

ABSTRACT

“Everything’s a Story”:
Orphanhood, Trauma, and Narrative in Twentieth-Century Fiction

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Orphaned characters abound in twentieth-century fiction, but critical studies of the significance of orphanhood are few and far between. Moreover, those that do exist fail to recognize the traumatic import of the orphaned experience, reading orphaned characters as historically or narratively important with little consideration of the psychological effect of their separation from their biological parents. In order to address that gap in criticism, this study identifies the traumatic nature of the orphan experience as established by attachment theory, arguing that literary orphanhood demonstrates the significance of narrative as a means of overcoming traumatic experience.

The chapters in this study consider the significance of orphanhood as traumatic experience in a variety of works. Chapter One examines the structure of children’s orphan stories in Frances Hodgson Burnet’s *A Little Princess*, C. S. Lewis’s *The Horse and His Boy*, and Katherine Patterson’s *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. Chapter Two examines gender differences in depictions of orphaned characters in Edith Wharton’s *The House of Mirth*, E. M. Forster’s *Howards End*, Evelyn Waugh’s *Love Among the Ruins*, and J. D. Salinger’s “For Esmé—With Love and

Squalor.” Chapters Four and Five consider orphaned characters in specific, American contexts, examining orphanhood in the American landscape in Gene Stratton-Porter’s *Freckles* and Willa Cather’s *The Professor’s House*, and orphanhood in southern gothic literature in Eudora Welty’s “Moon Lake” and Flannery O’Connor’s “The Artificial Nigger” and *The Violent Bear It Away*.

Through these readings, this study shows how early- to mid-twentieth-century orphan stories alternately familiarize and defamiliarize the orphaned experience. More specifically, it argues that literary orphanhood both magnifies the human experience, providing readers of all ages with a means by which they can distance themselves from, reflect upon, and have hope for their own state; and others those who have been orphaned, emphasizing the difference between the experience of being raised in a biological family and the experience of the orphan. In every case, this study provides new readings of the novels and stories explored therein, demonstrating the importance of seeing fictional and real-world orphans as affected though not determined by their traumatic past.

“I Can’t Help Making Things Up”:
Orphanhood, Trauma, and Narrative in Twentieth-Century Fiction

by

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To Evan, Dillon, and Zoë

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

In February 2002, my family adopted three young children from Russia. Though their single mother was still living, they had been removed from their home several months earlier because she had not been caring for them, spending the money given her by the government for their support on alcohol. Though the oldest of the children was only four years old at the time of the adoption, they had all experienced significant trauma and neglect during the first few years of their lives which resulted in attachment and learning disorders that still affect them today.

Contrast that with the history of a popular literary orphan—say, Harry Potter. After his parents are killed by the infamous Lord Voldemort when he is just over one year old, Harry is left to be raised by his neglectful aunt and uncle, where he is forced to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs and given not quite enough to eat. However, on his eleventh birthday, Harry learns that he is a wizard, enters Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and lives a relatively normal, albeit unusually adventurous, life. Though he misses his parents and longs for the caring family structure he sees in the homes of his schoolmates, Harry never struggles with the traumatic disorders experienced by my siblings and their adopted friends.

When I first recognized this disjunct between real-life and literary orphaned experience years after the aforementioned adoption, my first reaction was one of disgust. How could authors be so blind to the actual difficulty of

orphanhood experienced by both abandoned children and their adoptive families? Did not their portrayals of happy-go-lucky orphans contribute to the nonchalance with which so many families, my own included, took on the demanding task of raising adopted children? If anything, these stories seemed to be contributing to rather than alleviating the difficulties of orphanhood and adoption by creating false ideas of the state in the minds of their readers.

At the same time that I asked these questions, I also recognized that, though these stories were in general far from accurate, even my adopted siblings loved to read about Harry Potter, Anne Shirley, Freckles, Sara Crewe, Frodo Baggins, and the many other orphans who populate the literary landscape. This led me to ask another set of questions: Why do these characters appeal so strongly to the imaginations of their readers? How does their orphanhood affect our understanding of the state, for better or for worse? What difference does the orphanhood of these literary children and adults make to them as characters, to their relationships with other characters in the novel, to the novel as a whole, and to us as readers? How ought we to respond as readers to these literary depictions of orphanhood?

It is this last set of questions that I explore in the following pages. In this extended study, I argue that all literary orphans to some degree experience and have to overcome the trauma of orphanhood. This typically happens through a process in which the orphaned characters are introduced to a new and often familial community and are befriended by others who invite the orphans to become a part of the community themselves. Before entering this community, orphaned characters usually experience internal or external opposition which is only overcome by an act of storytelling or imagination whereby the characters

accept their state and undergo emotional transformation. After proposing this general structure of orphan stories, I explore how the orphan story pattern is employed and modified, in part and in whole, in literature of the early- to mid-twentieth century, arguing that these stories alternately familiarize and defamiliarize the orphaned character in order to carry out their various purposes and to magnify various aspects of the human experience. In every case, I will consider orphans as traumatized, exploring how they are presented both to the reader and to other characters in the book and suggesting the effects of that presentation on the reader.

Before exploring the theory underlying this reading of orphanhood as traumatic experience, we need to understand what exactly is meant by “orphaned character.” For the sake of this study, orphans are those who have been separated from their biological parents before they are in a position to care for themselves adequately. In some cases, the characters are separated from their parents as infants. In other cases, the characters are in their teens before they suffer this loss. Some orphaned children are left to fend for themselves, either for a time or permanently; others are adopted into caring families, in some cases even into their own extended families. Most of the orphans have been separated from their parents by death, but others by abandonment or kidnapping. In each case, however, the characters are orphaned in the sense that they are not within the care and community provided by their biological parents; they exist outside of the biological family narrative of which they would otherwise have been a

part, and must cope with the consequences of being separated from their biological parents even if they are in a new and supportive community.¹

In considering the significance of orphanhood and the functional consequences of separation from biological parents, I follow the primary thread of orphanhood as traumatic experience and the consequent importance of narrative acts in the growth of the orphaned character. Interestingly, while orphan stories abound in twentieth-century literature as in every other century, there are relatively few studies of the characters as such. Moreover, none of the studies that do exist adequately address the traumatic nature of orphanhood. The majority of studies focus on the historical and cultural significance of orphanhood, largely overlooking its psychological consequences.² Eileen

¹ I am dealing specifically with the fact of separation from biological parents and for the most part ignoring the possibility (or, in many cases, the reality) of adoption for these characters. Adoption is certainly immensely important, and in many cases provides the best option for children even if their biological parents are still alive (as, for instance, in cases like that of my siblings). However, even children who are adopted into loving families still must deal with the psychological consequences of orphanhood—of separation from their biological parents—with which I am concerned in this study.

² Diana Loercher Pazicky's study of orphaned characters in early American literature, *Cultural Orphans in America*, falls into this category, providing an excellent discussion of the historical significance of orphanhood and its relation to historical and cultural features of early America. Claudia Nelson's book *Little Strangers: Portrayals of Adoption and Foster Care in America, 1850-1929* is also helpful in its discussion of the cultural rhetoric surrounding orphanhood in fictional and nonfictional works. Other collections draw on this historical theme, considering it specifically in relation to conceptions of family structure. The collection of essays *Imagining Adoption: Essays on Literature and Culture*, edited by Marianne Novy, examines the historical and cultural significance of specifically adoption stories, exploring how questions of family identity play out in various nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels and autobiographical works. Novy's *Reading Adoption: Family and Difference in Fiction and Drama* similarly explores the constructed nature of family as revealed in stories with adoption plots. Maria Holmgren Troy, Elizabeth Kella, and Helena Wahlstön's *Making Home: Kinship and Cultural Memory in Contemporary American Novels* similarly addresses conceptions of orphanhood and adoption in literature written between the 1980s and 2000s, arguing that the figure of the orphan represents difference and allows fertile ground to reconsider traditional conceptions of family and of American life. Jerry Grisowld's *The Classic American Children's Story: Novels of the Golden Age* considers orphans as a type of the American self. And Valérie Loichort reads orphanhood as a metaphor for "[t]he dialectical distance between author, parent, and time . . . [and] their respective offspring—the text, the child, and history" (1).

Simpson's *Orphans: Real and Imaginary* does recognize the psychological significance of orphanhood and provides a place where the author, herself an orphan, can tell her own story. Similarly, Betty Jean Lifton's *Lost & Found: The Adoption Experience* explores the mythic nature of specifically adoption, recognizing the position of the adoptee as one that is storied and suggesting that literary depictions of orphanhood and adoption have forwarded this perception. However, these works lack close textual analysis and do not suggest the literary consequences of recognizing the connection between storytelling and healing from trauma. I address this gap in scholarship in the following pages, presenting new readings of orphaned characters and of the novels in which they appear based on an understanding of orphanhood as traumatic experience.

That it is valid to view orphanhood in this way is evident when we consider how orphanhood meets the definition of trauma put forth by various trauma theorists. In her introduction to the collection *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Cathy Caruth describes trauma as "an overwhelming event or events" which often leads to the delayed response of "repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors" known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (4). In *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth elaborates on this description of trauma, arguing that the "unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events" that cause PTSD cannot be fully grasped at the moment of their happening because the individual relates to the traumatic event in a way "that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known, and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing" (94). In other words, a traumatic event is one that varies from a typical

experience of life to the extent that the person experiencing it cannot immediately comprehend what has taken place.

While PTSD is perhaps the best-known trauma-related disorder, psychological researchers have shown that PTSD symptoms are not the most common symptoms of trauma demonstrated by young children. Though, as Bessel A. van der Kolk explains, “Children are thought to be extraordinarily sensitive to the long-term effects of uncontrollably traumatic events” (“Psychological” 11), in many cases the traumas that children experience are what he calls complex traumas, arising from more than one immediate, violent event. Because this is the case, symptoms of PTSD are “not the most common psychiatric diagnosis in children with histories of chronic trauma,” because “trauma has its most pervasive impact during the first decade of life and becomes more circumscribed (ie, more like ‘pure’ PTSD) with age” (“Developmental” 405). Instead, “the most common diagnoses in order of frequency were separation anxiety disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, phobic disorders, PTSD, and ADHD” (405). Similarly, Caroline C. Fish-Murray and her colleagues observe that children who experience abuse as a form of trauma often exhibit a “delay in development of the self and in the ability to get along with and understand others” (97).

Though children are thus less likely than adults to exhibit symptoms explicitly associated with PTSD, van der Kolk advocates recognizing other symptoms as related to trauma rather than merely identifying them as various disorders: “By relegating the full spectrum of trauma-related problems to seemingly unrelated ‘comorbid’ conditions, fundamental trauma-related disturbances may be lost to scientific investigation, and clinicians may run the

risk of applying treatment approaches that are not helpful” (“Developmental” 406). Instead of looking for symptoms of PTSD and identifying other symptoms as resulting from “seemingly unrelated ‘comorbid’ conditions,” van der Kolk advocates for viewing children as more likely to succumb to what he terms developmental trauma disorder, more commonly known as Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD),³ in the face of traumatic experience.

