write her own narrative without fabrication, then she needs to know how Friday lost his tongue. The impossibility of knowing the history behind Friday’s tongueless body curiously begins triggering fear,

playwrights in the Elizabethan period had to do with the fact that women were often denied education and access to occupations outside of the domestic sphere. Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One’s Own*. New York: Harvest Books, 1989.

²⁹⁹As I argued earlier, Susan’s insistence on substance is connected to Coetzee’s critique on Defoe’s writing. Susan’s attempts to remember the event, or Defoe’s attentiveness towards describing the minutiae of the daily activities on the island, transfigures a kind of fear surrounding the exposure of the unconscious materials. It almost as though this type of writing reminds one of an analysand who describes the content of his or her daily routine obsessively because the practice of free association is too anxiety provoking, because it has the potential to expose his or her unconscious fantasies.

and I argue that the fear she is experiencing can also be regarded as the fantasmatic fear of losing her tongue, which has various psychodynamic meanings.³⁰⁰

Phenomenology of Identification: the Thing and its Meaning

In order to remember how Cruso described Friday's tongue, Susan's mind travels back to the island. She mentions that Cruso introduced the pronoun "they" when he was speaking of the ones who cut out Friday's tongue.³⁰¹ After hearing the pronoun, she shows a sign of amusement because in her fantasy she thinks she knows who cut out Friday's tongue, and her fantasmatic conviction is matched with what Cruso said.³⁰² Thus, in order to seek validation of her fantasmatic thought, or to seek to transform her fantasmatic conviction to a reality-based knowledge, Susan asks Cruso the question, "Who cut out his tongue?" Susan then hears Cruso answer: "The slaves" (23). Susan and Cruso have the following exchange:

"The slaves cut out his tongue and sold him into slavery? The slave-hunters of Africa? But surely he was a mere child when they took him. Why would they cut out a child's tongue?"

Cruso gazed steadily back at me. Though I cannot now swear to it, I believe he was smiling. "Perhaps the slaves, who are Moors, hold the tongue to be a delicacy," he said. "Or perhaps they grew weary of listening to Friday's wails of grief, that went on day and night. Perhaps they

³⁰⁰ The fear Susan experiences can be interpreted in the following way: although she does not possess a penis, she does possess a tongue that can be severed. In this sense, in her fantasy, both penis and tongue gain equal significance. Susan's attempt to use Friday as a thing reminds us of Lelia, Chang-Rae Lee's character in *Native Speaker*, who seeks to use immigrant children in order to disavow the knowledge that having a tongue that produces perfect English sounds is not equal to having a phallus.

³⁰¹ The usage of the plural pronoun has a significant place in the development of racist rhetoric. See Judith Butler, *Exitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997. Donald Moss, "Introduction: On Hating in the First Person Plural: Thinking Psychoanalytically about Racism, Homophobia, and Misogyny" in *Hating in the First Person Plural*. New York: Other Press, 2003.

³⁰² This is the function of the Lacanian *Manque-à-être*. In order for the castration fear to grab hold of the subject, what is triggering the fear in the subject cannot be revealed. In this sense, the function of the fear is to drive the subject's libido like a wheel. There is an intrinsic link between the operation of fear and fetishism. Derrida paid attention to this link while maintaining the metaphor of fear operating as a wheel in the function of fetishism. See Jacques Derrida, *Glas*. Trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

wanted to prevent him from ever telling his story: who he was, where his home lay, how it came about that he was taken. Perhaps they cut out the tongue of every cannibal they took, as a punishment. How will we ever know the truth?" (23)³⁰³

If her fantasy and Crusoe's information are not in conflict, she will experience a sense of satisfaction because what she fantasized is now real and her perceptive knowledge can stand as a form of truth, or it can be regarded as substantial, the word Susan uses throughout the novella. This is precisely the moment when the difference between reality and fantasy gets diminished for Susan. In addition, when Susan hears the word, "slave," a shift in Susan's feelings towards Friday occurs. Crusoe's answer not only instills feelings of pity and fear, more importantly it offers an opportunity for Susan to justify her curiosity towards the lack of Friday's tongue, and she uses it as the reason to write about her experience on the island.

Susan's initial response to the discovery of Friday's severed tongue is fear, which originates from her forming identification with his inability to express his thoughts and feelings using language. Her fear then produces a reaction much like paralysis. But, simultaneously, Susan's response expresses a humanistic of view – she feels sympathetic that Friday's ontological status could not refute such a harsh treatment. She then begins questioning whether what Friday had gone through is something she, too, may have to fear. For Susan, cutting out a tongue is an act equal to experiencing narcissistic injury and self-annihilation. However, her fear that accompanies recognizing Friday's tonguelessness not only speaks about her strong identification with Friday's struggle, but also indicates her fantasmatic conviction that, unlike castration of the male genitals, the

³⁰³ Loss of the tongue is losing of taste, which also means the loss of oral pleasure. Furthermore, the act of cutting the tongue signals the elimination of one of the five senses, taste. Incidentally, the letter *e*, which Coetzee cuts off from Crusoe's name, is the fifth letter of the English alphabet.

castration of tongue can happen to both African men and white English women. In other words, if castration of the tongue happened to Friday, it could certainly happen to her because the severance of the tongue does not discriminate between the sexes. This fantasmatic thought also reveals that castration of the tongue does not discriminate according to racial difference; when Susan is engaging in this exploration, the differences between her and Friday—both the gender and racial differences—begin disappearing in her psychic world.

Susan's disavowal of both sexual and racial difference continues to maintain her identification with Friday, continuously linking his tonguelessness and her own lack of writerly skills. As a result, her identification with Friday's tonguelessness temporarily puts her in the position of the racial Other, but this outcome induces anxiety in her. In the following paragraph Susan describes how she saw Friday in a different way than she saw other slaves:

'Hitherto I had found Friday a shadowy creature and paid him little more attention than I would have given any house-slave in Brazil. But now I began to look on him – I could not help myself – with the horror we reserve for the mutilated. It was no comfort that his mutilation was secret, closed behind his lips (as some other mutilations are hidden by clothing), that outwardly he was like any Negro. Indeed, it was the very secretness of his loss that caused me to shrink from him. I could not speak, while he was about, without being aware how lively were the movements of the tongue in my mouth. I saw pictures in my mind of pincers gripping his tongue and a knife slicing into it, as must have happened, and I shuddered. I covertly observed him as he ate, and with distaste heard the tiny coughs he gave now and then to clear his throat, saw how he did his chewing between his front teeth, like a fish. I caught myself flinching when he came near, or holding my breath so as not to have to smell him. Behind his back I wiped the utensils his hands had touched. I was ashamed to behave thus, but for a time was not mistress of my own actions. Sorely I regretted that Cruso had ever told me the story (24).

The reason Susan expresses sympathetic feelings towards Friday is that in his muteness she locates her own struggle of not knowing how to write a book on her own. In recognizing Friday's tongueless mouth, Susan imagines herself losing her tongue. And this imagination instills the unthinkable fantasmatic thought that losing her tongue means becoming Friday. For Susan, the Thing, or the real fear associated with Friday's tongue, is the realization that white English women can lose their tongues just as Friday did. This understanding is supported by her experience of having to encounter gender discrimination in England. Once Friday's lack of tongue is unveiled, Susan begins to see Friday in close psychic proximity, which creates a reaction much like repulsion. This reaction is the result of two contradictory yet equally powerful feelings she has towards Friday. One speaks about the fear that is more dedifferentiating – the fear of turning into Friday, which brings up the fear of self-annihilation. The other feeling comes from a differentiating understanding, which expresses sympathetic feelings towards Friday, who, unlike herself, will not be able to reclaim his speech or find a way to end his subjugation.

Ultimately, what propels Susan's fear is the secrecy and unknowability associated with the circumstances under which Friday lost his tongue. What is unknowable and cannot be defined then invites Susan to answer the question by using her imagination and fantasies. In this sense, Friday's tongue functions as a fetish, which perpetually conceals the story that Susan seeks to obtain. And, since she cannot gain a reassurance that the castration Friday experienced will not also happen her, she keeps Friday close; in doing so, she hopes to make sure that she will not experience castration of the tongue, and that her experience will remain differentiated from his experience.

It is also possible to suggest that Susan's wish to become an author is motivated by her fear that one day she will lose her tongue, and when that happens, the book will tell the story of her experience. Susan expresses this sentiment in the following:

The tongue is like the heart, in that way, is it not? Save that we do not die when a knife pierces the tongue. To that degree we may say the tongue belongs to the world of play, whereas the heart belongs to the world of earnest (85).

In this paragraph Susan speaks to Friday about her view of the tongue, which is similar to the heart, in that both tongue and heart contain the essence of one's existence. She longs to play with Friday, to exchange words with him using her tongue so as to experience intimacy, a kind of relationship she sought to have with Cruso on the island. This moment suggests that, with Friday, Susan tries to turn England into Susan's own island – she is trying to attain what Cruso was able to do with Friday on his island. However, despite her continuous efforts, Friday is to her unlike how he was to Cruso. Friday will not give into her demands, which continues to frustrate her, and she views Friday's refusal as stemming from his recognition of the gender difference between Cruso, a man, and Susan Barton, a woman.

Susan's identificatory relationship to Friday suggests that in her fantasy she and he are both subjects lacking the potent and powerful phallus, the English phallus. However, when Friday's absolute indifference to her demands becomes unbearable to her, Susan questions the value of her identification with him. She wonders whether Friday's place in the world, a place of servitude, is where she finds herself. However, if that is the case, Friday's resistance to submitting to her stands as a reminder that she and he are not standing on equal ground in England: Friday has the power to resist Susan's attempts to subjugate him. The fear Susan experiences can be articulated as coming from

her understanding that a white English woman with a tongue can be subjugated by a black man without one. This thought process not only confirms Susan's conviction that women do not have access to speech and language in England, but also expresses her anger and frustration towards English hegemony, which allows African men without tongues, who she feels should be subservient, to remain indifferent to the demands of white English women. This is the moment Susan's identification to Friday begins losing its significance.

Through maintaining identification with Friday, Susan generates her understanding of herself as the gendered Other in England. However, when her identification with Friday becomes too fearful, she switches her identification from him to Foe. By switching from being obsessed with the phenomena surrounding Friday's tongue to identifying with Foe's writerly skills, she seeks to reassert her power over Friday. It is also the case that by establishing identification with Foe, she is able to demonstrate to Friday that one who has access to speech and language is also one who is given power based on whiteness. In the following passage Susan writes a letter to Foe and tells him Friday's newly discovered "habit" of dancing while wearing Foe's robe and wig.