While, as I observed in my original reaction against orphan stories, relatively few literary orphans exhibit symptoms associated with traumatic disorders of any kind, the fact that they have encountered trauma is itself indisputable. Caruth defines trauma as “an overwhelming event or events” (“Introduction” 4), a definition that certainly applies to separation from parents, even in infancy when a child is necessarily unable to care for herself. Later in Caruth’s collection, Kai Erickson explains that trauma “result[s] from a *constellation of life experiences* as well as from a discrete happening, from a *persisting condition* as well as from an acute event” (185; emphasis original). The

³ Reactive Attachment Disorder is characterized in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* by the following symptoms:

- A. A consistent pattern of inhibited, emotionally withdrawn behavior toward adult caregivers, manifested by both of the following:
 - 1. The child rarely or minimally seeks comfort when distressed.
 - 2. The child rarely or minimally responds to comfort when distressed.
- B. A persistent social and emotional disturbance characterized by at least two of the following:
 - 1. Minimal social and emotional responsiveness to others.
 - 2. Limited positive affect.
 - 3. Episodes of unexplained irritability, sadness, or fearfulness that are evident even during nonthreatening interactions with adult caregivers.
- C. The child has experienced a pattern of extremes of insufficient care as evidenced by at least one of the following:
 - 1. Social neglect or deprivation in the form of persistent lack of having basic emotional needs for comfort, stimulation, and affection met by caregiving adults.
 - 2. Repeated changes of primary caregivers that limit opportunities to form stable attachments (e.g., frequent changes in foster care).
 - 3. Rearing in unusual settings that severely limit opportunities to form selective attachments (e.g., institutions with high child-to-caregiver ratios). (265-66)

absence of parental guidance and care during childhood certainly qualifies as one such traumatizing “persisting condition.”

This is particularly apparent when one considers the importance of parental attachment to a child’s development as it is discussed in the theories of Sigmund Freud and his successors. Though the field of psychology has moved beyond many of Freud’s theories, his significance as a historical figure and his continued influence in literary studies make it worthwhile to begin our explanation of parent-child bonds with his work. In the series *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud writes of the “unexpectedly great part [of] human development” that is played “by impressions and experiences of early childhood” (37). In particular, he explains how a child’s desires shape her future development. Because all desires are based in physical desire which is in itself essentially sexual in nature, Freud argues that even the “powerful wishful impulses of childhood may without exception be described as sexual”: “A child has its sexual instincts and activities from the first; it comes into the world with them; and, after an important course of development passing through many stages, they lead to what is known as the normal sexuality of the adult” (44). The first objects of these desires, Freud suggests, are “those who look after [the child], but these soon give place to its parents” (50). Thus, the child’s parents come early in her life to be the object and represent the fulfillment of all physical, sexual desire.

In his later writings, Freud explains that it is more particularly the mother toward whom children direct their first desires. In *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud writes, “A child’s first erotic object is its mother’s breast that nourishes it; love has its origin in attachment to the satisfied need for nourishment” (45).

Though the object of desire during this oral phase of the child's development begins with the mother's breast, this "object is later completed into the person of the child's mother, who not only nourishes it but also looks after it and thus arouses in it a number of other physical sensations, pleasurable and unpleasurable" (45). Because the mother is the person from whom the child receives his nourishment and physical care, she comes to represent for him the fulfillment of desire, and therefore to be the object of that desire. Because this is the case, we see "the root of a mother's importance, unique, without parallel, established unalterably for a whole lifetime as the first and strongest love-object and as the prototype of all later love-relations—for both sexes" (45). In other words, the relationship between mother and child becomes for the child the type for all future relationships. Though the child's desire is later turned away from the mother herself, the initial desire for and attachment to the mother that result from these first physical interactions with her continues to impact the child for the rest of his life.

Of particular interest to the question of orphaned children are Freud's comments upon the role of the absent mother in the life of her abandoned child. Freud argues that the child's relationship with the mother is so essential to the development of the child's psyche that it will impact his development even if the mother is not actually present after his birth. As Freud explains,

the phylogenetic foundation has so much the upper hand over personal accidental experience that it makes no difference whether a child has really sucked at the breast or has been brought up on the bottle and never enjoyed the tenderness of a mother's care. In both cases the child's development takes the same path; it may be that in the second case its later longing grows all the greater. (*Outline 45-46*)

Far from negating or even lessening the importance of the mother in the development of the child, Freud suggests that separation from the mother at birth or at any time during early childhood may even increase the child's desire for the mother. Thus, even if a child is separated from his mother at birth, the innate and unanswered desire for parental relationship will have a profound effect on that child's development, with the result that the separation itself constitutes a traumatic event in that child's life.

While Freud's recognition of the significance of the bond between mother and child is historically important, more recent psychological research has continued to study that bond and the consequences of its disruption in what is now known as the field of attachment theory. The two key figures in this field, John Bowlby and Mary Salter Ainsworth, did much important groundwork in developing Freud's observations. While Ainsworth's studies were instrumental in understanding the variety and nature of attachment bonds,⁴ Bowlby's postulation of the significance of attachment is particularly important to this

⁴ Ainsworth recognized the importance of the mother-child bond in childhood development and mental health. However, while Bowlby focused on defining attachment, Patricia M. Crittenden explains that "the hallmark of Ainsworth's work is 'individual differences in the quality of attachment relationships'" (438). Robert Karen similarly explains Ainsworth's work in identifying difference in attachment styles, explaining of her 1961 address to the World Health Organization,

She noted that the catch-all phrase 'maternal deprivation' was actually composed of three different dimensions—the lack of maternal care (insufficiency), distortion of maternal care (neglect or mistreatment), and discontinuity in maternal care (separations, or the child's being given one mother figure and then another)—and that these three dimensions were frequently confounded, making it difficult to study any one of them alone. Carefully sifting through dozens of studies, she assessed what they had to say about the effects of each of these conditions, and, in doing so, she was able to disentangle many apparent contradictions (126).

As Carol Garhart Mooney explains, "Ainsworth moved beyond maternal deprivation to study other aspects of infant development. She knew even as a student that she would one day focus on the relationships of infants and mothers during the first year of life" (26-27). Though Ainsworth's work is not as important to this study as Bowlby's, it is important to note that she, too, recognized the importance of mother-child attachment for healthy development.

study. More specifically, his work to “defin[e] ‘attachment’ as the universal innate propensity of humans to form protective and comforting relationships” (Crittenden 438) relates to our understanding of orphanhood as traumatic experience.

Much of Bowlby’s theory can be found in his 1951 work, *Maternal Care and Mental Health*. In this report to the United Nations on behalf of the World Health Organization, Bowlby shows “that maternal care in infancy and early childhood is essential for mental health” (59). Specifically, he argues that it is “essential for mental health . . . that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or mother-substitute), in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment” (67). Studies “make plain that, when deprived of maternal care, the child’s development is almost always retarded—physically, intellectually, and socially—and that symptoms of physical and mental illness may appear” (15).⁵ In other words, Bowlby’s work demonstrates the necessity of continuous and caring maternal relationships for establishing a child’s health; separation from the mother often has serious physical and mental consequences.

⁵ This is true regardless of the age at which separation occurs. A study by Spitz and Wolf that Bowlby cites in his report shows that “anaclitic depression” appears even in children separated from their mother between six and twelve months of age, though symptoms of separation can appear in children even younger than that (*Maternal Care* 22-23). Indeed, Bowlby suggests that children are particularly vulnerable to attachment disorders before age three, becoming less so as they grow older because the ability to communicate and to understand the passage of time helps them be a bit more stable (26-27). This is not to underplay the consequences of separation in the lives of older children, however; Bowlby is also quick to explain that separation between mother and child is likely to have serious consequences even when the ability to communicate allows the child to understand better what is happening (26-27). Indeed, he explains later in the study that “one-third of all those who had spent five years or more of their lives in institutions turned out to be ‘socially incapable’ in adult life” (68). Regardless of the age at which separation occurred, children who did not have the benefit of maternal attachment for a period of several years during their childhood are likely to suffer the consequences for the rest of their lives.

Bowlby's other works similarly emphasize the importance of the mother-child bond. In *Attachment*, a more rigorous study of the same material covered in his presentation to the World Health Organization, Bowlby explains that "there is good evidence that in a family setting most infants of about three months are already responding differently to mother as compared with other people" (199). Bowlby cites studies by Ainsworth and Schaffer and Emerson, showing that infants manifest attachment behaviors as early as fifteen weeks of age, but in almost all cases by six months old (199-201). In another work where he considers the psychological results of a broken bond, Bowlby explains that fixation and repression often result from that disruption: "Unconsciously the child remains fixated on his lost mother: his urges to recover and to reproach her, and the ambivalent emotions connected with them, have undergone repression" ("Childhood" 70). When this happens, children often exhibit behaviors such as "Chronic anxiety, intermittent depression, attempted or successful suicide" ("Separation" 100). Even when the bond between mother and child is reformed after it has been broken for a period, the consequences can still be significant: "prolonged or repeated disruptions of the mother-child bond during the first five years of life are known to be especially frequent in patients later diagnosed as psychopathic or sociopathic personalities" ("Separation" 100). As Serge Lebovici explains in a review of attachment theory, Bowlby's work shows that a child's behavior "does not result solely from the maturation of his nervous system: the object relationship also plays a part in development. Any uncertainties and failings it may have and the emotional deprivation that underlies them are bound to have an unfavourable effect on his development" (75). Bowlby's work

demonstrates the fundamental developmental importance of secure attachment bonds for children.

Other more recent studies in psychology and neurobiology have confirmed Bowlby's theory. Among these studies, van der Kolk's work is particularly helpful. In a study published in 1987, he writes that "failure to develop such [attachment] bonds is devastating. . . . In both children and adults, this may lead to temporary or lasting disruptions in the capacity to modulate emotions and engage in social affiliation. The clinical symptoms of this lost trust can be as severe as the symptoms of those in whom basic trust never developed" ("Separation" 35). Indeed, the mere absence of the mother from a child's life can be devastating, aside from any other event more generally recognized as traumatic: "In most mammalian species, dependency on adult caregivers has become so strong that separation from the mother alone, even without external danger, causes distress in infants" (40). Elsewhere van der Kolk explains that "[t]he emotional development of children is intimately connected with the safety and nurturance provided by their environment. Children universally attach themselves intensely to their caregivers" ("Psychological" 14). Because that is the case, "Many children who have been exposed to disruptions of their attachment to their primary caregivers through separation or through abuse or neglect develop extreme reactivity to internal and external stimulation: they overreact to frustrations and have trouble tolerating anxiety" (15).

In a more recent study published in 2005, van der Kolk further develops the importance of the parent-child connection and the neurological consequences of its being broken. He explains that "[e]arly patterns of attachment affect the quality of information processing throughout life" because they determine the

degree to which children trust their emotions and their understanding of the world ("Developmental" 403). As parents recognize and affirm their children's reaction to a given situation, they help to establish children's confidence in self and world. If, on the other hand, parents do not provide their children with consistent, emotionally sensitive care, they "are likely to become intolerably distressed and unlikely to develop a sense that the external environment is able to provide relief" (403). When this is the case, children "have trouble relying on others to help them and are unable to regulate their emotional states by themselves," and will "experience excessive anxiety, anger, and longings to be taken care of" (403). When this is the case, children can develop Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). While taking a number of forms, RAD as van der Kolk describes it is different from PTSD in that it results from a failure to form a secure attachment and a healthy framework of how to view the world, rather than from a disruption of the pattern already set in place. Thus, psychological disorders result from the traumatic experiences both of an interrupted attachment pattern and of failing to form an attachment pattern at all, both of which are common in orphaned children who have been separated from parental attachment figures.

While the fact that orphanhood qualifies as a traumatic experience validates my approach of applying trauma theory to orphan stories, merely recognizing the traumatic nature of orphanhood does not leave orphaned children or their literary counterparts in a very hopeful situation. Therefore, we return to trauma theorists and psychological researchers who have explained that though traumatic disorders may arise in the wake of traumatic experience, it is possible to undergo healing from that trauma. This healing often occurs

through an act of narration, whereby the traumatized individual tells the story of her trauma to another in such a way as to create new structures for understanding her experience of the world at large. Through this process, the traumatized individual may experience what researchers have termed post-traumatic growth. It is thus the act of storytelling—an act in which, I will argue, all orphaned characters participate to some extent or in some form—that enables those who have undergone trauma to heal from and grow through their traumatic experiences.

The importance of narrative acts in healing from and growth in traumatic experiences has been discussed by numerous trauma theorists, who suggest that through such acts the traumatized individual can grasp the traumatic experience and create a new cognitive framework for how the world operates. This understanding of story as a means of healing from trauma is predicated on the understanding of narrative as essential to human experience. On this point, Michael White and David Epston write,

In striving to make sense of life, persons face the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of themselves and the world around them. Specific experiences of events of the past and present, and those that are predicted to occur in the future, must be connected in a lineal sequence to develop this account. This account can be referred to as a story or self-narrative (see Gergen & Gergen, 1984). The success of this storying of experience provides persons with a sense of continuity and meaning in their lives, and this is relied upon for the ordering of daily lives and for the interpretation of further experiences. (10)

In other words, the meaning of events in our lives and the continuity of our experience is based on our narrational, story-shaped understanding of the world. Events make sense only in the context of the story in which they take place.

White and Epston go on to explain that “[i]f we accept that persons organize and

give meaning to their experience through the storying of experience, and that in the performance of these stories they express selected aspects of their lived experience, then it follows that these stories are constitutive—shaping lives and relationships” (12). Not only are the stories we create important in understanding our experiences, but they constitute the experience itself. Without story, life and the events of which it is composed have no meaning at all.

Based on this understanding of human experience, trauma theorists recognize traumatic events as those that break the story to the point that it must be retold entirely. Kalí Tal calls this process “mythologization,” one of three primary ways that individuals cope with trauma. She argues that each person creates personal myth, “the particular set of explanations and expectations generated by an individual to account for his or her circumstances and actions” (116). When this myth is disrupted by traumatic experience, the traumatized individual must engage in a process of mythologization, which “works by reducing a traumatic event to a set of standardized narratives (twice- and thrice-told tales that come to represent ‘the story’ of the trauma) turning it from a frightening and uncontrollable event into a contained and predictable narrative” (6). Because personal myth is so necessary to human existence, the traumatized individual must rebuild that myth in order to function.

Other researchers have also recognized the importance of storytelling as a means of coping with trauma understood as a disruption of personal myth—or, in the terms of this paper, personal narrative. Caruth explains that traumatic disorders grow not from the traumatic event per se, but from an inability to assimilate that traumatic event into one’s experience. Regarding the process of assimilation, she suggests that it is only after a period of forgetting or latency that

the traumatized individual may remember, relive, and depart from the trauma. Departure itself is achieved through an act of narration, particularly of narrating the trauma to another individual, for, she explains, “the history of a trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another” (“Introduction” 11). Thus, as James Hillman writes, “Healing is not a procedure leading to a product, a concretized healthy person; healing is a life process that begins with our acceptance of our fictive realities and authorial roles within them” (x). Recognizing the narrational structure of our understanding of the world and our ability to create such narrative is essential for psychological healing from traumatic experience.⁶

An illustration here would perhaps be helpful. One day early last summer, I was driving down a divided highway, enjoying the beauty of the sunny day and the new greenery after a long Minnesota winter. Shortly before my left turn off the highway, I noticed something on the road near the median. When I got closer, I realized that it was a family of ducklings that had managed to get so far but were now trapped by the median and the speeding traffic.

⁶ According to Caruth, one necessary component of this healing from trauma is that there be an audience—a witness to the testimony of trauma borne by the traumatized individual. Other researchers have drawn the same conclusion. Bowlby recognizes the necessity of a sympathetic audience to anyone experiencing loss when he writes, “if we are to give the kind of help to a bereaved person that we should all like to give, it is essential we see things from his point of view and respect his feelings” (“Separation” 113). Tal similarly explains, “Without a sense of community power, testimony is useless. Testimonials have as their premise a sympathetic listenership with the power to prevent the recreation of such traumatic experiences in the future” (125-26). And van der Kolk and his colleague Onno van der Hart write,

In the case of complete recovery, the person does not suffer anymore from the reappearance of traumatic memories in the form of flashbacks, behavioral reenactments, and so on. Instead the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality. (176)

According to all of these researchers, the listening of a sympathetic audience lends weight to the narration of the traumatized individual, enabling her to accept her experience because it has been accepted by others.

Several of them were dead, others had been hit by passing cars but were still struggling for life, and the few that had not been injured were trying desperately to climb the median and escape from the traffic, oblivious to the terror that awaited them on the other side. In that moment, my personal narrative of “a beautiful early-summer day” was shattered. According to that narrative, ducklings belong in ponds with their mothers, and crossing roads should involve friendly policeman á la *Make Way for Ducklings*. In order to make sense of what I had witnessed, I had to reconstruct my narrative to include the horror of a family of day-old ducklings suffering pain and fear in the face of oncoming traffic. I had to make room for that sight in my narrative in order to cope with what I had witnessed.

The narrational process suggested by trauma theorists and demonstrated by my relatively mundane experience looks as different for children as does their trauma. As van der Kolk explains, “Traumatized children rarely discuss their fears and traumas spontaneously. They also have little insight into the relationship between what they do, what they feel, and what has happened to them” (“Developmental” 405). Because this is the case, where adults would be able to communicate their trauma in words, children tend to do so “by repeating it in the form of interpersonal enactments, both in their play and in their fantasy lives” (“Developmental” 405). That is, children often act out their narration of the traumatic event, engaging in an imaginative action that, though not necessarily verbal, serves the same purpose as telling the story of trauma does for adults. As we will see throughout this study, in the case of literary orphans the process of storytelling is as varied as van der Kolk leads us to expect. While the orphaned child’s act of telling the story of his trauma may not consist of a straightforward

narration of the story of his life, that process is nonetheless present, for it is through the process of narrating trauma that the literary orphan, as well as the children studied by the researchers discussed above, learns to understand difference and grow in character through the traumatic experience of orphanhood.

The potential growth that may occur in spite of, or even because of, traumatic experience has been explored by numerous psychological researchers who have studied the phenomenon of post-traumatic growth. Christopher Peterson and his colleagues explain that people who have experienced trauma often experience “improved relationships with others, openness to new possibilities, greater appreciation of life, enhanced personal strength, and spiritual development” (214). That is, through traumatic experience a person may actually become stronger in certain ways that are beneficial to himself and his relationships with others. Moshe Bensimon’s 2012 study further explains this process. He writes, “The course of PG is characterized by a traumatic event after which the victim begins to express interest in new activities and aspects of life. With growth, trauma victims have the ability to find positive meaning in life in the face of adversity (Fredricson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003)” (783). The results of Bensimon’s study even went so far as to demonstrate that “growth stems from trauma”: “the ability to experience a traumatic event as challenging can lead to positive outcomes such as growth. Indeed, growth may be integral to trauma by helping the individual cope effectively with trauma exposure (Taylor, 1983)” (785). This growth may even occur when the trauma leads to disorders as severe as PTSD (786). Though, as Peterson and his colleagues write, “No one would wish traumatic events for themselves or others, . . . [t]hat any character

benefits at all are associated with increasing exposure to potential trauma adds to a growing literature showing that people are more resilient than extant theories predict” (216). Though traumatic experience and the consequent disorders that often arise are by no means desirable, the diagnosis of a traumatic disorder is not a death sentence; traumatized individuals, including the characters in the following study who have experienced the trauma of orphanhood, may even become stronger through their experiences.

Before I explain the specific works considered in the following pages, it is important to note that I am not arguing that all literary orphans suffer from traumatic disorders.⁷ In the same way that only some, not all, men and women experience PTSD after active military duty, so only some, not all, children experience traumatic disorders as a result of separation from their parents. This is true of literary characters as of real children: Harry Potter and Anne Shirley do not exhibit symptoms of traumatic disorders, though they are certainly orphaned in the fullest sense of the word. Instead of insisting that all orphaned children are traumatized by their experience, I am arguing that the experience of orphanhood is by nature traumatic—that is, whether or not the orphaned character exhibits symptoms of psychological disorder, the very fact that they are not a part of a

⁷ Though addressing specifically issues of adoption rather than orphanhood, Novy presents one of the most direct objections to reading orphanhood as traumatic experience when she writes,

One of the controversial issues among people who write about adoption is the question of how much trauma is inevitable in adoptee experience. Is the loss of a birth mother, whether through death or relinquishment, always painful and therefore a primal wound that affects the adoptee throughout life? I have serious doubts about this as a general claim, since the loss may be softened if it takes place early enough and is followed quickly by adoption in a loving and understanding family. (*Reading* 221)

I agree with Novy that “the loss of a birth mother” can be “softened” by adoption. However, it is still important to recognize the traumatizing nature of separation from birth parents. Even Novy admits that “in all of these novels [explored in her study] trauma is clearly involved. . . . In all of these novels we see the effects of these events as long lasting, even if hidden most of the time” (221).

biological family structure shapes the way that interact with their fictional world and should shape the way that we read them. Thus, if we read the orphan experience as one that can result in trauma—if we read orphan stories in light of trauma theory—we will have a better understanding of those stories and of the characters who inhabit them.

In addition, we must recognize that the process of healing from trauma through narrative action is by no means simple. It might seem at this point that orphanhood is traumatic experience, but that that does not really matter since it can be overcome by an act of narration. This is certainly not the case. While storytelling is immensely important, especially to the orphaned characters in many of the works discussed in the following pages, it is essential to recognize that for real-life orphans, adoptees, and foster children, the process of accepting abandonment and reconstructing narrative identity is by no means easy.

In light of that fact, we must acknowledge what many trauma theorists have recognized, that traumatic experience is essentially unknowable. As Caruth explains, psychological trauma inflicts a wound on the mind that is in itself unavailable to the understanding of the one who has experienced the trauma. She writes that trauma “is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor” (*Unclaimed* 4). Because this is the case, “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (4; emphasis original). In other words, psychological trauma arises not just from a traumatic event, but also from

the fact that the event itself cannot be fully understood. The uncontrollable recurrence of traumatic memories that characterizes PTSD, the trauma disorder with which Caruth is most concerned, arises because the mind is not able to process the event in the first place, and so returns to it in an attempt to make sense of what has happened. Caruth explains that this recurrence of traumatic memories reveals that “trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (4). The truth to which a trauma bears witness, because it is thus unavailable until some time has passed after the traumatic event itself, “cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language” (4). In other words, traumatic experience exists as unknown reality, asserting its truth even against the active and linguistic structures by which we organize the world. Thus, stories of trauma tell the readers that “[w]hat returns to haunt the victim . . . is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known” (6).

Because trauma is indirect, “*not* directly available to experience” (Caruth, *Unclaimed* 63; emphasis original), a traumatic event creates an other of the person who has encountered it. The experience of trauma is in itself “other” to the traumatized individual, and as a result of the experience he becomes other to those around him. As Shoshana Felman writes, to bear witness from inside a traumatic event is to some degree to bear witness as an other: “To testify from inside otherness is thus to bear witness from inside the living pathos of a tongue which nonetheless is bound to be heard as mere noise” (“Return” 231). In other

words, "*the inside has no voice*" (231; emphasis original); by virtue of the fact that traumatic experience is unknowable, it is impossible to articulate it in a way that can be clearly and fully understood by those who are on the outside.

Understanding trauma as thus indirect and othering informs our reading of orphanhood as trauma. Recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience means that we are also recognizing that it is impossible for those who have not experienced separation from their biological parents to understand all that it means to be orphaned. Even as a sibling of three adoptees, I cannot say that I understand what it is to be abandoned by my birth parents. Though I may immerse myself in orphan stories and imagine myself to be orphaned, I will never really understand the difficulty of the experience undergone by my siblings. As Tal explains, "*the personal myths of the reader are never 'tragically shattered'* by reading. Only trauma can accomplish that kind of destruction" (122; emphasis original). Trauma theory, as Caruth explains, demands that we recognize that even as we witness, we do not see fully; there is always something inarticulable in the trauma itself: "the theory of trauma addresses us ultimately, I would suggest, with the possibility of life, but in a voice we cannot always identify, and in a language, enigmatic and resonant, that we must still learn to hear" (*Unclaimed* 139).