'In the grip of the dancing he is not himself. He is beyond human reach. I call his name and am ignored, I put out a hand and am brushed aside. All the while he dances he makes a humming noise in his throat, deeper than his usual voice; sometimes he seems to be singing.

For myself I do not care how much he sings and dances so long as he carries out his few duties. For I will not delve while he spins. Last night I decided I would take the robe away from him, to bring him to his senses. However, when I stole into his room he was awake, his hands already gripping the robe, which was spread over the bed, as though he read my thoughts. So I retreated (92).

She is attempting to communicate to Foe the nature of her relationship to Friday, which begins and ends with her experiencing frustration. As a way of deterring Friday from frustrating her, which she understands as him becoming increasingly powerful, Susan says the following:

‘Friday sits at table in his wig and robes and eats pease pudding. I ask myself: Did human flesh once pass those lips? Truly, cannibals are terrible; but most terrible of all is to think of the little cannibal children, their eyes closing in pleasure as they chew the tasty fat of their neighbors. I shiver. For surely eating human flesh is like falling into sin: having fallen once you discover in yourself a taste for it, and fall all the more readily thereafter. I shiver as I watch Friday dancing in the kitchen, with his robes whirling about him and the wig flapping on his head, and his eyes shut and his thoughts far away, not on the island, you may be sure, not on the pleasure of digging and carrying, but on the time before, when he was a savage among savages. Is it not only a matter of time before the new Friday whom Crusoe created is sloughed off and the old Friday of the cannibal forests return? Have I misjudged Crusoe all this time: was it to punish him for his sins that he cut out Friday’s tongue? Better had he drawn his teeth instead!’ (94-95)

In this paragraph, Susan describes him as a cannibal, and she does so in order to reassert her white English subjectivity.³⁰⁴ Utilizing this problematic view allows Susan to express

³⁰⁴ Perhaps cutting off of the tongue can be read as an act utilized to prevent cannibals from tasting human flesh. Interestingly, despite Susan’s insistence that Friday is an African and Africans practice cannibalism, historical documents suggest that not all Africans practiced cannibalism. See for example, Bartolomé de las Casas. *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Trans. by Nigel Griffin. New York and London: Penguin Classics, 1999. Jean de Lery. *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*. Trans. by Janet Whatley. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1992. Michael de Montaigne. “Of Cannibals” in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Trans. by Donald M. Frame. (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1943), pp. 150-159. Tzvetan Todorow. *The Morals of History*. Trans. by Alyson Waters. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995. In other words, Susan’s association that cannibals are Africans is a product of the Western racism against the people who are of African descent. In addition, in *Robinson Crusoe*, Fridays is described as cannibal, but his physical description resembles that of multiracial peoples or native peoples of the Americas:

He was a comely handsome fellow, perfectly well made; with straight strong limbs, not too large; tall and well shaped, and, as I reckon, about twenty six years of age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect; but seemed to have something very manly in his face, and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of an European in his countenance too, especially when he smiled. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large, and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the Brasilians, and

an important idea: she “appropriately” introduces Friday into the western canon, which matches Defoe’s depiction of Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*.³⁰⁵ In that description, Friday is perceived as a threat to humanity, which fits right in with the popular view expressed by Defoe that black men are cannibals. And by doing so, she seeks to turn the power back onto herself. Her action will then allow her to express that she has the power to write about him, to alter his subjectivity by utilizing language.

In the next scene Susan describes Friday playing flute. Friday’s continuous indifference towards her demand for human contact creates an unconscious reaction in Susan, which makes her grab the biggest flute amongst the many in the box of flutes that

Virginians, and other natives of America are; but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour that had in it something very agreeable, tho’ not very easy to describe (208).

³⁰⁵In Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Friday is consistently treated as a cannibal. This is one way to understand how anthropology is a way of asserting and reasserting power that belongs to the Western subject, and simultaneously to be able to do so can be conceptualized as an attainment of pleasure. It is because of this that anthropology provides an opportunity for tension-relief for some individuals.

In *Robinson Crusoe*, Friday’s orality is centered around the idea that if Friday learns to speak English from Crusoe, then Friday will be saved from his inhuman man-eating habits. While the English language functions as a tool to rescue Friday from savagery to humanity, it also offers a way for Crusoe to confirm the assumption that Africans are cannibals, information he learned from various travel and anthropological narratives. Therefore, Crusoe’s motivation to teach Friday English expresses the following intention: he wishes to install in Friday an awareness of the difference between his previous life and his current life after being rescued by Crusoe. The difference Crusoe attempts to instill in Friday is the belief in Christianity, which Crusoe believes will ultimately save him from his man-eating habit. *Robinson Crusoe* (205-230).

The tendency to pathologize the notion of difference or a different point of view expressed by the Other is closely examined by Franz Fanon in both *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*. Unlike Crusoe in *Robinson Crusoe*, Susan is less interested in exploring the idea of whether or not Friday is a cannibal. However, she engages in this racist point of view when Friday becomes too threatening to her or when she feels less powerful faced with his indifference. In other words, Susan engages in the problematic Western anthropological rhetoric when she sees Friday’s indifference as his expression of power over her. Yet, Friday will remain indifferent to all of Susan’s demands, which ceaselessly frustrates Susan. In order to ease her frustration, to seek tension relief, Susan returns to the anthropological depiction of the Other repeatedly and concludes that Friday’s refusal to provide emotional support can be explained by the fact that Africans do not value sympathies, and that Crusoe’s treatment of him worsened this “biological” tendency. Fanon examines this issue through elucidating the connection between the phenomenology that constructs racial difference and the practice of biological determinism. Susan is forming an ambivalent relationship to the Western anthropological discourse, which encourages her to view Friday’s muteness as a form of disorder. Fanon would argue that the information attained from Western anthropology links itself to the discourse of Western psychiatry where the Other’s refusal to participate in the practice of pathologizing their racial difference is often regarded as the evidence of his or her psychiatric illness. For an excellent critique of Western anthropology and the damage it created with regard to the perception of the Other, see Trinh.T Minh-ha. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing, Postcoloniality, and Feminism*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Foe left in his house. Susan imagines it be Foe's. She then gives Friday the smallest one and persuades him to play music with her. This gesture suggests that by holding the biggest flute, she is showing Friday that she has the bigger phallus, and thus he needs to obey her demand to share his internal world through playing music with her. Susan expects Friday to fulfill her demands unconditionally. Therefore, when he stops playing and does not recognize that he is supposed to be playing with her, not alone, or that he is not supposed to be dancing in trance, she becomes irritated. While feeling angered by Friday's non-responsiveness to her demands, Susan says the following to him:

“So, Friday,” I said, and smiled – “we are becoming musicians together.” And I raised my flute and blew his tune again, till a kind of contentment came over me. I thought: It is true. I am not conversing with Friday, but is this not as good? Is conversation not simply a species of music in which first the one takes up the refrain and then the other? Does it matter what the refrain of our conversation is any more than it matters what tune it is we play? And I asked myself further: Are not both music and conversation like love? Who would venture to say that what passed between lovers is of substance (I refer to their lovemaking, not their talk), yet is it not true that some thing is passed between them, back and forth, and they come away refreshed and healed for a while of their loneliness? As long as I have music in common with Friday, perhaps he and I will need no language.... ‘I could not restrain myself from varying the tune, first making one note into two half-notes, then changing two of the notes entirely, turning into a new tune and a pretty one too, so fresh to my ear that I was sure Friday could follow me. But no, Friday persisted in the old tune, and the two tunes played together formed no pleasing counterpoint, but on the contrary jangled and jarred (96-98).

The sound Friday produces is jangled and jarred, which represents the sound of the past. It is primitive and constrained, showing no potential for the movement towards the future, which Susan envisions as the place where he will utter the sounds of the English language. Susan's smile can be interpreted as an expression of her aggression towards Friday. Her insistence that playing music is as good as having a conversation demonstrates the following logic: if the utterance of sounds produces an emotional

reaction, then the communication has been achieved, even though the meaning behind the exchange of sounds cannot be articulated using linguistic codes.³⁰⁶

It is possible to read Susan's big flute, a flute that belongs to Foe, as standing in the place of the writerly pen, the tool that produces creative prose. However, Friday's flute, the smallest one, only utters empty signifiers. Susan explains the experience of playing flute with Friday in the following way: "The music we made was not pleasing: there was a subtle discord all the time, though we seemed to be playing the same notes. Yet our instruments were made to play together, else why were they in the same case?" (96). Susan's explanation suggests another possible reading: her wish to engage in the act of playing flute is metaphorically linked to her seeking sexual contact with Friday. However, Susan recognizes the impossibility of experiencing pleasure from having a conversation (or sexual intercourse) with Friday because he will not respond to her seduction. He will play as he wishes, completely ignoring her demand for communication. She becomes irritated again, and at this point her frustration forces her to stop playing her flute. She then notices that Friday was not even looking at her: his eyes were always closed. Susan recognizes that she does not even exist in the field of Friday's vision, but he is very much a part of her world.

Susan makes one last try before giving up on the idea of incorporating Friday's story into her book: she presents various sketches to him, but she is met with his vacant gaze, the same gaze she received when she was playing music with him. This deepens Susan's awareness that Friday exists in a world where she does not exist. Friday does not

³⁰⁶ If Susan's thought process indicates that music can replace language, what kind of emotional effect is she seeking to experience with Friday, and how is she to translate it into a form of narrative in her book? I will come back to this question later in the chapter.

express the need for psychical dependence on Susan, but she is absolutely dependent on him. She is aware of this reality, and this reality is inherently frustrating for her:

‘So now I knew that all the time I had stood there playing to Friday’s dancing, thinking he and I made a consort, he had been insensible to me. And indeed, when I stepped forward in some pique and grasped at him to halt the infernal spinning, he seemed to feel my touch no more than if it had been a fly’s; from which I concluded that he was in a trance of possession and his soul more in Africa than in Newington. Tears came to my eyes, I am ashamed to say; all the elation of my discovery that through the medium of music I might at last converse with Friday was dashed, and bitterly I began to recognize that it might not be mere dullness that kept him shut up in himself, nor the accident of the loss of his tongue, nor even an incapacity to distinguish speech from babbling, but a disdain for intercourse with me. Watching him whirling in his dance, I had to hold back and urge to strike him and tear the wig and robes away and thus rudely teach him he was not alone on this earth (98).