It is that endeavor of learning to hear the voice of trauma, to recognize the traumatic otherness of the orphan experience, that I will undertake in the following pages. Though recognizing that orphanhood is traumatic experience requires us simultaneously to acknowledge that we cannot fully understand what it is to be orphaned, we as readers who have not experienced that trauma must do our best to understand what we can. Indeed, until we recognize

orphanhood as traumatic experience and understand that we cannot know what it is to be separated from our biological parents, until we accept orphanhood as a form of otherness, we run the risk of falling into the trap of American pop-culture, which views orphanhood as an exciting adventure and imposes that view on many who are suffering the results of childhood abandonment. As Susan Bordo writes, fictive “representations are all we have to inform our public ‘imaginary’ about adoption—these, and the real-life dramas of children being torn from the arms of their adoptive families by birth parents reclaiming their biological children” (323). Though Bordo sees literary representations as problematic in their trite treatment of the orphan experience, I argue that those representations, if read in light of the “real-life dramas” of orphanhood as traumatic experience, can in fact help us to understand the difficulty of orphanhood and the importance of story as a means of overcoming that difficulty. It is thus our responsibility as members of the familial self to listen humbly to orphan stories, recognizing the difference of the experiences recounted there.

This study will be divided roughly into two sections. Chapters Two and Three will engage with orphans in both American and British novels, discussing how the characters are presented differently to child versus adult readers. Chapters Four and Five will discuss orphans in specific, American contexts: the American landscape and southern gothic literature. I will focus on American literature in the second part of the study for two reasons. First, while it is valuable to have a broader sampling of orphans when exploring the general topics of chapters Two and Three, it will be equally valuable to narrow the field in chapters Four and Five so as to allow for closer readings of the texts. Second,

there do not seem to be as many orphans in British literature of the twentieth century as in American, which numerous critics argue is owing to the United States' lack of heritage as opposed to its more established European counterpart.⁸

In Chapter Two I discuss depictions of orphaned characters in twentieth-century children's literature. I begin my study here because these stories contain the most obvious use of orphanhood as trauma, of the orphan desiring and finding familial community, and of storytelling and imagination as the thing that allows the orphan to overcome trauma and enter community. Because this is the case, these stories help to establish the pattern of orphan stories that I explore throughout the rest of the study. After providing a general overview of how orphan characters are treated in twentieth-century children's literature, I discuss the various ways in which the three narratives of orphan stories manifest in Frances Hodgson Burnet's *A Little Princess* (1905), C. S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), and Katherine Patterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1975).

Chapter Three considers gender differences in depictions of trauma in orphaned characters who are in their early adult years. It is useful to consider gender distinctions when studying orphan characters because there are some qualitative differences in how men and women orphaned characters experience trauma: young women who have no parents are generally in traumatizing social

⁸ On the orphaned nature of the United States as a country, Claudia Nelson writes, The United States has long presented itself both as self-made orphan (it celebrates every year the anniversary of the severing of its relationship with the mother country) and as adoptive parent to countless immigrants. Because both foster parent and upwardly mobile child evoke the American dream, the rhetoric surrounding adoption and foster care often takes on nationalist overtones, suggesting that the displaced child is a distinctively American phenomenon. That this implication is false does not prevent such rhetoric from telling us much about the part that such displaced children have played in the reshaping of American childhood and the American family—indeed, the reshaping of America's understanding of itself. (4)
See also Griswold 5, 241-242; Pazicky xiii; Singley 3-4.

situations, whereas young men are generally in traumatizing political situations. I support these claims with discussions of the young female orphans Lily Bart in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) and Margaret and Helen Schlegel in E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), and of the young male orphan Miles Plastic in Evelyn Waugh's "Love Among the Ruins" (1953). I also explore the effect of the unnamed male narrator's encounter with the orphaned Esmé in J.D. Salinger "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor" (1950), indicating how interactions between those suffering from different types of trauma can have a positive effect on their ability to integrate the traumatic experience into their emotional and mental lives.

In the fourth chapter, I begin a topical exploration of specific stories in American literature. This chapter shows how the American landscape serves as a place where orphaned characters can experience wholeness and heritage as they connect with the ecologically and historically important features of the American environment. I first discuss Gene Stratton Porter's *Freckles* (1904), a novel that has been largely overlooked by critics but that is filled with significant features relating to both orphan stories and the American landscape in its depiction of the orphaned Freckles' communal encounter with God and man through his time in the Limberlost. I then consider Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* (1925), arguing that Tom Outland becomes connected to the communal, storied heritage of his country through his time in the Cliff City that he discovers while ranching in New Mexico. However, a second traumatic experience fractures his sense of community and works against the healing process that he had begun, suggesting the limitations of landscape and the importance of community in healing from trauma.

Finally, Chapter Five discusses the *unheimlich* nature of orphanhood as it is depicted in southern gothic literature. These stories tend to capitalize on the traumatic, othering nature of orphanhood, being less sympathetic to the orphaned characters and focusing instead on how their responses to trauma affect those around them. This chapter explores orphanhood in Eudora Welty's "Moon Lake" (1949), suggesting that in order to cope with trauma and to gain a sense of self in a strongly familial society, Easter, the most prominent orphaned character in the story, creates personal narrative, by which she becomes a representative of all the girls at the Moon Lake and allows the Morgana girls who are in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood to face their imminent maturation and independence. The chapter also treats Flannery O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger" (1955) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960), showing how the consequences of trauma parallel sinful actions for both Nelson Head and Francis Marion Tarwater, who are saved from their trauma/sin by a grotesque movement of divine mercy.

Through this careful exploration of the topic of orphanhood in twentieth-century literature and its relationship to trauma and storytelling, I demonstrate the importance of seeing orphaned characters in light of the difficulties they have experienced. I answer questions about the appeal and significance of orphaned characters by arguing that they overcome trauma and enter into a familial community by engaging in acts of storytelling or imagination, allowing both readers who have had similar experiences and those who have not to see the significance of narrative and the possibility of healing. By first giving a general overview of orphaned characters in relation to the age of their intended audience and then exploring how these characters are treated in specific American

contexts, this study establishes a pattern and explores how that pattern is employed and modified in various orphan stories. On the whole, my focus on the psychological significance of orphanhood sees these characters both as a magnifier, providing readers of all ages with a means by which they can distance themselves from, reflect upon, and have hope for their own state; and as other, recognizing the difference between the experience of being raised in a biological family and the experience of the orphan. In every case, this study provides new readings of the novels, demonstrating the importance of seeing fictional and real-world orphans as affected though not determined by their traumatic past.

CHAPTER TWO

Child Orphans for Child Readers

In a conversation with a novelist who specializes in children's literature, I once heard that "orphans are gold." And, if the abundance of orphaned characters in books written for children is any indication, he is not the only author who has found this to be true. Orphaned characters abound in children's literature more than in any other genre. From Dorothy of Frank L. Baum's 1900 *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* to the Baudelaire children of Lemony Snicket's late-1990s *Series of Unfortunate Events*, the orphan has been and remains one of children's literature's most common tropes.

While both the abundance of orphaned characters and the fact that orphanhood has its most considerable and obvious effects during childhood make it appropriate to begin my study here, there is yet another and more significant reason that I begin with children's literature: these stories contain the most obvious use of orphanhood as trauma, of the orphan desiring and finding familial community, and of storytelling and imagination as the thing that allows the orphan to overcome trauma and enter community. Though the stories in which these characters appear vary widely—Anne Shirley and Gilly Hopkins are very different kinds of children; the realist setting in *A Little Princess* is very different from the fantasy setting of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*—there are patterns that remain constant through them all, regardless of the particularities of setting or character. In opening my study with an analysis of the structure of the children's orphan story, I identify the patterns of orphan stories

that inform our reading of all literary orphanhood by enabling us to recognize deviations and thereby understand the significance of particular orphan stories in a new way.

In this chapter, I will provide a general overview of how orphanhood functions in twentieth-century children's literature. Following the general model for structural analysis of literature put forward by theorist Vladimir Propp and further developed by Roland Barthes,¹ I will propose a theoretical structure of children's orphan stories by identifying twelve functions of such tales, grouping those functions into six actions, and suggesting how that structure can be read for its historical, theological, and psychological significance. In order to illustrate these structural significances, I will then consider how they play out in Frances Hodgson Burnet's *A Little Princess* (1905), C.S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), and Katherine Patterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1975). In each of these analyses, I will show that, though the stories primarily demonstrate one of the three narrational significances common to children's orphan stories, they nonetheless all exhibit a pattern that is inherently psychological because orphanhood is an inherently traumatizing experience. In demonstrating that this is the case, I will prove that understanding orphanhood as traumatic experience is essential in reading all twentieth-century children's orphan stories—and ultimately, as I will demonstrate in the remainder of this study, in reading orphan stories at large.

¹ In employing the theories of Propp and Barthes, I rely on their identification of the different structural elements of which stories generally are composed. The specific functions, actions, and narrations of orphan stories identified below are all my own.

Structure of the Children's Orphan Story

The first step in developing this structural pattern is to establish the functions of children's orphan stories. By "function" I refer to the units of narrative meaning of which the story is composed. In describing the nature of functions, Propp explains that these units "should in no case depend on the personage who carries out the function" and "cannot be defined apart from [their] place in the course of narration" (21). That is, the unit of narrative meaning that is a function is not composed of or dictated by the character ("a male hero," or even "an orphaned hero," does not qualify as a functional unit), but rather by its role in the narrative in which the character takes part (for example, "a trying event" or "victory over opponent"). Propp goes on to explain a function "*as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance in the course of the action*" (21; emphasis original). That is, a function is a unit of narrative meaning performed by or fundamentally affecting a character in the story, which unit is recognized as a function based on the importance of the role it plays in the narrative as a whole.²

Barthes expands upon Propp's discussion of functions in a story, describing them simply as "the smallest narrative units" ("Introduction" 88).³ He

² There is one slight alteration to the structure identified by Propp that can be made when considering children's orphan stories. While Propp suggests in his analysis of fairy stories that "the sequence of functions is always identical" (74), there is some degree of flexibility in the sequence in which the functions occur in an orphan story. Though each of the proposed elements are present in children's orphan stories, certain of those elements may occur earlier or later in the sequence, as noted in the description below.

³ Though we will not deal with both types here, it is worth noting that Barthes differentiates between two types of narrative units: functions and indices. Indices, or units of being, have meaning in and of themselves, in relation to something outside the story rather than inside it, "serving to identify, to locate [the story] in time and space" (96). Functions, on the other hand, are units of doing that have a correlate later in the story.

differentiates between cardinal functions and catalyzers. Cardinal functions are the “real hinge-points of the narrative (or a fragment of the narrative)” (93) that “form finite sets grouping a small number of terms, are governed by logic, are at once necessary and sufficient” (97). These functions are needed for the plot to work. Catalyzers, on the other hand, serve to “merely ‘fill in’ the narrative space separating the hinge [or cardinal] functions” (93); they complete the story but are not necessary to plot progression. Though Barthes effectively suggests the importance of both of the types of function, our analysis will consider specifically cardinal functions—functions which are necessary to the progression of the plot—as they appear in the orphan story.

Based on Propp’s and Barthes’ principles, I suggest the following twelve functions of children’s orphan story:

I. ABANDONMENT OF THE CHILD/REN.

The first function of an orphan story is the most obvious and necessary of those found in the genre. In order for the story to be an orphan story in the first place, the child/ren must be abandoned by their parents, either because the latter have died or because they are unable to care for the child/ren. This function often takes place before the story itself begins.

II. THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S EXPERIENCE TRAUMA.

Though this function is not always explicit in twentieth-century children’s orphan stories, trauma is inherent in the orphaning experience itself. As explained in the introduction, we learn of the traumatic nature of orphanhood from attachment theory as developed by John Bowlby, which demonstrates the importance of the mother-child bond in developing healthy social and psychological patterns in young children. Without this important connection,

orphaned children can demonstrate behaviors and conditions that parallel those seen in patients suffering from trauma-spectrum disorders. For example, Frances Hodgson Burnet's Sara Crewe suffers a night of "wild, unchildlike woe" after the death of her father (*A Little Princess* 116).

In addition to the trauma inherent in orphaning itself, many orphaned characters also experience some kind of abuse, either from their caretakers or because of the absence thereof, and usually as a result of their orphanhood. L.M. Montgomery's Anne Shirley becomes a child laborer for a family with too many children and an alcoholic father (*Anne of Green Gables*); C.S. Lewis's Shasta receives blows and harsh words in return for his labors for Arsheesh (*The Horse and His Boy*); J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter is underfed and forced to sleep in the broom cupboard under the stairs at the home of his Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*).

Like function I, this function often occurs prior to the commencement of the story in which the orphaned character/s figure.

III. A NEW COMMUNITY IS INTRODUCED.

Through varying external circumstances, the orphaned character/s enters into a new communal space: Sara Crewe is forced to work with the servants and to live in the rat-infested attic with Becky (*A Little Princess*); Esther Forbes' Johnny Tremain ceases silver-smithing and becomes an errand boy to the Whig party (*Johnny Tremain*); Katherine Patterson's Gilly Hopkins enters yet another foster home (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*); Harry Potter is admitted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*); Lemony Snicket's Baudelaire children go to live with Count Olaf (*A Bad Beginning*).

This function is one that has been noted as significant by several critics of children's orphan stories. Joe Sutliff Sanders argues that the entering a new community is an essential part of the pattern of early twentieth century girls' orphan stories (6). Minda Rae Amiran notes the typically gendered difference in how this movement manifests itself in children's stories of the same period: "In the prototypical story the boy runs away from his adoptive family or sets out to make his fortune, while the girl is sent to live with a spinster aunt or some other solitary person whose affections she must work to win" (85). James Michael Curtis comments upon the same pattern, explaining that "idealized parental figures often 'rescue' children from their orphaned state and transport them to fantasy worlds where their very real social problems are much more easily solved through various fantasy conventions" (4). Whatever the circumstances, however, the orphaned character inevitably moves toward a new community, even if that community, as Amiran suggests of boy's stories, is composed of fellow wanderers or adventure-seekers.

IV. OTHER CHILD/REN BEFRIEND THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S.

Upon entering into their new community, the orphan/s are introduced to other child/ren who extend or accept signs of friendship. Anne asks Dianna to be her "bosom friend" (*Anne of Green Gables*); Burnett's Mary Lennox is introduced to Dickon and his animals (*The Secret Garden*); Johnny meets Rab at the *Boston Observer* office and is offered a job (*Johnny Tremain*); Shasta meets Bree and eventually joins forces with Aravis and Hwin (*The Horse and His Boy*).

V. OPPOSITION AGAINST THE ORPHAN/S ENTERING INTO COMMUNITY OCCURS.

Though the character/s have been initiated into a new community, they experience internal or external opposition to becoming a fixed member of that

community. This opposition takes three different forms: a) The orphan/s are only provisionally accepted into the community (Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert disclose that they really wanted a boy, but agree to keep Anne for a short time on trial [*Anne of Green Gables*]); b) The orphan/s resist entering into the community (Gilly avoids becoming attached to Trotter and William Ernest [*The Great Gilly Hopkins*]); or c) Some external force appears to keep the orphan/s from fully integrating into the community (Harry is opposed by Draco Malfoy, Snape, and underlying it all by Voldemort himself [*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*]). This is the point of the story at which the villain or the primary obstacle to be overcome manifests itself.

VI. THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S ENGAGE IN AN ACT OF THE IMAGINATION.

Like the last, this function can take several forms: a) The orphan/s tell or learn the story of their past life (Harry discovers that he is the famous child of wizarding parents [*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*]); b) The orphan/s imagine for themselves some alternate, usually fanciful life (Anne pretends her reflection in the mirror is herself in another world [*Anne of Green Gables*]); or c) The orphan/s enter into a literal or figurative imaginative space (Edith Nesbit's Philip finds himself in the city he has built of objects around the house [*The Magic City*]; Gilly begins to read and enjoy poetry [*The Great Gilly Hopkins*]).

There are two things to note about this function. First, the imaginativeness of the orphaned character/s may manifest itself at different points in the narrative. While it always occurs during function VI, it may also appear earlier in the story (or in the character's life). For example, Sara demonstrates a voracious appetite for books as well as a capacity for storytelling even before her father dies (*A Little Princess*).

Second, the orphaned character/s may participate in one or all of the manifestations of this function. Thus, Harry learns about his past (V.a), encounters the Mirror of Erised where he sees himself with his dead parents (V.b), and enters into the magical space of Hogwarts and the wizarding world (V.c) (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*); and Anne exhibits both a capacity for storytelling (V.b) and a love of literature (V.c) (*Anne of Green Gables*).

VII. OTHER CHARACTER/S OBSERVE AND SANCTION THE IMAGINATIVE ACT.

As the orphan/s tell/learn about their past, imagine an alternative life, and/or enter into an imaginative space, other character/s observe them doing so, and offer verbal or active approval of what they are doing. Thus, Ben Weatherstaff finds Mary, Dickon, and Colin in the secret garden and joins them in their attempt to tame the overgrown flowerbeds (*The Secret Garden*), and Lucy rebuilds a part of the magic city that Philip has constructed (*The Magic City*).

VIII. THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S ACCEPT THEIR STATE.

Through engaging and being sanctioned in an imaginative act, the orphaned character/s accept their orphanhood and their traumatic past for what it is. For instance, Harry, after a couple of nights staring at himself with his family in the Mirror of Erised, agrees with Ron and Dumbledore that it is necessary to live in the present rather than merely imagining himself with his family (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*).

This function often includes an act of forgiveness whereby the orphan/s explicitly or implicitly pardon their parents for dying or abandoning them and/or their previous communities for inflicting abuse.⁴ For example, Anne

⁴ Studies in the field of psychology have shown the importance of forgiveness to mental health—a fact that is interesting in light of the present study. For instance, Loren L. Toussaint and

expresses the belief that the previous families with which she had stayed “meant to be just as good and kind as possible” even when they failed to be so, exhibiting her forgiveness in spite of their neglect and abuse (Montgomery 41).

It is worth noting here the parallel between functions VI-VIII and trauma theory’s postulation of testimony as a means of departing from trauma as set forth in the introduction to this study. According to trauma theory, the human mind is incapable of grasping a traumatic event at the time that it occurs. As a result, it is only through bearing witness to the traumatic experience after a period of latency that a traumatized person is able to move away from the fracturing that trauma causes toward a more integrated life. Dori Laub explains that by not telling the story, the survivor of trauma’s perception of reality becomes distorted, and she begins to question the reality of the events. Accordingly, the traumatized individual must tell about the traumatic experience in order to survive. In fact, Laub suggests, “What ultimately matters in all processes of witnessing, spasmodic and continuous, conscious and unconscious, is not simply the information, the establishment of the facts, but the experience itself of *living through* testimony, of giving testimony” (70); it is the act of testifying—of storytelling—that enables the traumatized person to endure after the traumatic event.

While not all of the forms that function VI takes involve telling the story of the trauma per se, the imaginative act in which the orphan/s engage nonetheless

a team of psychologists engaged in a study of the connection between forgiveness and depression. Their study showed that “[i]ndividuals who reported high levels of forgiveness of self and others showed lower odds of being diagnosed as depressed” (99). Other studies have yielded similar results (Krause and Ellison 77). Though I will not develop this idea in the present study, the importance of forgiveness suggests that it may be as significant to the process of overcoming trauma as is the Act of Imagination proposed here.

resembles the testimonial process proposed by trauma theorists. Thus, in speaking of *A Little Princess*, Sanders suggests that “[s]tories are not just for pacifying children. They are for controlling reality” (83). Storytelling functions for Sara as it does for trauma theorists, providing her with a means by which she can control the traumatic reality that she experiences. Similarly, Kristin N. Taylor identifies Dorothy as participating in a “journey toward self-integration” through her travels (381). It is the imaginative experience in these stories that enables the characters to accept their state, and thereby to live an integrated life.

IX. THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S ARE RE/AFFIRMED AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

At this point, the orphaned character/s are established as fixed members of the community into which they have entered. That community either affirms or reaffirms the child/ren’s value, making them a necessary part of that community. Harry receives Christmas gifts from Mrs. Weasley (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*); Anne is told that the Cuthberts will allow her to stay at Avonlea (*Anne of Green Gables*); Johnny is given increasing responsibilities with the rebelling Whigs (*Johnny Tremain*).

Note that this function, like function VI, may occur at various stages throughout the story, though there will always be some manifestation of it after the character/s have begun to accept their state. Thus, for example, Gilly is affirmed by Trotter throughout the book, though it is only after the child has been exposed to Wordsworth’s poetry (VI.c) and begun to care for her foster family (VIII) that she acknowledges that affirmation (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*).

X. THE SOUNDNESS OF THE COMMUNITY IS THREATENED.

Here the opposing force manifests itself most strongly, attempting to keep the orphaned character/s from integrating fully into their new community.

Examples of this include Voldemort's appearance in the underground chamber at Hogwarts (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*), the arrival of Gilly's grandmother to take her from Trotter (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*), and Shasta's battle with the Archenlanders against Rabadash and his troops (*The Horse and His Boy*).

XI. TRANSFORMATION OCCURS.

As a result of the imaginatively enabled acceptance and in facing the major opposition, the orphaned character/s undergo and/or contribute to positive change. This transformation may be personal, circumstantial, or communal. a) Personal transformation in the orphaned character/s entails victory over the fears that they have experienced as a result of their past, acceptance of and dedication to the community of which they are now a part, and/or courage to fight dark things. Gilly begins to defend Trotter and William Ernest (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*); Harry faces Voldemort in spite of his knowledge of the enemy's power (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*). b) Circumstantial transformation entails victory over the abuser or the one who has killed the orphaned character's parents. For example, the Baudelaire children vanquish Count Olaf, however temporarily, after undermining his scheme to obtain their fortune (*The Bad Beginning*). c) Communal transformation occurs in the community that the orphan has entered as a result of the orphan's presence. Thus, the Cuthbert household and Avonlea as a whole are transformed by Anne's presence (*Anne of Green Gables*), and Colin begins to walk through Mary's encouragement (*The Secret Garden*).

XII. THE ORPHANED CHARACTER/S ARE ESTABLISHED IN A NEW LIFE.

Through the process of imagination, acceptance, affirmation, and transformation, the orphaned character/s are firmly established in a new life. Because the orphan/s have forgiven, they are able to grow, to move on from the place of pain that they occupied at the beginning of the story. This function usually occurs through the orphaned child/ren entering some sort of family structure. As Claudia Mills writes, “Almost every orphan novel in the end is about the search for a family: the protagonist finds a home, finds loving and caring adults to whom he can belong” (228). Thus, as Taylor explains, “Through her quest, Dorothy comes to define home as where Aunt Em is and learns ‘[t]here is no place like home’ . . . where family is not defined by duty or biological ties but rather by love and acceptance” (381). In the same way, Harry goes to the Dursleys’ knowing that he will return to his new home at Hogwarts the next year (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*); Gilly goes to live permanently with her grandmother (*The Great Gilly Hopkins*); Johnny receives surgery to mend his injured hand (*Johnny Tremain*); Anne is given the teaching position at the school in Avonlea (*Anne of Green Gables*); Shasta becomes Cor, prince of Archenland (*The Horse and His Boy*); Philip recognizes his love for the new family that his sister’s marriage has formed (*The Magic City*); and they all ride off into the sunset mounted on white steeds to live happily ever after.

Having identified the functions, we will now consider the actions, or spheres of action, as Propp has it, that provide the rules for combining the units of meaning delineated by the functions. Of this topic, Propp explains that “many functions logically join together in to certain *spheres*” (79; emphasis original). These spheres may correspond to a particular character, come together in a particular character, or be divided amongst many characters (80-81). Noticing

this fact, Barthes suggests the importance of defining “character according to participation in a sphere of action” rather than spheres according to character, for the characters may vary, but the spheres do not (“Introduction” 107). Barthes also points out that this recognition of the permanence of action and the transience of character allows for variance in the subject of the action: if the sphere of action is not dependent upon the character/s who fulfill it, then one can acknowledge the multiplicity of subjects while not compromising the structure that has been identified.

The specific actions and the functions that they fulfill are as follows:

1. ORPHAN

The first and most prominent action in an orphan story is that of the orphan. The functions fulfilled by the Orphan include II (trauma), VI (act of imagination), VIII (acceptance), XI (personal, circumstantial, and/or communal transformation), and XII (establishment).

2. ABSENT PARENTS

This action is in general noticeable by negation rather than affirmation. It fulfills function I (abandonment).

3. COMPANION

The third action is that of the companion of the orphaned character/s, who supports, encourages, and often helps them in their journey toward community. The functions fulfilled in this action include III (community), IV (befriending), VII (observation), IX (re/affirmation), XI.c (communal transformation), and XII (establishment).

4. SANCTIONING FIGURE

Action 4 is that of the sanctioning figure, usually an adult, who acts as a stand-in for the child's absent parents and often adopts the child at some point in the story. Functions fulfilled by this action include III (community), VII (observation), IX (re/affirmation), XI.c (communal transformation), and XII (establishment).

5. OPPOSING FORCE

The opposing force can be one character or many characters, and/or a personal, internal weight that the orphan/s must overcome. This action fulfills functions V (opposition) and X (soundness threatened).

6. COMMUNITY

Though this action includes actions 3 and 4, it is worth categorizing separately in that it typically stands outside of and is represented by those actions. Functions fulfilled by this action include III (community), IV (befriending), VII (observation), IX (re/affirmation), XI.c (communal transformation), and XII (establishment).

Having thus established the functions and actions of the twentieth-century children's orphan story, it remains to be seen what narrative or mythological meaning can be found in these texts. Barthes explains that narration entails mastery of a social code whereby the narrator communicates meaning to the reader. Through narration, the narrator combines "articulation, or segmentation, which produces units . . . and integration, which gathers these units into units of a higher rank (this being *meaning*)" ("Introduction" 117; emphasis original). In other words, narration is the combination of functions (narrative units) and actions such that the narrator of the story communicates meaning to the reader. A consideration of narration examines "what has been

disjoined at a certain level” and seeks to understand how it is “joined again at a higher level” (122); it examines the system of signs that compose the story with an eye toward seeing how that system creates meaning at the higher level of narrative.

With regard to twentieth-century children’s orphan stories, there are three broad categories into which the narrative meanings tend to fall. First, the historical-mythological significance suggests that orphan stories enforce the importance of the biological family structure as a means of forming normative citizens according to the predominant bourgeois standards of the time in which they were written. Here we see the Orphan as the familial other who must overcome the Opposing Force that has been brought on because of the Absent Parents and that is keeping her from entering the familial self of the Community. Through her relationship with the Companion, who acts as a representative of the Community-Self, the Orphan-Other is able to conform to the standards of selfhood and thereby to gain the approval of the Sanctioning Figure and become a member the Community.

Second, the theological significance of the orphan story structure seeks to understand the meaning of the story as demonstrating the gospel narrative of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. According to this reading, the Orphan is a representative of all humanity, which has fallen from its created state and suffers as a result of separation from the Absent Parent, God the Father. Though redeemed through the actions of the Companion (Christ/the Holy Spirit) and approved by the Sanctioning Figure (God the Father), the Orphan must continue to struggle against the Opposing Force (Satan and the evils of a fallen world) with the Community of the church until transformation is complete and he can

be established the more completely in the eternal Community of the kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth.

Finally, the twentieth century children's orphan story can be read for its psychological significance, drawing on psychoanalytic and trauma theories to suggest that these stories demonstrate psychological development in children, empower them to face subconscious fears, and suggest the importance of narrative as a means of living a connected life. Under this reading, we see the Orphan as the child experiencing a traumatically fractured relationship with the Absent Parents and facing the Opposing Force of neuroses resulting from that separation. Through narration encouraged by the Sanctioning Figure and Companion, she is enabled to create a new cognitive structure of reality and enter into the Community.

It is important to note here that, while a given orphan story may express one of these narrational meanings more obviously than the other two, all three inhere in the structural pattern of orphan stories. As Barthes suggests in his later post-structuralist works, no text has only one meaning. Instead, he suggests, every text is intertextual, and consequently laden with a multiplicity of possible meanings. Based on this understanding of the meaning of a text, Barthes writes that it is important "to 'see' each particular text in its difference" ("Struggle" 126) in order "not to reduce the text to a signified, whatever it may be . . . , but to hold its *significance* fully open" (141; emphasis original). In other words, Barthes' post-structuralist works argue that each text has many different meanings, and thus it is important not to limit the interpretation of the text to one specific meaning. This theory certainly applies to the narrative meaning of children's orphan stories: we cannot reduce the structure to these three different narrative

meanings, nor can we say that any one story demonstrates only one of these meanings. Instead, we should recognize the multiplicity of meanings that can inhere in every individual orphan story. Even when a story falls most obviously into one of the broad categories of historical, theological, and psychological meaning, it will at the same time contain some element of one or both of the other narrative meanings as well, and likely elements that do not rightly belong in any of these three.

Moreover, the structural pattern of children's orphan stories even on a functional level recognizes orphanhood as traumatic experience. Though not every orphan story will focus primarily on the psychological development of its orphaned character, the structural pattern of trauma, narration, transformation, and community has strong psychological connotations that cannot be ignored. Even at the level of the three narratives, the psychological implications of their different emphases holds true: the historical-mythological narrative emphasizes the social component of orphanhood as traumatic experience, recognizing the historical and familial fracturing that takes place through the traumatic experience of separation from parents; the theological narrative emphasizes the transformation and growth that take place in healing from traumatic experience and the importance of community in assisting in the process of recovery; and the psychological narrative rounds it all off, with special attention to the real effects of separation from biological parents. Thus, even while one particular narrational meaning may inhere in a given story more obviously than another, the story itself will demonstrate psychological characteristics by virtue of the fact that it is about one who has undergone the traumatic experience of being separated from her parents.

With the inherently traumatic nature of orphanhood in mind, we will now move on to a more thorough consideration of how the structural pattern of functions, actions, and narrations common to twentieth-century children's orphan stories manifest and mean in particular stories. I will consider three stories, one for each of the narrative meanings suggested above, each written in a different part of the century and a different part of the world, two by female authors and one by a male author. The difference of time and place in the lives of these authors demonstrates that the basic structure outlined above inheres in children's orphan stories regardless of when, where, and by whom they were written. I will begin by considering *A Little Princess* (1905), written by Frances Hodgson Burnet, a woman who moved to America from Britain when she was sixteen years old, with special attention to the historical-mythological significance of Sara Crewe's orphanhood. Next, I will consider British C.S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy* (1954), exploring the overtly theological significance of Shasta's orphanhood and restoration to his biological family. Finally, I will conclude with American Katherine Patterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1978), considering how Gilly illustrates the psychological significance of twentieth-century children's orphan story structure. In each case, I will demonstrate how seeing orphanhood as traumatic experience informs the stories' different significances.

Sara Crewe and Historical Consciousness through Orphan Narrative

Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* tells the story of a little girl who, after losing her father and her fortune and suffering for a time at the hands of a hateful school mistress, is restored to wealth and happiness. This fairy-tale in

realist form was published in 1887 as the serialized story *Sara Crewe: or, What Happened at Miss Minchin's*, retold in Burnett's 1902 play *A Little Un-Fairy Princess*, and finally published in 1905 as the beloved children's novel. Like other twentieth-century⁵ children's orphan stories, this novel exhibits the twelve functions and six actions identified above, and Sara very clearly occupies the first and most prominent action of the Orphan. However, while Sara is the primary orphaned character in this tale, the novel also depicts another orphaned girl: Becky, the scullery maid at Miss Minchin's Select Seminary for Young Ladies who eventually becomes Sara's attendant. This character plays an important role in the development of the story, and her status as orphan, especially in conjunction with Sara's occupation of the same position, bears further consideration.

This is especially true in light of the historical-mythological significance of twentieth-century children's orphan stories, especially in that *A Little Princess* uses both of the orphaned characters and the similarities and differences between them to enforce the class structures prominent at the beginning of the twentieth century. To demonstrate this fact, I will compare the way that Sara and Becky occupy the structural action of Orphan in *A Little Princess*. Though the novel employs these structural parallels between Sara Crewe and Becky in an attempt to demonstrate equality and solidarity between children of all classes, it nonetheless maintains early twentieth-century class structures, ultimately failing

⁵ Though the publication dates and content of this novel belong in many respects to the late nineteenth century, the novel itself set a precedent for what followed, and is therefore important to consider as belonging to this genre.

to escape from the bourgeois Self/proletariat Other distinction assumed by the society within which it was written.

In recognizing that both Sara and Becky occupy the action of Orphan, it is significant that they do so in their own distinct though intersecting orphan stories. That is, rather than occupying the same action, which Propp acknowledges as a possibility (80-81), Sara and Becky occupy the action of Orphan in their own separate stories while occupying different actions in the story of the other child. Because this is the case, we will look here at each of the characters individually, discussing how they each occupy the action of Orphan in their distinct stories.

The primary orphaned character in *A Little Princess* is of course Sara Crewe, the fanciful child whose imaginings and circumstances earn her the designation afforded by the title of the book. Sara, as the orphaned protagonist of the novel, perfectly and straightforwardly occupies the action of Orphan, fulfilling each of the five functions assumed by this role. Thus, Sara fulfills function II in experiencing trauma upon the death of her loving and indulgent father, both in his death itself and because of the abusive treatment she experiences as a result of his death and loss of fortune. As Marilyn Pemberton notes, "in this story Burnett is very much interested in the trauma of loss and abandonment" (163). Indeed, the very way in which Sara first hears about her father's death is traumatizing: in the middle of her eleventh birthday party, Captain Crewe's solicitor breaks the news of his death to Miss Minchin, who immediately disbands the party and banishes Sara from her comfortable parlor to the cold, dreary, rat-infested attic. The reader is told that the night following the reception of this news, Sara "lived through a wild, unchildlike woe of which

she never spoke to anyone about her" (116); had it not been for the distraction occasioned by the discomfort of her surroundings, "the anguish of her young mind might have been too great for a child to bear" (116).