When Susan finally recognizes that Friday will never give into her force, she tries to get rid of him by putting him on a ship back to Africa, the imaginary land from whence he was brought to Crusoe’s island. However, in the end, she cannot accomplish this task because of the fear that he may not be able to safely return to his “homeland,” Africa, because the ship captain might instead take him to the Americas where he will once again become a slave.

In this moment, the reader will re-encounter Susan’s dependence on Friday and how much his presence is keenly felt in her psychic world. It is because of this that, even though her frustration makes her try to get rid of him, she is unable to carry out the act. This dynamic between the two indicates that even though Susan struggles to assert her power over Friday, she is the one who is dependent and therefore submissive and vulnerable to him.³⁰⁷ Coetzee does not let Susan discard Friday because it is his way of

³⁰⁷ According to Hegel, the dialectic between the master and the slave is the mutual recognition of each other’s existence in the eye of the other. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Trans. by J. B. Baillie, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1949) pp. 230-231. But, for Fanon, what the master wants from the slave is not

unveiling the unethical and racist practice of using the racialized Other as the thing, which is often done by white Western writers just like Susan. She is not allowed to disregard Friday even though he does not offer her any opportunity for the attainment of *jouissance*. Instead, Friday becomes a shadow of Susan: he haunts her, reminding her of her perverse relationship to the act of writing, and her wish to attain the phallus through engaging in writing a book.³⁰⁸

Tongue or Phallus: The Question of Truth and Substantiality

When her attempts to use Friday as the thing continue to be unsuccessful, she becomes increasingly irritated and angry. She then wonders if his tongue was cut off when he was an infant, “at the age when boy-children among the Jews are cut; and if so, how could he remember the loss?” (69). Although her fantasmatic thought shows a strong link to Western anthropology, while engaging in this exploration, her thoughts lead her to temporarily suspend her conviction that her story must be written based on her memories.³⁰⁹ However, after this exploration, Susan begins to oscillate between truth and fabrication defensively; as a result, her wish to know the difference between truth and fabrication, or memory and lie, begins to emerge as her defense against the Thing, against

recognition, but work. *Black Skin White Masks*. Trans. by Charles Lam Markman. (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967), p. 220, footnote 8.

³⁰⁸ Susan’s inability to get rid of Friday also speaks about the depth of the identificatory relationship she has developed with Friday, not as a person, but as an object characterized by his silence. In other words, Susan treats his silence as similar to her own struggle of being silenced because of her feminine gender. This thought process proves the working of her fantasmatic thought process.

³⁰⁹ Susan formulates questions such as whether or not Friday’s circumstance was unique to him, or whether it is the common practice of any tribe in Africa that the men are mute and speech is reserved for women. This statement suggests a pattern of working-through, since the question she is ceaselessly asking herself is whether or not women are allowed to speak since they do not have a penis. Susan is valuing truth and substance over fantasy and imagination, but she does not recognize that anthropology or anthropological exploration is evidence of an author who is engaged in his or her imagination and fantasy. In other words, while being engaged in the anthropological explanation, Susan is disavowing the truth that her problematic anthropological explanation is based on her imagination and fantasy. Anthropology is a collective view of how the Other behaves which is endorsed by the Western hegemonic view.

destitution and death. Susan struggles to hold onto the notion of truth so as to not let go of her grounding in reality. She wants to remain on the ground instead of going out to sea in her fantasmatic process because to be away from reality triggers the fear of being engulfed in the open sea. For Susan, wandering around, or drifting away into psychic oblivion instills the fear of self-annihilation. However, interestingly, while struggling to stay in reality, Susan still holds onto the fantasmatic conviction that her book should be written by Foe. This view indicates that Susan switches around what is realistic and what is fantasmatic, what helps her to become a writer and what does not.

Susan's thought indicates that female writers' ability to access creativity is significantly hindered by the demands that exist in the external world, which force women to take on gender-specific occupations. In other words, through Susan, Coetzee reveals the nature of writing as a masculine occupation. Perhaps, Susan's fetishistic thought to utilize Foe's writerly skills implies her realization that in order to survive in England, realistically speaking, she cannot afford to imagine or even to fantasize that she can be a writer. Therefore, Susan feels it is necessary to use Foe's writerly skills as the thing in order to save herself from encountering the Thing, the awareness of the death instinct that overwhelms her own sense of self-preservation against self-annihilation when she is faced with her strong desire to become a writer.³¹⁰ Yet, Susan cannot prevent herself from drifting into fantasy and imagination. She says: "Sometimes I wake up not knowing where I am. The world is full of islands, said Cruso once. His words ring truer every day" (71). If the world consists of many islands, England is one. Waking up in England is a form of reality, but within it various forms of fantasy can find their

³¹⁰For the discussion of this particular pull towards inertia facilitated by the death instinct, see Freud's *Beyond Pleasure Principle* (1920). S.E. 18.

expression. She can invent her reality by allowing her fantasy to take over; when that happens, England becomes Crusoe's island where she begins to collect the story that can overwrite the story of *Robinson Crusoe*. Susan identifies Foe as the one who will rescue her from the English Isles by supplying the skills she needs in order to turn her narrative into a book.

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Second Dyad: Susan and Foe, the site of the letter *a*

In the third section of the novel, Susan encounters Foe in person and begins the process of turning her memory, which exists as an internal voice, and the letters she wrote to Foe, into a book. Susan prepares herself to be the shadow of Foe so that her internal and ghostly writing will finally be transformed into masculine narrative. This process suggests that her subjectivity is now being subjected, but ironically; by forming a dyadic relationship with Foe, Susan will gradually realize the importance of learning how to translate her internal voice into a form of writing. Since Susan was unable to get rid of Friday, he has now become a shadow-like figure, following her wherever she goes. Susan expresses her thoughts associated with Friday's silence in the following way:

‘How are we ever to know what goes on in the heart of Friday? ... I turned to Friday, who has been squatting all the while by the door with his head on his knees. ‘Do you love me Friday?’ I called softly. Friday did not so much as raise his head. ‘We have lived too close for love, Mr Foe. Friday has grown to be my shadow. Do our shadows love us, for all that they are never parted from us?’ (115)

Although Susan continues to regard using of Foe's writerly skills as indispensable, when she finally sees him face to face her awareness of the danger associated with using Foe's

powerful pen begins to increase.³¹¹ Susan senses the danger associated with Foe taking over the writing process when he tells her that her story of the island is dull. She perceives his comment as an expression of his wish to change the content of her story. In order to prevent him from doing so, Susan tells him that Friday is withholding crucial information, and it is this manner through which she reintroduces him to Foe as the thing.³¹²

Susan enthusiastically expresses to Foe that the reason her story is dull is because she cannot describe why Friday lost his tongue, which is the part that should draw the attention of the reader. But Foe does not respond to her. His indifference frustrates Susan and forces her to talk to Foe in the following way:

‘The story of Friday’s tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday’s tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday (118).

When faced with Foe’s silence and his disregard of her explanation, Susan’s frustration turns into a symptom similar to a panic attack:

‘Mr. Foe,’ I proceeded, speaking with gathering difficulty, ‘when I lived in your house I would sometimes lie awake upstairs listening to the pulse of blood in my ears and to the silence from Friday below, a silence that rose up the stairway like smoke, like a welling of black smoke. Before long I could not breathe, I would feel I was stifling in my bed. My lungs, my heart, my head were full of black smoke. I had to spring up and open the curtain and put my head outside and breathe fresh air and see for myself that there were stars still in the sky (118).

³¹¹ In other words, by giving Foe distinctively different writing from Susan, Coetzee once again seems to challenge Daniel Defoe’s work. He does so by asserting that the creative work should not incorporate the notion of truth-telling or the writer’s religious beliefs or convictions, rather it should incorporate the writer’s imagination and fantasy.

³¹² This is an interesting moment. It seems that Coetzee is critiquing Defoe’s writing as repetitive and dull, but adding entertainment value to the story will not solve the problem, in fact it will create another problematic narrative. In this sense, Coetzee is strategically juxtaposing Defoe and Foe to indicate that they are both being an enemy to the creative process.

While residing at Foe's house Susan is faced with the power of Foe's writerly skills. She then experiences the fear that Foe has the power to erase her narrative entirely. This realization also sets in a form of self-annihilatory fear, the power to obliterate her subjectivity, history, and language. At this very moment Susan senses Foe's skills, his writerly phallus, the thing, turning into the fearful Thing. And in order to rescue herself from the Thing, she turns to Friday.³¹³

Fantasy Before the Incorporation of the Writerly Phallus

The story Susan chooses to tell to Foe is Friday's dancing ritual. She says when Friday dances, he wears nothing but Foe's robe and wig. In so doing, Susan introduces for the first time the idea that Friday's severed tongue is the real representation of his castrated body:

'For though I had seen Friday naked before, it had been only from a distance: on our island we had observed the decencies as far as we could, Friday not least of us.

'I have told you of the abhorrence I felt when Cruso opened Friday's mouth to show me he had no tongue. What Cruso wanted me to see, what I averted my eyes from seeing, was the thick stub at the back of the mouth, which ever afterwards I pictured to myself wagging and straining under the sway of emotion as Friday tried to utter himself, like a worm cut in half confronting itself in death-throes. From that night on I had continuously to fear that evidence of a yet more hideous mutilation might be thrust upon my sight.

'In the dance nothing was still and yet everything was still. The whirling robe was a scarlet bell settled upon Friday's shoulders and enclosing him; Friday was the dark pillar at its centre. What had been hidden from me was revealed. I saw; or, I should say, my eyes were open to what was present to them.

'I saw and believed I had seen, though afterwards I remembered Thomas, who also saw, but could not be brought to believe till he had put his hand in the wound (119-120).

³¹³ If Foe becomes the writer, Susan will be considered non-existent; it could mean she is dead. Although she fears self-annihilation, the act of having Foe as the writer will certainly erase her existence.

By marking Friday's body as lacking not only a tongue but also a penis, Susan is seeking to lure Foe into believing that her story is interesting.³¹⁴ In describing Friday's dancing ritual to Foe, Susan is offering Friday's "penis-less and tongue-less" body in order to save herself from encountering the obliterating power of Foe's writerly phallus.

However, Foe continues to remain indifferent to her seduction.

Susan experiences Foe's disinterest as frustrating, which is similar to how she experiences Friday's indifference to her demands. After experiencing the failure of seducing Foe with Friday's castrated body, Susan realizes that in front of Foe, she and Friday are both silenced, because they do not have the phallus. In Foe's presence, she, too, can become Friday, the subject whose narrative will be written by others. This realization frightens her. In order to get rid of this fearful association, Susan quickly senses the need to differentiate herself from Friday. In the following sentence Susan desperately explains to Foe the difference between her and Friday:

'Friday has no command of words and therefore no defense against being re-shaped day by day in conformity with the desire of others. I say he is a cannibal and he becomes a cannibal; I say he is a laundryman and he becomes a laundryman. What is the truth of Friday? You will respond: he is neither cannibal nor laundryman, these are mere names, they do not touch his essence, he is a substantial body, he is himself, Friday is Friday. But that is not so. No matter what he is to himself (is he anything to himself? –how can he tell us?), what he is to the world is what I make of him. Therefore the silence of Friday is a helpless silence. He is the child of his silence, a child unborn, a child waiting to be born that cannot be born. Whereas the silence I keep regarding Bahia and other matters is chosen

³¹⁴ At this moment in the novella, the reader is uncertain as to whether or not Susan is fabricating this story because she is sensing the possibility that Foe might obliterate her story. The only person who could support her description is Friday, but he will not do so. Faced with the impossibility of getting Friday to support her claim, Susan cleverly makes sure to introduce another person, Thomas, who stands in as a witness who, she insinuates, is able to substantiate her claim. In addition, the "Thomas" here can be regarded as a reference to the Biblical figure, St. Thomas, known as Doubting Thomas, who demanded to feel Jesus of Nazareth's wounds before believing in the resurrection.

and purposeful: it is my own silence. Bahia, I assert, is a world in itself, and Brazil an even greater world. Bahia and Brazil do not belong within an island story, they cannot be cramped into its confines (121-122).

Although Foe may regard Susan and Friday as keeping secrets, Susan argues that Friday's silence is absolute until someone offers a hand in interpreting what he might be saying. This description of Friday fits in with the description of a child who will learn to express his thoughts with the aid of the caretaker. He is waiting to be born as a speaking subject with the aid of a writer such as Susan and Foe.

Susan asserts that Foe's sole function is to provide the writerly skill. She asserts this view by calling him her "muse" (126). And, by explicitly describing Foe as a male-muse who possesses the writerly phallus, Susan disavows the crucial truth that it is not Foe, but Friday who is the real male-muse to her, which means Friday is the one who structures the logic behind the dyad between Susan and Foe; he is the one who drives the two by necessitating the negotiation with regard to what kind of story should be written. However, the significant realistic influence (not fetishistic influence) Friday has on the writing process consistently remains unarticulated, as if to suggest that Susan and Foe are only able to see him as the thing, not a subject who possesses the substantial skills and knowledge needed in order to produce a successful piece of writing. While being seduced by his writerly skills, Susan speaks to Foe in the following way:

'Do you know the story of the Muse, Mr Foe? The muse is a woman, a goddess, who visits poets in the night and begets stories upon them. In the accounts they give afterwards, the poets say that she comes in the hour of their deepest despair and touches them with sacred fire, after which their pens, that have been dry, flow. When I wrote my memoir for you, and saw how like the island it was, under my pen, dull and vacant without life, I wished that there were such a being as a male-Muse, a youthful god who visited authoresses in the night and made their pens flow. But now I know better. The Muse is both goddess and begetter. I was intended not to be the mother of my story, but to beget it. It is not I who am the intended, but

you. But why need I argue my case? When is it ever asked of a man who comes courting that he plead in syllogisms? Why should it be demanded of me?' (126)

Although experiencing the fear of facing Foe's power, Susan continues to hold onto her concrete belief that if she does not incorporate Foe's writerly skills, the thing, her speech will not become a narrative on the page; if that is the case, the transformation of her gender to masculinity cannot be actualized. Through the negotiation between Susan and Foe, Coetzee illustrates the danger associated with the narrative produced by the writer who is in the position of power. Such a writer can erase the voices of other writers including African and white female writers. However, Coetzee expresses a crucial difference between the two groups of other writers, white female writers and African writers. The difference suggests that while white women can write, African writers cannot.³¹⁵ Although the force of silencing is also at work for white female writers, their writing will gain recognition as long as they imitate canonical texts or write gender-specific narratives.

Creative Writing and the Experience of Perverse Pleasure

According to psychoanalytic theoretical observation, at the moment external reality becomes synonymous with the internal or psychic reality, the difference between what is internal and external is blurred. When the effect of blurring is applied to the act of writing (and also reading), creative writing works side by side with the psychic process

³¹⁵ Susan Van Zanten Gallagher writes the following:

Written at a time when black South Africans were not permitted to write their own lives – either politically, socially, or fictionally – *Foe* speaks to the realities of that silencing in its revision of the legendary story of Robinson Crusoe, a story with particular relevance to both the South African social situation and Coetzee's own literary situation (169).

A Story of South Africa: J. M. Coetzee's Fiction in Context. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991.

that is tied to psychosis, which produces perverse pleasure. However, what prevents the writer from becoming psychotic – in which the difference between fantasy and reality is entirely diminished – is the working of sublimation with which the blur becomes the site of creative expression.³¹⁶ Susan sees the ability to sublimate as a gift only given to male writers such as Foe. In other words, for her, the possession of sublimatory skills and the writerly phallus are synonymous.

In the following paragraph Foe expresses his familiarity with the usefulness of the blurring. He then tells Susan to recognize the danger associated with the power of the blurring that occurs while engaged in writing:

‘In a life of writing books, I have often, believe me, been lost in the maze of doubting. The trick I have leaned is to plant a sign or marker in the ground where I stand, so that in my future wonderings I shall have something to return to, and not get worse lost than I am. Having planted it, I press on; the more often I come back to the mark (which is a sign to myself of my blindness and incapacity), the more certainly I know I am lost, yet the more I am heartened too, to have found my way back.

‘Have you considered (and I will conclude here) that in your own wanderings you may, without knowing it, have left behind some such token for yourself; or, if you choose to believe you are not mistress of your life, that a token has been left behind on your behalf, which is the sign of blindness I have spoken of; and that, for lack of a better plan, your search for a way out of the maze – if you are indeed a-mazed or be-mazed – might start from that point and return to it as many times as are needed till you discover yourself to be saved?’ (135-6)

Although Foe encourages Susan to experience the blur, he simultaneously cautions against being lost in it too long. What the blurring does is to eliminate the ability to differentiate reality and fantasy, and the first indication of such loss is the loss of the

³¹⁶ Janine Chassequet-Smirgel argues the following: “The relationship between creation and perversion is enigmatic. Indeed, the creative process implies having recourse to sublimation. Now, sublimation makes use of the same instinctual energy as that which is directly released through perverse sexual energy” *Creativity and Perversion*. (London: Free Association Books, 1985), p. 89.

concept of time.³¹⁷ The timelessness of the day that Susan claims to have experienced on the island speaks about her experience of this blurring. Or, one can say that her experience on the island is similar to getting lost in the creative process and being unable to find the way back to her external reality. Foe informs Susan, and the reader, of what he does in order to prevent himself from getting lost in the process of writing – this is his way of defusing the blurring. However, despite Foe’s willingness to instruct, Susan continues to maintain her belief that she does not possess such skills. In her mind, learning about the writerly technique from Foe is still superfluous at this point, because she intends instead to use Foe’s writerly phallus as the thing to write her book.

However, approaching the middle of novella, Susan’s view of utilizing Foe’s writerly skills, or his writerly phallus becomes increasingly favorable only in her fantasy. In reality, Susan recognizes that Foe will obliterate her from the pages he will write. Before Susan and Foe copulate, her awareness begins to induce a panic-like state. In noticing Susan’s affect, Foe attempts to soothe her by offering advice so that she will calm herself down. He mentions that in making the effort to produce a narrative that is well received by the reader, letting go of the writer’s subjective convictions and views is inevitable. This remark can be read as his articulation of the link between writing and lying, the style of writing he is accustomed to producing, and, in expressing his point of view as a manner of suggestion, he convinces Susan to give in to his way.³¹⁸ In his description of the writing process, Susan is regarded as the Other. Foe’s argument

³¹⁷ In psychoanalysis the existence of reality is asserted by the agreement between the analyst and patient with regard to the analytic frame. As well, time and money are the two main forms of reality that emerge in analysis. See Freud’s papers on technique. See “On Beginning the Treatment: Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis” (1913) in *S. E.* 12, pp. 126-133.

³¹⁸ Dominic Head argues that with regard to Coetzee’s tendency to reject the privileging of textuality, the novella illustrates that Foe and Coetzee are in agreement with one another. However, my reading suggests that Coetzee aligns Foe with Defoe and himself with Friday. “The Maze of Doubting: Foe” in J. M. Coetzee. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.127.

suggests that writing cannot avoid committing violence upon the Other, the subject that exists in the story and for whom the reader's desire is being driven, because the writer's job is to gratify the reader. Foe tells Susan not to be doubtful of this writing process, and submit to the general law of what writing must do, which is to fabricate a story of the Other using his or her fantasy. Foe continues:

‘But if you cannot rid yourself of your doubts, I have something to say that may be of comfort. Let us confront our worst fear, which is that we have all of us been called into the world from a different order (which we have now forgotten) by a conjurer unknown to us, as you say I have conjured up your daughter and her companion (I have not). Then I ask nevertheless: Have we thereby lost our freedom? Are you, for one, any less mistress of your life? Do we of necessity become puppets in a story whose end is invisible to us, and towards which we are marched like condemned felons? You and I know, in our different ways, how rambling an occupation writing is; and conjuring is surely much the same (135).

Foe's speech suggests that inventing lies and telling truth go hand-in-hand because it is what everybody does automatically, without even being aware of it. His statement also indicates that if one orchestrates his or her lies, or lives in lies and truth simultaneously, which is the way of being in this world, then what is the problem when the author invents stories by using his or her fantasy and imagination? Although his statement is addressed to Susan as a form of inquiry, he does not await for her response, because it is a rhetorical question. According to his view, writing does not have to offer a site where open creative inquiries occur; instead, he views it as similar to what a rhetorical question accomplishes, meaning the question is answered by the question itself. In other words, for Foe, writing is a form of closed system, which is far from creativity and creative expressions.