Though Sara accepts her new lot without complaint, her misery "made her forget things" even to the point of being unkind to Ermengarde St. John, the only one of her former playfellows who demonstrates any inclination toward kindness after Sara has begun to show the signs of her misfortunes (125). It is only after she enters a new community in her role as servant (function III), is befriended first by Becky and then by Ermengarde (function IV), and experiences opposition from the other servants in entering into her new role (function V) that Sara begins to exercise her imagination again (function VI). When Ermengarde decides to climb the stairs to Sara's attic and extend a hand of friendship several weeks after Sara receives news of her father's death, Sara's "imagination . . . begin[s] to work for her" though "[i]t had not worked for her at all since her trouble had come upon her. She had felt as if she had been stunned" (130). Though Sara had always been a fanciful child, the trauma that she had experienced upon the death of her father temporarily put her imaginative capacity to rest. In losing her father, Sara experiences trauma, and it is only after the period of latency described by Caruth as inherent to the traumatic experience ("Introduction" 8) that she is able to process that trauma. Ermengarde's friendship awakens this old characteristic, and Sara begins to imagine herself a prisoner in the Bastille: "A well-known glow came into Sara's eyes" (130), and after a time she starts "looking quite like the old Sara" (131). The child is able to regain some of her former composure by engaging in an act of the imagination,

picturing herself in the alternative life of a deposed and mistreated yet still kind and courteous princess.

From this time forward, Sara's imaginative propensity enables her to accept the situation in which she finds herself more fully than she could before, fulfilling function VIII. She begins to see the beauty of the London sky above the rooftops (135). She makes friends with the rats who live in the walls of the attic (145). And when Ermengarde comments upon the strangeness of Sara's romantic imaginings, she explains, "I can't help making up things. If I didn't, I don't believe I could live" (147). It is her imaginings, especially those in which she pictures herself as a misplaced but true princess, that empower Sara to bear up under the horrifying circumstances in which she finds herself.

As she accepts her circumstances, transformation occurs, to Sara as a person, to her circumstances, and to the community of which she is a part (function XI). Personally, Sara's acceptance enables her not just to pretend to be a princess, but to exhibit the kind and generous tendencies that she associates with that position.⁶ Though Sara exhibits a capacity for generosity and kindness at the beginning of the book, the trials that she faces enable her to gain an understanding of the suffering of others and thereby to become what she was only potentially at the beginning of the novel. Thus, as Elizabeth Rose Gruner writes, "Sara grows, and she grows through the exercise of imagination—specifically, storytelling" (171); as she exercises her imagination, Sara is able to

⁶ While Phyllis Bixler Koppes suggests that Sara does not actually grow as a character, but is rather revealed, as the story progresses, to be what she already was at the beginning of the book, I would argue that this revelation itself entails transformation.

become in reality what she had only imagined herself to be before: one who lives selflessly even in the midst of trial.

In addition to this personal transformation, Sara's circumstances are also transformed (XI.b). When the Indian gentleman, Mr. Carrisford, who lives "on the other side of the wall" in the row of houses containing Miss Minchin's school (184), begins to take an interest in the forlorn but polite little girl in the attic, Sara's bare room is transformed into a cozy and comfortable space. When she later finds the Indian gentleman's monkey peeping through her window and carries it to him, Mr. Carrisford recognizes her as the child of his dead friend, Sara's circumstances are permanently transformed as she goes to live as a young heiress with the man whom she had formerly held responsible for her father's death.

Finally, Sara's community is transformed by her presence, both before and after her fortune has been restored (XI.c). Before that event, Sara transforms the lives of some of the girls at the school—most particularly Becky, who tells her one dreary winter night, "'twarn't for you, an' the Bastille, an' bein' the prisoner in the next cell, I should die" (198). It is through Sara that Becky is able to hold up under the abuse that she experiences. Later, after Sara's fortunes are restored, she further transforms her community with Becky by taking the scullery maid with her as her personal attendant (312). Sara also transforms the Indian gentleman himself. Shortly after Sara is identified as the lost child of Captain Crewe, Mr. Carmichael, Mr. Carrisford's lawyer, notes to his wife, "The man will be himself again in three weeks" (297). Within a short time, he is indeed able to leave his chair beside the fire and accompany his new companion, whom he likes more than any other he ever had (316), on her excursion to the baker's shop. Here

Sara finally transforms the lives of many beggar children by commissioning the “bun-woman” to share her wares with those in need of sustenance at Sara’s expense (319-20).

In conjunction with her transformation of the community around her, Sara is established in that new community herself, fulfilling the last of the functions designated to the action of Orphan (function XII). She is launched in her new life with Mr. Carrisford, becoming a companion to him as she was to her father and living a life of luxury in her new home. In thus being established in a new community, Sara permanently overcomes the difficulties resulting from her position as an orphan, completing the action of Orphan within the novel.

While Sara thus perfectly and most obviously occupies the action of Orphan in *A Little Princess*, Becky, the scullery maid at Miss Minchin’s school, also occupies that action in her own, less central, story. Though Becky’s story overlaps with Sara’s, it is separate from it, and Becky fulfills several of the functions at different points in the story than does Sara. For example, Becky experiences the trauma of losing her parents before the book opens (function II). Though the reader does not see the traumatizing event, the fact of the trauma is no less real in the life of the child character, especially because that trauma is followed by abusive treatment. When Sara first enquires about “that little girl who makes the fires” (57), Mariette, her maid, paints a bleak picture of the “forlorn little thing who had just taken the place of scullery maid—though, as to being scullery maid, she was everything else besides” (57). Mariette explains the tasks that the girl performs, expressing sympathy toward her in her stunted physical and emotional development, concluding that “[s]he was so timid that if one chanced to speak to her it appeared as if her poor, frightened eyes would

jump out of her head" (57-58). This description of Becky entails abuse, trauma, and the terror that often results from such conditions.

Though this is the case at the beginning of the story, when Becky is befriended by Sara (function III), and thereby introduced to a new and for the first time benevolent community (function IV), and in spite of the fact that that community can only be enjoyed at odd intervals when she and Sara can spare a few moments between their typical daily routines (function V), Becky begins to engage in an act of the imagination that had not previously been possible for her. This appears in the eagerness with which she listens to Sara's stories. Though Becky at first catches only a bit of the story of the merpeople as Sara tells it to the other pupils of the school, when Sara befriends her, Becky is allowed to hear the whole of the wonderful tale in installments when she reaches Sara's room in the afternoon. As their friendship develops, Becky begins to grow stronger—and not just because of the meat pies that Sara gives to her. Becky lies awake in bed at night remembering the wonderful stories that Sara has told and thinking about the kindness that she receives from her young friend, and that kindness, as manifest in the laughter that they enjoy together, "is the best help of all" (80). Even after Sara has lost her fortune and been banished to the attic, Becky continues to engage in acts of the imagination. She slips easily into the role of "the prisoner in the next cell" (148), and when Sara begins to transform the attic into a banquet hall for the impromptu feast that Ermengarde provides, the young scullery maid enters into the imaginings with whole-hearted, if largely unsuccessful, zeal (243-44). Through the imaginative space provided by Sara, Becky's own imagination is nourished, growing stronger than it had ever been before.

The next function fulfilled by the Orphan of accepting her state is only hinted at in Becky's case (function VIII). This is, I would argue, owing to the fact that she is not the protagonist of the novel as a whole. Becky's acceptance comes from the physical comforts that she receives as she enters into the romanticized imaginative space provided for Sara by Ram Dass and the Indian gentleman. Through the nourishment and comfort that she receives thereby, Becky is able to bear up anew under the trials that her position entails.

Transformation occurs in Becky as she begins to lose the timidity that she demonstrates at the beginning of the story (function XI). Thus, when she is invited into the communal space occupied by the schoolgirls, first in Sara's parlor, then at her friend's birthday party, then at Ermengarde's feast in Sara's attic, and then in Sara's newly furnished attic room, Becky is increasingly willing to participate in and enjoy the comforts that these different spaces afford. This personal transformation reaches its climax with her circumstantial transformation when she becomes Sara's attendant after that young lady has received her inheritance.

This last transformation also encompasses the final function fulfilled by Becky as Orphan: her establishment in a new community (function XII). This establishment and the good effect that it has on Becky's health and happiness is briefly mentioned in the last chapter, when Miss Minchin sees a "very irritating" sight: "Becky, who, in the character of delighted attendant, always accompanied her young mistress to her carriage, carrying wraps and belongings" (319). Becky is established in her new community at Mr. Carrisford's, thus demonstrating the final function of the Orphan.

Through this analysis, it is evident that both Sara and Becky occupy the action of Orphan in their separate yet intertwined orphan stories. In thus paralleling the characters, the novel emphasizes the commonality of human experience and the equality of personhood in all little girls regardless of their position in society—an undoubted theme throughout the book. This theme is evident in Sara’s repeated comments upon the similarities between herself and others. For example, Ermengarde is described by the narrator as “a notably and unmistakably dull creature who never shone in anything” (31) who has no imagination of her own (247) and struggles to remember what she has learned (28), while Sara is “clever” (32). However, Sara explains this not as an inherent difference between herself and her friend, but as a matter of circumstance: Ermengarde would also be able to speak French (32), make up stories (33), and remember her history lessons (227) if only she is taught in the right way. Even when Sara does admit a dissimilarity between herself and her friend, she “tried not to let her feel too strongly the difference between being able to learn anything all at once, and not being able to learn anything at all” (229). Though she is aware of the difference between herself and Ermengarde, Sara is careful not to let that difference affect their friendship or how she sees Ermengarde as a person.

Sara also compares herself with other characters in the book with whom it is even less desirable to be associated. She compares herself with Lottie, the spoiled and temperamental child whom she “adopts” as her daughter at the school, by noting that she, too, does not have a living mother (48). Sara goes so far as to notice the similarities between herself and Lavinia, one of the older girls at the school who is pointedly unkind to Sara both before and after she has lost her father, and even between herself and Miss Minchin. As she tells Ermengarde

early in the novel, “Perhaps I have not really a good temper at all, but if you have everything you want and everyone is kind to you, how can you help but be good-tempered? . . . Perhaps I’m a *hideous* child, and no one will ever know, just because I never have any trials” (40-41; emphasis original). Later in the book this attitude of equality comes out again when she tells Ermengarde, “*Everything’s* a story. You are a story—I am a story. Miss Minchin’s a story” (149; emphasis original). It is in this perception of everyone as story that Sara notes the similarity between herself and all the others in the book: though the particulars of their stories are different, everyone exists in a story and is therefore essentially the same. In each of these instances, the novel emphasizes the commonality of the human experience across social, intellectual, and generational boundaries.

This same illustration of similarity is evident in the parallel between Sara and Becky as orphaned characters: both experience trauma, participate in an act of the imagination, accept their state, experience personal, circumstantial, and/or communal transformation, and are established in a new community. They are the same, the novel tells us. The child handing sixpences to poor little orphaned girl could become the poor little orphaned girl herself on the slightest provocation, and therefore we must recognize the inherent personhood of the poor little orphaned girl and treat her accordingly, even though her circumstances may be less than desirable.