Foe gives even an stronger argument about the link between inventing lies and telling truths when partaking in the act of writing. He suggests that writing should be conceptualized as living in stories, because there is no difference between fantasy and

reality as far as thoughts, imaginations, and fantasies are concerned. In this sense, the story the writer creates is the extension of his or her psychic experience, thus, while involved in creating fictional characters, the writer may begin seeing their characters taking over his or her external world. Foe continues:

‘We sit staring out the window, and a cloud shaped like a camel passes by, and before we know it our fantasy has whisked us away to the sands of Africa and our hero (who is no one but ourselves in disguise) is clashing scimitars with a Moorish brigand. A new cloud floats past in the form of sailing-ship, and in a trice we are cast ashore all woebegone on a desert isle. Have we cause to believe that the lives it is given us to live proceed with any more design than these whimsical adventures? (135)

This is the moment in which the writer’s fantasy becomes a form of reality, or his or her internal world meets the external world. This moment can be described as the moment when the writer experiences perverse pleasure. Foe’s approach to writing suggests that the writer must gratify the reader while simultaneously attaining perverse pleasure by entering into a fictional world where the difference between fantasy and reality (or between truth and lies) diminishes. In describing this process, Foe is suggesting to Susan that she should not feel troubled by what he said, because his suggestion points to the truth about the process of writing.

Susan’s insistence on writing a book based on her memory is significantly different from the style of writing Foe offers. Susan’s approach to writing initially appears as her defense against accessing her imagination and fantasy. Her concreteness and consequent resistance towards utilizing Foe’s writerly skills, which include the incorporation of his fantasies, emerged as a response to the fear of self-annihilation from living in England. As I mentioned previously, it seems that she is unable to utilize her imagination and fantasy because she fears that doing so will hinder her from satisfying

her basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter in England. And she is overwhelmed by the demands of her external environment and thus cannot follow Foe's suggestion to daydream or let go of her grounding in reality. However, she is developing growing awareness that utilizing Foe's writerly skills will, in the end, obliterate her point of view entirely. She is forced to choose: should she allow herself to be obliterated by Foe or should she face the demands placed upon her by living in England even though doing so triggers her fear of self-annihilation? Susan begins to resist Foe. And her resistance towards Foe's writerly advice is no longer found in her fear of prolonging her hallucinatory state via engagement in fantasy and imagination but rather it comes from her deepening awareness that Foe sees no wrong in violating the Other for the attainment of his own pleasure.

Reality After the Incorporation of the Writerly Phallus – The Encounter with the Thing

When Foe invites Susan to spend a night at his house, Susan immediately interprets to this invitation as an opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse with him. In remembering Kaplan's argument, this is literally the moment when the incorporation of Foe's writerly phallus will be granted.

I showed [Friday] his sleeping-place and drew the curtain on him. Foe doused the light and I heard him undressing. I hesitated awhile, wondering what is augured for the writing of my story that I should grow so intimate with its author. I heard the bedsprings creak. 'Good night, Friday,' I whispered – 'Pay no attention to your mistress and Mr. Foe, it is all for the good.' Then I undressed to my shift and let down my hair and crept under the bedclothes (137).

Just before they have sex, while lying awake on Foe's bed, silence falls upon Susan and Foe. Then, nervously, they start engaging in conversation about the merit of dreaming.

This topic reveals yet again the different point of views held by Susan and Foe with regard to what type of writing is truthful or substantial. Foe begins by asking the following question: “If we spent all our lives awake, would we be better people for it or worse?” (137). This suggests that Foe is recognizing the relationship between the dreams that occur in sleep and the writing of one who daydreams. However, what “it” refers to is the creative process, which becomes the foundation for writing. Foe continues with his questions:

‘Would it be better or worse, I mean,’ he went on, ‘if we were no longer to descend nightly into ourselves and meet what we meet there?’
 ‘And what might that be’ said I.
 ‘Our darker selves,’ said he. ‘Our darker selves, and other phantoms too.’ And then, abruptly: ‘Do you sleep, Susan?’ (137-8)

What Foe implies by “darker selves and other phantoms” is the existence of the internal thoughts that are being pushed away from the consciousness. They are dark and phantom-like because his conscious mind does not wish to know them. Therefore, his wish not to sleep indicates his resistance towards encountering his dark and phantom-like repressed wishes and desires in the dream world. Susan responds to Foe’s question by saying yes, she does, indeed, dream. Then Foe starts asking Susan what she sees in her dreams, especially, whether or not she sees the appearance of phantom-like figures in dreams:

‘I sleep very well, despite all,’ I replied.
 ‘And do you meet with phantoms in your sleep?’
 ‘I dream, but I do not call the figures phantoms that come to me in dreams.’
 ‘What are they then?’
 ‘They are memories, memories of my waking hours, broken and mingled and altered.’
 ‘And are they real?’
 ‘As real, or as little real, as the memories themselves’ (138).

Foe asks Susan to explain what “figures of phantoms” signify in her dreams. She responds by saying that although they are “broken and mingled and altered” figures in her dreams, who appear castrated because of the nature of the broken and mingled bodily disfiguration, are real, “as real or little real, as the memories themselves.” Here, Susan gives us her theory of memories, which is not based on the truth in a concrete sense. Dreams are like memories, containing the day’s residue. Therefore, dreams are not entirely fabrications, even though they appear in distorted forms that often make it difficult to locate the truth in them.

Susan’s reply suggests that she understands the hallucinatory nature of dreams.³¹⁹ She is showing openness to encountering the figures in the dreams, in contrast to Foe, who is resistant to dreaming. Although Susan previously argues that truth telling is the method with which her story should be written, here she gives her understanding that the truth, coming from her memory, can get distorted. In other words, conscious memories emerge in a form of distortion, which work alongside of the psychic mechanisms of censorship and forgetting. Psychoanalysis teaches us that what remains hidden underneath the surface, buried under the unconscious, or pushed away from the ego, is, indeed, a form of truth, which comes out in a distorted form.³²⁰ Interestingly, the exchange between Susan and Foe expresses their difference pertaining to the connection between dreaming and writing, and Susan expresses a Freudian point of view which

³¹⁹ Freud would argue that dreams contain wishes, especially infantile wishes, that are seeking fulfillment. In the above paragraph, Susan is showing her difficulty with dreaming that allows her to attain the fulfillment of infantile sexuality in a form of hallucination. However, it is also important to remember that her hallucination strikes her during the day when she engages in the process of thinking about incorporating Foe’s writerly phallus.

³²⁰ Freud argues that memories, especially ones that manifest on conscious levels have already gone through the work of censorship, thus their expressions are most likely distorted from the truth. Although it is impossible to get to the truth, since various censorships and resistances are at work, the investigation of truth (or revealing of one’s psychic reality) must be carried out in order to understand and undo the restriction symptoms create in one’s daily life. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1920) S. E. Vol. 5, Chapter 7.

indicates that dreams and creative writing engage in the similar psychic processes called hallucination. Ironically, Foe's writing begins to appear more concrete.

Although Susan demonstrates her awareness of the working of the psychic apparatus, she is still far from acknowledging her own writerly ability. Before they engage in sexual intercourse, Susan and Foe have yet another exchange. This time it is about the reason she sought him out. Susan mentions it is because she wanted his blood:

I pursue you with my own dull story, visiting it upon you now in your uttermost refuge. And I bring these women trailing after me, ghosts haunting a ghost, like fleas upon a flea. That is how it appears to you, does it not? 'And why should you be, as you put it, haunting me, Susan?' 'For your blood. Is that not why ghosts return: to drink the blood of the living?' (139)

Susan uses the adjective, "dull" in order to emphasize her feelings associated with her lack of writerly skills. However, the concept of writerly skills, or writing that is carried out by a writerly phallus, is increasingly appearing an unreal and phantom-like concept, starting to produce the imagery of her chasing ghosts. After hearing what Susan said, Foe does not say a word, instead, he responds to her by giving her a kiss on the lips; while doing so, he bites her lip. It is his act of silencing her via initiating sexual encounter, but in doing so he expresses his aggression towards her. Foe reminds Susan that it is, in fact, Susan's blood he is, and will be, tasting.

Although Susan mentions she is seeking Foe's blood, it is actually his semen that she is going to incorporate, which will turn the body of work into her offspring. In other words, she is not distinguishing the book from a child; this is another fetishistic thought process she is having. After the biting incident, Foe and Susan finally copulate. While Foe is upon her, Susan closes her eyes. She says the following: "[I try] to find my way back to the island, to the wind and wave-roar; but no, the island was lost, cut off from me

by a thousand leagues of watery waste” (139). Susan realizes that her fantasy before the copulation, to use Foe’s writerly phallus to complete the process of writing book, is no longer there. Instead she now senses that the copulation may create a negative and unexpected result because it did not take her back to the island. This realization begins instilling anxiety in her. Susan is now aware that in her fantasy, copulation was to give her the answer, but in reality, she is now experiencing creative numbness—the copulation did not fortify her vision of the island. The anxiety she is sensing pushes her to say the following to Foe:

‘Permit me,’ I whispered – ‘there is a privilege that comes with the first night, that I claim as mine.’... ‘This is the manner of the Muse when she visits her poets,’ I whispered, and felt some of the listlessness go out of my limbs.

‘A bracing ride,’ said Foe afterwards – ‘My very bones are jolted, I must catch my breath before we resume.’ ‘It is always a hard ride when the Muse pays her visits,’ I replied – ‘She must do whatever lies in her power to father her offspring’ (139-140).

Aside from the obvious association between a book and baby, there is a subtle gender switch that takes place in the above paragraph through the switch of the pronouns from “I” to “she.” Interestingly, after the sexual contact, Susan asserts the need to see Foe as her feminine muse, who will impregnate her with his magical phallus. Perhaps, it is possible to say that Susan attempts to see Foe as possessing a feminine body with a phallus, and this perception influences her way of looking at her own body and creativity. In other words, the gender switch indicates her projection of her own fetishistic body onto that of Foe, and in order to maintain this view, Foe’s body is forever necessary. It is in this manner that Foe serves as her fetish, her thing. Susan has taken the masculine role and is now beginning to use Foe to satisfy her desires.

Silence, Speech, and Language: Friday as Writer

After Susan and Foe have sex, she communicates to him that she is interested in rethinking how to treat the absoluteness of Friday's silence. The re-emergence of her interest in Friday suggests that Susan is sensing the danger associated with Foe's now-internalized phallus. Or, it could also mean that having incorporated Foe's phallus she once again returns to the question of how to use Friday as the thing, returning to the site of the letter *e*. However, Foe first tells Susan that Friday and his silence will exist in the story, which needs to be filled with the writer's imagination and fantasy. Once again, Foe expresses his idea that for him utilizing fantasy and imagination is an invitation to fabricate what is unknown, as Foe suggests:

‘In every story there is a silence, some sight concealed, some words unspoken, I believe. Till we have spoken the unspoken we have not come to the heart of the story. I ask: Why was Friday drawn into such deadly peril, given that life on the island was without peril, and then saved?’ (141)

Susan does not reply to Foe; instead she quietly experiences the following internal thought: “The question seemed fantastical. I had no answer” (141). Although she has incorporated Foe's writerly phallus, Susan's resistance to Foe's suggestion to treat Friday as a fictional character confirms that she does not wish to engage in her fantasy in the manner that Foe suggests. It is because for Foe writing a story while utilizing imagination and fantasy means inventing lies.³²¹

³²¹ Freud argues that the formation of fantasy is a compromise between consciousness and unconscious wishes, and it is a place where the concept of reality will be redefined to offer an alternative view of the world the subject occupies. For Freud, fantasies are substitutes for repressed memories that are not allowed to enter consciousness, thus the emergence of fantasies means that repressed memories are now turning into fantasies so as to seek expression. See “Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*” (1907) in *S. E.* 9, pp. 52-58.

As I mentioned previously, Susan experiences Friday's silence as triggering both the fear associated with the possible castration of her tongue and the frustration stemming from not knowing the story behind the lack of his tongue. These two affects are intertwined, because in order for Susan to attain a sense of relief from castration fear, the story behind his tongue must be thought as unvailible. When seeing Susan faced with fear and frustration regarding the lack of Friday's tongue, Foe calmly mentions that Friday and the silence surrounding his severed tongue should be considered as the "heart of the story," which is also the "eye" of the story. It is the site to which the writer draws the reader:

‘I said the heart of the story,’ resumed Foe, ‘but I should have said the eye, the eye of the story. Friday rows his log of wood across the dark pupil – or the dead socket – of an eye standing up at him from the floor of the sea. He rows across it and is safe. To us he leaves the task of descending into that eye. Otherwise, like him, we sail across the surface and come ashore none the wiser, and resume our old lives, and sleep without dreaming, like babes.’

‘Or like a mouth,’ said I. ‘Friday sailed all unwitting across a great mouth, or beak as you call it, that stood open to devour him. It is for us to descend into the mouth (since we speak in figures). It is for us to open Friday's mouth and hear what it holds: silence, perhaps, or a roar, like the roar of a seashell held to the ear’ (141-142).³²²

Foe agrees: "That, too," then he continues: "I intended something else; but that too. We must make Friday's silence speak, as well as the silence surrounding Friday" (142).

These passages indicate that Foe's definition of silence is different from Susan's. Foe's point of view confirms that Friday's silence should be viewed as an invitation for the writer to make up his story while for Susan the silence provokes a sense of despair; it indicates impossibility. Susan sees that Foe's approach to Friday's silence does not concern Friday. By saying, "We must make Friday's silence speak, as well as the silence

³²² The imagery of an eye that is expressed here and Friday's possible reaction against Foe's effort to speak for him will be addressed later when we address Friday's drawing a picture of eyes on a sheet of paper.

surrounding Friday” (142), Foe is once again suggesting that the story of how Friday lost his tongue should be written using the mechanism of fabrication. When Susan hears this statement, she becomes confused because she is uncertain to whose fantasies and imaginations Foe is referring. Is he going to write the narrative of Friday’s silence? Is she going to allow him to obliterate Friday’s story? She responds in the following way:

‘But who will do it?’ I asked. ‘It is easy enough to lie in bed and say what must be done, but who will dive into the wreck? On the island I told Crusoe it should be Friday, with a rope about his middle for safety. But if Friday cannot tell us what he sees, is Friday in my story any more than a figuring (or pre-figuring) of another diver?’ (142)

Foe does not reply to Susan’s inquiry. Susan continues with her response. She insists she will not write the story the way Foe suggests. Friday’s silence will remain absolute, and there is not much she can do about it:

‘All my efforts to bring Friday to speech, or to bring speech to Friday, have failed,’ said I. ‘He utters himself only in music and dancing, which are of speech as cries and shouts are to words. There are times when I ask myself whether in his earlier life he had the slightest mastery of language, whether he knows what kind of thing language is’ (142).

Susan assumes that if she succeeds in having Friday speak, then her book will be written in a way that resists the force of fabrication. Her persistent attempts gradually instill an alternate view in Foe. He begins wondering whether Friday may be able to learn how to write, through which he maybe able to relate his story. He asks Susan if she has shown Friday how to write. Susan says no and explains the reason in the following way: “Letters are the mirror of words.... Even when we seem to write in silence, our writing is the manifest of a speech spoken within ourselves or to ourselves” (142). Then Susan makes a significant comment: “If he writes, he employs a secret writing, which it is not given to us, who are part of that writing, to read” (143).

Her statement points out the existence of her internal understanding that even though Friday might be able to learn how to write letters, what he will share may be undecipherable by the consciousness of the white reader. What he utters with signifiers cannot be matched with signified. Foe responds to Susan in the following way:

‘We cannot read it, I agree, that was part of my meaning, since we are that which he writes. We, or some of us: it is possible that some of us are not written, but merely are; or else (I think principally of Friday) are written by another and darker author. Nevertheless, God’s writing stands as an instance of a writing without speech. Speech is but a means through which the word may be uttered, it is not the word itself. Friday has no speech, but he has fingers, and those fingers shall be his means. Even if he had no fingers, even if the slaves had lopped them all off, he can hold a stick of charcoal between his toes, or between his teeth, like the beggars on the Strand. The waterskater, that is an insect and dumb, traces the name of God on the surfaces of ponds, or so the Arabians say. None is so deprived that he cannot write’ (143-44).³²³

Foe’s statement, “Friday has not speech, but he has fingers” reminds Susan of a perverse view that Friday has other body parts, which can function as the substitute for his tongue. If this view is put to practice, it is possible to think that Friday is not entirely incapable of expressing his thoughts, ideas, and memories in writing. When Susan hears Foe’s suggestion that Friday might be able to learn how to write, she remembers Cruso and the way she communicated with him.

As with Foe, Cruso was someone with whom she could not argue, especially on the issue of remembering and forgetting.³²⁴ Therefore, the association between Foe and

³²³ A close reading of the notion, “A writing without speech” will be offered when I examine the meaning behind Friday’s drawing.

³²⁴ Since Susan could not locate Cruso’s diary on the island, she asked Cruso when he was to be rescued one day, whether or not he would regret not keeping a record of his years on the island. Cruso responded to Susan vehemently. He said: “Nothing is forgotten.” Then he said; “Nothing I have forgotten is worth the remembering.” Susan responded by saying that it was “[O]ur nature to forget as it is our nature to grow old and pass away.” Susan said to Cruso that not keeping his diary might fail to set his story aside from other stories of sea travels. To this Cruso responds: “I will leave behind my terraces and walls. They will be enough. They will be more than enough.” Cruso’s intention was to mark his existence on the island by the terraces and walls, and the story the visitors would tell are entirely up to them. Susan could not understand

Cruso produces a reaction in Susan, which ends up making her hold her tongue so as to silence herself. Susan's gesture signifies the act of biting her tongue, which once again links her to Friday's tonguelessness. Foe then makes an astonishing statement about the existence of "darker author." In this statement, Coetzee leaves an impression that it is Friday, not Foe, who is the writer in the story. Once Friday begins to write, it is perhaps close to the way "God" intended, he will stand as the powerful writer because he will tell the truth. Despite this powerful wish, Friday's response ends in a rather unexpected manner. In response to Susan's attempt, Friday writes the letters, *s-h* on the page, seemingly shushing her while not letting go of the pencil (146). Susan says the following after this experience:

Long and hard I stared at him, till he lowered his eyelids and shut his eyes. Was it possible for anyone, however benighted by a lifetime of dumb servitude, to be as stupid as Friday seemed? Could it be that somewhere within him he was laughing at my efforts to bring him nearer to a state of speech? I reached out and took him by the chin and turned his face towards me. His eyelids opened. Somewhere in the deepest recesses of those black pupils was there a spark of mockery? I could not see it. But if it were there, would it not be an African spark, dark to my English eye? I sighed. 'Come Friday,' I said, 'let us return to our master and show him how we have fared in our studies' (146).

Susan sees Friday's act as the assertion of his power. She feels threatened by it, but her experience of fear turns into anger and frustration, which forces her to seek Foe, the English writer with the potent writerly phallus, so as to use him in order to stop Friday from asserting his power over her. Susan communicates to Foe that Friday would not learn. To this, Foe produces a general remark that Friday's refusal is something not

the meaning of this statement. She said: "As for myself, I wondered who would cross the ocean to see terraces and walls, of which we surely had an abundance at home" (17-18). But, this internal thought is something that she decides not to disclose. It is because she was aware that Cruso will not understand her point of view. In this exchange Coetzee demonstrates that Cruso does not care to tell his story based on his memories because even if he did, what he tells will be distorted.

unique to him, but, in fact, happens to anyone who is learning the process of writing. Foe says: “If you have planted a seed, that is progress enough, for the time being. Let us persevere: Friday may yet surprise us” (147).³²⁵

Although Susan listens to Foe attentively, she does not see Friday’s refusal in the way Foe describes: Friday’s silence provokes anger in Susan because to her he is an “African” and therefore supposed to be submissive to her. In order to soothe herself, she attempts to decipher the meaning behind Friday’s silence by engaging in a problematic anthropological explanation, which she uses in order to reassert her power as a Westerner. Her act speaks about her wish to get rid of her persistent frustration when the racialized Other refuses to submit to her commands. While Foe is convincing Susan to be patient with Friday’s learning process, Friday sits on the mat with the slate that Susan was using when she was teaching him how to write letters. He then shows her that he is the one who is in control, but how he does this is something she cannot reconstruct and show to Foe. Susan describes what she saw in the slate:

Glancing over [Friday’s] shoulder, I saw he was filling [the slate] with a design of, as it seemed, leaves and flowers. But when I came closer I saw the leaves were eyes, open eyes, each set upon a human foot: row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes.

I reached out to take the slate, to show it to Foe, but Friday held tight to it. ‘Give! Give me the slate, Friday!’ I commanded. Whereupon, instead of obeying me, Friday put three fingers into his mouth and wet them with spittle and rubbed the slate clean (147).

³²⁵ Another way read this paragraph is to notice how Foe openly treats Friday as a writer who is actively engaged in the act of writing. Susan V. Gallagher reminds us that *Foe* was written at a time when black South Africans were not permitted to write about their own lives, either in political, social and/or fictional ways. She argues that *Foe*, thus, not only speaks about the realities of those writers who are silenced under apartheid, but also, through Susan Barton, Coetzee unveils the world the silenced occupied. Susan Van Zanten. *A Story of South Africa: J. M. Coetzee’s Fiction in Context*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1991.

He draws rows of open eyes set upon a human foot. The interpretation of such imagery cannot be carried out without utilizing fantasy and imagination, but she knows that if she utilizes her interpretation she will end up engaging in fabrication. However, before allowing Susan to carry on her thoughts, the exploration of the meaning behind the drawing, Friday erases the picture entirely. As a result, Susan is now unable to demonstrate what Friday did to Foe, and she realizes that whatever she will say cannot be proven by any evidence. Through describing Friday's action, Coetzee deconstructs the power dynamics that automatically grant the white subject the privilege of making up the story of the racialized Other. What Friday did will be stored in Susan as a form of trace, but she will not be able to claim it as a form of truth because no one else can substantiate her claim. Therefore, what she communicates might be interpreted as a form of her fantasy, hence it could be argued that it never took place. At this moment, Susan truly witnesses the day-to-day experience of the racialized Other, whose experience cannot enter the dominant cultural imaginary imagery of the West. Interestingly, Friday's drawing—though it might be more appropriate to call it his writing—now exists in Susan's psyche where it resists interpretation.

Through the act of erasing his writing, Friday poignantly marks his agency. He then refuses Susan's perverse need to know what is internal to him so that she can gratify herself.³²⁶ Then the power dynamics between Susan and Friday begin to shift. Susan cries

³²⁶ Perhaps Coetzee makes the point that the articulation of the history of oppression carried out on the Other often does not enter the mind of the oppressor. As the passage indicates, the essential part of Friday's expression does not catch Susan's attention. One way to read this passage is to regard Friday's silence as the expression of the impossibility associated with the act of speaking – he determines that to speak about his thoughts and ideas to Susan is futile. She is too invested in her wish to use Friday's speech so as to gratify herself; therefore, she is incapable of hearing his self-expression as a way of asserting his point of view. In other words, Susan's point of view suggests that Friday is only useful so far as he can become her thing. For an excellent articulation of the way in which the speech of the Other fails to enter the dominant cultural imagery, see Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *In Marxism and the Interpretation of*

to Foe and says the following: “‘Mr. Foe, I must have my freedom!’ ... ‘It is becoming more than I can bear! It is worse than the island! ... I walk with him, I eat with him, he watches me while I sleep. If I cannot be free of him I will stifle!’” (147-148). Foe responds to Susan by encouraging her to use Friday’s muteness to her advantage because she can then tell her own story as she wishes it told. Needless to say this advice points to the violence the canonical writer creates upon the racialized Other. This advice stirs a chain of reactions between the two of them, because Susan resists what Foe encourages, and her resistance stems from the peculiar identification she has formed with Friday. However, she is also aware of the need to get rid of Friday because otherwise he will continue to frustrate her by refusing to submit to her will.

Coetzee links Susan and Friday closely together, making them almost inseparable. After having sex, Foe eventually falls asleep but Susan stays awake.³²⁷ Susan wonders whether the incorporation of Foe’s phallus means he will now take over her internal world. While fearing the answer to this question, she goes to find Friday, who is sleeping in the dark alcove. In Susan’s mind, if she is able to locate Friday, who has become her shadow, she will know she still exists as a differentiated subject from Foe. By linking Susan and Friday closely Coetzee continues to problematize Susan’s need for Friday.³²⁸ While Susan is rethinking Foe’s writerly phallus as the thing, Friday’s lack of tongue continues to trigger fear in Susan.³²⁹ She wonders that just as she is, he, too, is a writer

Culture. Edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988

³²⁷ Despite Susan having indicated to Foe earlier that she does not have trouble sleeping.

³²⁸ For Melanie Klein, ambivalence is the affect that combines the two extreme emotions: love and hate. See “Love, Guilt and Reparation” in *Love, Hate and Reparation*. London: Hogarth, 1936.

³²⁹ Donald Winnicott uses the term “transitional object” to define children’s use of an object that represents his or her primary object: the mother. Children do so in order to soothe themselves from the anxiety that comes from being alone in the world, and when they have successfully worked through the fear, they are able to let go of the transitional object. It is possible to regard Susan’s approach to Friday as her wish to

with substantial stories, but he is not allowed expression. Susan must be with Friday in order to rediscover herself.³³⁰

When Susan opens the curtain of the alcove and notices Friday's presence in the darkness, for a brief moment she wonders if Friday is asleep or lying awake, staring at her face. In the darkness Susan cannot locate his gaze; she then produces the specific association between the dark room and Friday's tongue-less mouth and the darkness of his throat. Susan realizes how lightly Friday breathes as compared to Foe, who has a tongue that produces sounds and meanings. This is another moment when Foe and Friday are being juxtaposed—two men with whom she has formed dyadic relationships in order to become a writer. Susan notices Foe's potency through his breathing contrasted with Friday's lack of a writerly phallus. However, in the darkness Susan recognizes Friday's scent, which reminds her of "woodsmoke," reminding her of the existence of the story he will not tell. This realization makes Susan drowsy. The scent of Friday expresses content that surpasses language—after all, linguistic codes cannot articulate everything there is to be articulated. However, concurrently, the naming Susan's experience of the scent is impossible because the act of naming is met with a powerful resistance, powerful enough

turn him into her transitional object. However, the difference between what constitutes a fetish object and what is a transitional object requires a careful attention here. In order for the object to function as a fetish object (or the thing), the utilization of it must be linked to the process of disavowal of the fear that accompanies the Thing. In other words, as long as the thing is being utilized, the subject perceives that he or she can avoid encountering the anxiety that is attached to the death instinct. (Here, I am conceptualizing the Thing not as castration anxiety, but as the anxiety that is attached to death instincts in general.) On the other hand, the utilization of the transitional object allows a child to step into the world as an independent subject, and it is needed until the child establishes his or her relationship to the world. The transitional object carries the shadow of the primary object, but the utilization of a fetish object does not express the subject's wish to maintain his or her relationship to the primary object. For a fetishist, the thing replaces human contact, whereas the transitional object is a representation of the child's wish to maintain human contact. Sigmund Freud. "On Fetishism" (1927) in *S. E. Vol. 21*. Donald Winnicott. "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" (1951) "The Use of the Object and Relating Through Identifications" (1969) in *Playing and Reality*. New York and London: Routledge, 1989. Karl Marx. "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" In *Capital*. (New York: International Publishers), 1967, pp. 76-87.

³³⁰ There is also a narcissistic element in Susan's identification with Friday, because her ability to attain self-other differentiation is lacking. This element can also be seen as an expression of perversion.

to make her drowsy, and resistance is at work because of the scent's prominent link to her unconscious wish. The entrance into the sphere in which her fantasy is linked to unconscious meanings is foreclosed upon because it is connected to an unconscious wish of which Susan does not want to become aware. However, in dreams she will be able to seek fulfillment of her unconscious wish. Therefore Susan's experience of drowsiness is not only the mark of her resistance but it is also her act of entering into a hypnotic state, the space between consciousness and unconsciousness, in order to seek fulfillment of her unconscious wish, which, Freud would suggest, contains both sexual and aggressive materials.

What Susan does not wish to be mindful of is Friday's humanity, because if she were she would lose the opportunity to use him when she feels the need to protect herself against the fear of encountering the Thing. Therefore Susan's usage of Friday as the thing requires her psychic commitment to regarding Friday as not a human subject—he needs to exist as a fantasmatic form, not a real person. However, her act of disregarding Friday's humanity is not only connected to her wish to utilize him as her defense against the Thing, it also originates from her true sexual and aggressive feelings towards him—when she regards him as a person she wants to have sex with him and she wants to hurt him. Susan disavows her wish to violate Friday by engaging in sexual or aggressive acts because her superego does not allow it: as a white woman, the gendered Other in England, she is aware of the effect of both physical and psychological violence. Therefore, although a part of her wants to give into her own fantasmatic wish, another part of her wants to prevent her from hurting Friday as English men would normally do. These two selves can be explained as her self-awareness to speak about the truth from her

own perspective as a woman, and her fantasmatic wish to identify herself as a phallic woman. The conflict between the two parts of herself also creates drowsiness, therefore, by entering into the hypnotic space, she can temporarily avoid experiencing the tension arising from this conflict. The hypnotic state creates longing for Cruso's island. She thus closes the curtain in Friday's alcove and goes back to Foe's bed. She then immediately falls asleep as if to return to the island in her dreams.

In the morning Susan and Foe discuss the function of Friday's existence in Susan's life. Foe reminds Susan of the reality that, despite her refusal to believe that he is not her slave, Friday is, indeed, under her subjection. After hearing Foe's comment, she reacts against him vehemently. At this moment her feelings towards Foe's approach to writing come out: "As long as you close your ears to me, misunderstanding every word I say as a word of slavery, poisoned, do you serve me any better than the slavers served Friday when they robbed him to his tongue?" (150). To this Foe replies "[he] would not rob you of your tongue for anything, Susan" (150). He then suggests that she go out of the house to explore what is outside and, when she comes back from her exploration, to tell him what she saw. She passively accepts Foe's suggestion, and while she is strolling Susan begins experiencing internal thoughts:

I was wrong, I knew, to blame my state on Friday. If he was not a slave, was he nevertheless not the helpless captive of my desire to have our story told? How did he differ from one of the wild Indians whom explorers bring back with them, in a cargo of parakeets and golden idols and indigo and skins of panthers, to show they have truly been to the Americas? And might not Foe be a kind of captive, too? I had thought him dilatory. But might the truth not be instead that he had laboured all these months to move a rock so heavy no man alive could budge it; that the pages I saw issuing from his pen were not idle tales of courtesans and grenadiers, as I supposed, but the same story over and over, in version after version, stillborn every time: the story of the island, as lifeless from his hand as from mine? (150-151)

When Susan returns from her walk, she sees a man seated at Foe's table. She soon realizes that it is not Foe – it is Friday, who is engaged in writing. Friday is wearing Foe's robes on his back and Foe's wig, "filthy as a bird's nest, sitting on his head" (151). This scene can be interpreted as Friday mimicking Foe, but it could also be read as Coetzee's attempt to take away the power that is granted to Defoe. Friday is engaged in writing, but his writing and the writings of other African writers are perpetually being silenced by the makers of canonical books, who continue to treat Defoe's text as the master narrative and disregard writings that express the point of view of the Other. Foe gestures to Susan to pay attention to Friday, who is learning how to write. She indicates to Foe that Friday is writing, but he is writing only one letter, the letter *o*. After hearing this, Foe says, "It is a beginning."... "Tomorrow you must teach him *a*" (152).³³¹

* * *

The Third Dyad: Susan and Coetzee, the site of the letter *o*

The letter *a* signifies Foe's approach to writing, which is facilitated by the act of fabrication; however, underneath the letter *a*, various information that has been censored and erased still remains. It is the site that quietly reminds the subject of the existence of such contents. When Susan sees Friday writing the letter *o*, she is aware that he is not

³³¹ The utterance of the letter O (capitalized) in *Robinson Crusoe* has a specific function. Crusoe uses it to express his devotion and prayer to God. And when he utters the word, Friday imitates him. However, in Friday there exists no presence of God, thus, there is no need to express his devotion to him. Crusoe's interaction with Friday leads him to realize that although Friday does not recognize the Christian God, he regards Benamuckee as god. The communication between the two of them is a one-way street – Crusoe is interpreting Friday's words in order to fit his own fantasy and imagination. Both them end up uttering O, but the only one who is expressing his devotion to God is Crusoe. What emotion and sentiment Friday is expressing with it cannot be interpreted beyond the fact that he is doing what Crusoe is expecting him to do. *Robinson Crusoe*. Pp. 192-193 and 218-226.

learning to write, rather he is already engaged in the act of writing. The letter *o*, open in the middle, represents his mouth without a tongue, elucidating a type of writing that refuses linguistic intervention or interpretation by signifiers. One example of this type of writing that Friday did is the drawing of the eye upon the foot. The reason letter *o* is contrasted with the letter *a* is that the act of interpretation inevitably produces fabrication. Therefore, interpretation occurs in the site of the letter *a*.³³² Friday is writing a story based on the sound he is able to produce, which is a narrative that is represented by a hole, a mouth without a tongue, where wind and air pass through into darkness. It is the story of Friday, and it is the story that he writes, but to which neither Susan nor Foe will gain access. It is useful to reiterate the functions of the three letters, *a*, *e*, and *o* in the following way: the letter *a* speaks about the force of fabrication, the *e* indicates the location of memories and truth that are either erased entirely or by replaced by the *a*, and finally, the *o* represents the writing that refuses interpretation by language: it occurs in the site where the psychic reality of the author that emerges in the writing refuses the reader's wish to attain gratification. In this manner Coetzee allows us to see that it is Friday who is the writer in the story, and both Susan and Foe are the reader, struggling to gain access to his psyche so as to attain gratification. Friday's writing is not readable to the reader who seeks to benefit from the hegemony of the Western world. Friday's writing remains only readable to those who share his struggles of not being allowed to tell or write critically about the hegemony of the West, which subjugates individuals based on racial and gender difference.

³³² Earlier, we noted the significance of the letter *a* in Susan's last name. The letter *a* indicates the location of certain history that is being omitted due to the existence of hegemonic order. It is the location where the truth is hidden, however, digging it up requires the act of interpretation, which often creates misinterpretation, or, in a worst-case scenario, fabrication.

If Susan were to engage in the process of writing, she must question the effect of language upon her psychic process (or vice versa). Through her interactions with Friday, she learns that what appears as truly substantial writing is what remains internal to her. The dyadic relationships Susan developed with both Friday and Foe eventually lead her to this realization. Coetzee cuts this chain of fetishistic relationships when Susan tries to enter into the world comprised by the letter *o*, and in so doing her identification shifts from Foe, the writer of the canonical master narrative, to herself as a writer. In this way Susan encounters the idea of the writer who occupies the place of the letter *o*.

Through Friday's eye-upon foot picture and writing of the letter *o*, Coetzee forces Susan to consider what constitutes internal writing, how she should name the writing that transforms what is internal to what is readable. He also asks her to question in what way she can responsibly express the content that remains in secrecy and silence, as well as what can be thought of as writing that does not involve the practice of silencing the Other by racializing him (or her). This task indicates that Susan must inaugurate the negotiation between the site of preconscious memory (the location of the letter *e*, which speaks about the act of erasure) and that of imagination and fantasy (the location of the letter *o* that refuses the insertion via language). By contrast, Foe occupies the site of *a* (the locus of fabrication where the canonical writer is at work). If Susan were to write while paying attention to this negotiation, the content of her writing would emerge in a manner similar to Friday's writing, dancing, playing of the flute, drawing of the eye-upon-foot picture, and drawing of the letter *o*. At the end of the third section of the book, Susan comes across the realization that, although she fears to enter the world of blurring, the site of the letter *o*, the place of undifferentiation between fantasy and reality, and the world in which

the interpretation via language is often refused, she must enter this site in order to engage in the act of writing because it is where creative expression occurs.

In the last section of the novel, the pronoun, “I” emerges while the quotations, which existed throughout the previous chapters, entirely disappear.³³³ This change indicates Susan’s assertion of her subjectivity as a writer. This last section of the book offers a resolution to the question of what type of writing a writer like Susan Barton should produce, without seeking to utilize Friday or Foe, whichever represents her fetish, the thing. She will engage her internal world via accessing her fantasy while refusing to fulfill the reader’s demand. It is possible to say that writing that fulfills the reader’s demands (or gratifies his or her wish) is regarded as readable, and what is readable is often automatically linked to canonicity.³³⁴ Until the final section of the novella, Susan’s approach to her writing was to make it readable and canonical using Foe. Coetzee juxtaposes his opinion against Foe as the canonical writer, claiming that the notion of substantiality attached to writing does not have to anticipate the presence of the reader. In Coetzee’s view, substantial writing is almost dream-like, it consists of narratives that simultaneously refuse the insertion of the reader’s and other writers’ expectations because otherwise the writer’s motivation is automatically linked to canonicity.

³³³ Derek Attridge’s reading suggests that the reader will not know to whom the pronoun “I” belongs. He writes: “[T]he narrator of the closing section (what name do we use? – Susan Barton, Daniel Foe, Daniel Defoe, J. M. Coetzee, our own?) has made the last of many attempts to get Friday to speak.” *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* (67). Denis Donoghue argues that the last section of the novella attempts to reach all of the silenced subjects. “Her Man Friday.” Review of *Foe*. New York Times Book Review 22 Feb. 1987: I, 26-27. Jane Gardam and Maureen Nicholson agree with each other that the pronoun I is Coetzee himself. Jane Gardam. “The Only Story.” Sunday Times Review 7 September 1986: 49; Maureen Nicholson. “If I Make the Air Around Him Thick with Words: J. M. Coetzee’s Foe” in *West Coast Review* 21.4 (1987): 52-58. However, my reading suggests that the pronoun I belongs to Susan Barton.

³³⁴ In this section of the novel, the narrative is seemingly disorganized or hallucinatory, representing a regressive quality. According to Freud, such a narrative could be regarded as displaying the existence of latent content, pointing out repressed memories that are closely linked to infantile sexual wishes.

In addition, although Susan regards herself as a writer, her narrative in the last section of the book keenly indicates the fact that in Susan's psyche female gender appears deformed. The woman's face is covered and her body is weightless. This description elucidates the view that Susan sees women as invisible and insubstantial, which confirms her wish to obtain a phallus by incorporating Foe's writerly phallus (153-157). Through describing Susan's psychic world in this particular way, Coetzee indicates that true writing should not involve in the masking of deformity via the utilization of the writerly phallus (or the thing). For Coetzee true writing is a creative expression that exposes the writer's psychic representation of his or her own subjectivity, even though it seems to be deformed, invisible, or weightless, as in the case of Susan. Furthermore, Susan needs to articulate the underlying reason she perceives her body in this particular way. In other words, through articulating her perception of her gender difference, she must alter her perceptive knowledge to knowledge that is linked to reality, which speaks about the nature of the hegemonic order that produces gender difference.

For Coetzee, when the writer offers prose, the reader inevitably begins rewriting the prose though engaging in the act of reading. And in doing so, he seems to argue that, although the reader seeks to enter the psychic world of the author, the two psyches, the writer's and the reader's, should remain forever differentiated. Perhaps, to Coetzee, writing that offers such an experience will oblige the reader to challenge the pull towards his or her psychic world rather than entering into that of the writer, and the reader's experience of the tension between the two is what the writing should accomplish. In the final section of the novella, Susan becomes a writer who engages in this manner of writing.

In the closing it can be noted that it is possible to read the ending of the book as the final stage in which Susan's identification to Friday is finally completed. However, this opinion expresses rather a violent view since it does not allow Friday to break away from his function as the thing to Susan. As the thing, Friday is still supplying the element that is lacking in Susan. This view locks Friday as Susan's fetish, instead of her realizing the inevitable lack that exists in reality and learning to tolerate it. My reading suggests that although Coetzee makes Friday function as the racialized Other towards whom Susan's desire is driven, he makes Friday's indifference as the tool with which to cut the chain of her fetishistic thought process. Although encountering Friday's indifference consistently reminds Susan of her various fears, of which some are fantasmatic (fear associated with castration of her tongue) and others are not (fear of self-annihilation when faced with gender discrimination), it forces her to become a feminine writer, whose internal world is full of imaginative and fantasmatic contents that can stand on their own without the incorporation and introjection of the masculine gender. In this way, through Friday's indifference, Coetzee instructs Susan how to be an author. Perhaps, he is sending a message that not engaging in the practice of racializing the Other is beneficial for all parties involved. In doing so, Coetzee suddenly emerges as not only a critic who goes beyond his responsibility to offer a writing that is critical of canonicity, but also as a psychoanalyst, who helps Susan to disengage from the practice of fetishism. He illustrates his ethical stance, which emphasizes his refusal to write for Friday, or the racialized Other. In *Foe* he expresses his commitment to write about this practice, the practice of racialization that is a part of the canonicity, and to demand that this practice must not be a part of the act of writing.

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