While it is true that the novel does thus emphasize the similarities between the characters, it is equally important to recognize that the historical-mythological import of early twentieth-century ideology of class hierarchy remains in place even when Sara has joined Becky in the attic. Though the characters are in the same position—drudges in the same establishment, living in

the same attic, fed equally malnourishing food—they are always of two essentially different social spheres. As Manisha Mirchandani notes, Sara’s “class background is never in doubt: her polite mannerisms and proper use of English—contrasted with Becky the servant girl’s working-class dialect and accent—clearly indicate her privileged upbringing” (15). Gruner likewise recognizes this fact in her analysis of *A Little Princess* as a Cinderella story. She explains that the fairy tale “dramatizes a class mobility that is really not one: that is, while she can seem—like so many self-made men of the period—to rise to wealth on her own merits, her elevation is always carefully accounted for by her ‘birth,’ her ‘natural’ goodness and, more importantly, nobility” (167). In paralleling this aspect of the fairy story with *A Little Princess*, Gruner argues that “the novel’s border-crossing logic never quite breaks down those borders. Becky remains a servant even in Sara’s restored status; the colonial enterprise that furnishes Sara’s wealth is never called into question” (179). Despite the apparent similarities between the characters, Sara and Becky occupy two distinct and mutually exclusive social spheres: Sara is always bourgeois, even when she is performing the tasks assigned to the proletariat, and Becky is never allowed to experience a bourgeois form of existence, instead moving from one proletariat space to another.⁷

⁷ In this maintenance of class distinction, *A Little Princess* confirms the observations of Marxist theorists Louis Althusser and Pierre Macherey on the nature of art as conveying the ideology of the culture that produces it. According to Althusser, literature, as a form of art, “makes us see . . . the ideology from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art, and to which it alludes” (222; emphasis original). That is, art does not give the reader a view of reality per se, but rather helps us to see the ideology through which we view reality. Althusser goes on to explain that art presupposes an ideology, defamiliarizing that ideology such that the reader is able to see it differently, making obvious the mythological nature of the myth that we take as history. Macherey continues to develop Althusser’s thesis, suggesting that art must be considered in conjunction with the society that produces it because works of art are

Thus, though *A Little Princess* attempts to show equality across class boundaries by structurally paralleling the stories of Sara and Becky, it ultimately fails to escape from the social structures of the early twentieth-century environment in which it was written. In making this ideological move, the novel plainly demonstrates the historical-mythological significance suggested above. Granted, it does not demonstrate what we might call the “pure” historical-mythological narrative, especially in that at least one of Sara’s Companions (Becky) does not represent the bourgeois Selfhood that Sara eventually reenters. However, the novel does quite obviously carry out the task of enforcing the normative structures of the predominant bourgeois standards of the time, bringing Sara as the Orphan-Other into conformity with the standards of familial and class Selfhood.

distorted in the same way that the society itself is distorted. Art shows up the gaps, contradictions, absences, and cracks in an ideology, helping the reader to recognize them as such.

This is true of *A Little Princess*, in which the reader is able to identify the gaps in the model of equality in class structure that the novel presents. The novel as a whole demonstrates an unmistakable ideology of equal personhood across classes. Though there may be variations in the particular circumstances of one’s life, the novel tells us, all human beings are equal in their personhood, whether they sweep streets or ride in carriages, scatter largess or receive sixpences on charity. Witness Sara and Becky: though one was born into a wealthy family and the other has no known history but has evidently grown up in near poverty, both are still just little girls who need community and imagination in order to be able to function. As Sara tells Becky the first time they meet, “we are just the same—I am only a little girl like you” (64). Class differences are purely circumstantial, and if we can just get beyond them we will see that we are all in fact the same.

At the same time that it sends this message, however, the novel also supports the idea that that equality of personhood can only be exercised if the bourgeoisie chooses to recognize the personhood of the proletariat. Becky’s imagination and transformation are enabled only by her interaction with the Sara; she is able to exercise her personhood only because Sara as a member of the bourgeoisie has recognized it, and then only in the degree to which Sara dictates in making Becky her attendant rather than her companion. As Mavis Reimer notes, “the imagination is the marker of privilege and the occasion for the operations of power” (131); Becky’s imaginings are contingent upon her interaction with the privileged Sara, and they enforce rather than undermine the power positions occupied by the girls. Even Sara, who is always “a little princess” even when her circumstances seem to say otherwise, is dependent upon the bourgeois adults in her life to regain her personhood and respectability. It is only in being recognized by the bourgeoisie that those in the proletariat are able to realize their personhood, and then only as much as the bourgeoisie allows.

While the historical-mythological narrative clearly inheres in the novel, it does so *through* the basic traumatized-orphan structure. Even while it sends its particular historical-mythological message of the primacy of the bourgeoisie, the novel still demonstrates the basic structural pattern that is common to all twentieth-century children's orphan stories, with all its elements of orphanhood as traumatic experience. It manipulates this pattern in order to convey one particular meaning—the historical-mythical meaning of class relations—but it does so through the pattern of a traumatized orphan learning to function in society and experiencing personal transformation as a result of engaging in an act of imagination. The traumatized orphan, with all her psychological significance, remains at the forefront of the reader's imagination, informing our understanding of Sara as the bourgeois heroine of this romantic-realist tale.

"Narnia and the North!": The Theological Orphan

The presence of the twentieth-century children's orphan story structure, and the evidence of traumatic experience and of the power of imagination in overcoming that trauma, is also evident in C.S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy*. As the children and the talking horses travel from Calormen to Narnia, and as Shasta discovers his identity as son of King Lune and heir to the throne of Archenland, this story clearly inheres the second, theological narrative meaning proposed above.⁸ In this section, I will consider how that narrative meaning is demonstrated in *The Horse and His Boy*. Lewis's overtly theological story lends

⁸ Lewis is perhaps one of the best authors to examine for this theological meaning. His overt Christianity, and the way in which that Christianity figures prominently in his writing, provide an obvious starting point when considering the theological meaning of twentieth-century children's orphan stories.

itself to this interpretation, clearly demonstrating the creation-fall-redemption-restoration pattern inherent in the theological meaning of the orphan story. After discussing the theological orphan pattern more fully, I will argue that Lewis's tale demonstrates the orphan story structure on two levels: first, in Shasta's physical restoration to his father with the help of various characters; and second, in the four fugitives' spiritual restoration to the "holy" space of Narnia itself with the help of Aslan. In so doing, *The Horse and His Boy* demonstrates the theological significance of orphanhood, suggesting the power of communion with God the Father in bringing joy and security. As one anonymous writer explains of this tale, it profoundly illustrates "the journey from chaos to cosmos; from far-off barbarous Calormen to Narnia, the homeland; from slavery to sonship" ("Narnia" 6).

Before exploring Lewis's story, there are two points related to the theological meaning of orphan stories that should be more fully developed. First is the Christian metanarrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration mentioned above. This pattern, as David Lyle Jeffrey and Gregory Maillet suggest, is one of the "crucial, interdependent epistemological elements" of a Christian understanding of reality that informs their philosophy of literature (71). Because this metanarrative pattern is thus essential to Christian reality and Christian thought, we can safely assume that it will manifest in a narrative structure that inheres a Christian theological orphan story meaning.⁹

⁹ Note that Jeffrey and Maillet do not claim this pattern is present in all of literature, but rather that Christian readers will have a theologically-based, philosophical understanding that this pattern informs reality. In the present case, I am noticing this pattern in the structure of children's orphan stories as one way in which it exhibits an explicitly Christian theological significance.

In explaining the various points of this Christian metanarrative, Jeffrey and Maillet identify the first stage, creation, in recognizing that “human nature was designed for a fullness of life in loving communion with the triune God” (71). However, “Adam and Eve’s decision to experience evil mars the communion God intended, making the human race that descends from them incapable of fully knowing and living the moral good” (71); this is the second stage, the fall. Jeffrey and Maillet continue, “In this life, Christians believe, we cannot understand our own human nature except through the restored unity ... created by the life and sacrificial death of the incarnate Son of God, the Christ” (72); this is the third stage, redemption. The fourth and final stage, restoration, is evident in that “[e]ternal salvation is offered by Christ and, through his grace, received by believers, who must still undergo a process of sanctification, or continual conversion toward a full restoration of the divine image” (72).

Because this pattern is, as Jeffrey and Maillet suggest, essential to a Christian understanding of how the world operates, it is safe to assume that this pattern will inhere in any story displaying a theological narrative meaning. And, indeed, this is the case. We see creation and fall in function I (abandonment), as the orphaned child is first born into and then separated from communion with her family. We see the fall again in the marred community and difficult experiences encountered by the orphan as she seeks to enter into a new community and experiences opposition to doing so in functions II (trauma), V (opposition), X (soundness threatened), and implicit in function XI (personal, circumstantial, and/or communal transformation). Redemption comes as the orphan is accepted and affirmed by others in functions III (community), IV (befriending), VII (observation), and IX (re/affirmation). Finally, we see the

gradual process of restoration in functions VI (act of imagination), VIII (acceptance), XI (personal, circumstantial, and / or communal transformation), and XII (establishment).

More plainly even than this, we see the narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration played out in the specific actions of children's orphan stories. There are three major players in Jeffrey and Maillet's explanation of the Christian metanarrative: God the Father, Christ, and humanity. We see God the Father in the actions of Absent Parent, as fallen humanity is separated from "loving communion with the triune God" (Jeffrey and Maillet 71), and in the Sanctioning Figure, who fills the role of the parent for the restored orphan. We see Christ, and, I would suggest, the Holy Spirit,¹⁰ whose role is to bring restored unity and eternal salvation to the believer, in the action of the Companion, who supports, encourages, and often helps the orphaned characters in their journey toward community. We see humanity in the Orphan, separated from the communion for which she was created and experiencing sanctifying transformation throughout the story. This leaves the Opposing Force and the Community, both of which are implicit in the Christian metanarrative outlined above. The Opposing Force is evident in the evil and incapacity of humanity brought about by the fall, and in the devil who, though not mentioned by Jeffrey and Maillet, is the active enemy of God and of all Christians. Finally, the Community is evident in the church as the gathering of those who have experienced redemption through Christ, and in the church universal that will be

¹⁰ Jeffrey and Maillet mention the third person of the Trinity only indirectly in referring to the triune God with whom human beings were created to live in communion.

brought to completion in the kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth.

This leads into the second preliminary observation about the theological narrative meaning: this meaning is significant in the way that it varies from the others, particularly the relationship between spheres of action and in the centrality of the father. The variation in relationship between spheres of action is found in the roles of the Absent Parent, Companion, and Sanctioning Figure. Most obviously, the Absent Parent and the Sanctioning figure are one and the same: it is absence from God the Father that causes humanity's trouble, and it is reunion with God the Father that restores humanity to their created purpose. The Companion (Christ/the Holy Spirit) is also implicated in this, as orthodox Christianity recognizes God as triune, existing as one being in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. In that sense, the Orphan/humanity suffers from, is redeemed by, and experiences restored fellowship with God through the work of God. Rather than entering into a new community with new parental and companion figures, in this narrative the Orphan experiences a purer form of narritival wholeness than in the other patterns, being restored to the family from which he was separated in the first place. In that regard, the theological reading of the orphan story structure is more complete and typological than the others, recognizing the value of the pre-orphaned, biological family structure for which orphaned children long by presenting not just a new normal for the Orphan, but a restoration and expansion of the old normal.

In addition, the theological meaning varies from the others in that it is the father, not the mother, who figures most importantly.¹¹ Though the mother is more obviously psychologically significant in a child's development, and thus more missed when she is absent, the father does play an immensely important role. In their longitudinal study of the importance of the father's role, Karin Grossman and her colleagues found that fathers play as important a role as mothers in a child's life, though the role of the father is different from that of the mother. As they explain, "Father's play sensitivity seems to be as much a part of the child-father attachment system as maternal caregiving sensitivity is part of the infant-mother attachment system if attachment is conceived of as a balance between the infants' attachment and exploratory behaviors" (324). Because this is the case, "children's model of self as competent and worthy of help seems to derive from a wide variety of attachment experiences with each parent" (327). Richard Bowlby, John Bowlby's son, in an interview with Lisa A. Newland and Diana D. Coyl, similarly recognizes the importance of the father's role. He explains that attachment theory since the early twenty-first century has found that the father is not a secondary but a second primary attachment figure for children, providing them with "exploration and excitement when times are favourable" (qtd. in Newland and Coyl 27). This role is equally important to the role of the mother in establishing a secure base for the child from which he can explore (28). Though the father's role is different from the mother's, it is equally important to the healthy psychological development of the child.

¹¹ It is worth noting that different Christian traditions might consider in this context the significance of the mother as represented by Mary, the church, or the Holy Spirit. While each of these are worth pursuing, in the present study I focus on the way that the father is more important than the mother in the primacy of God the Father to the theological narrative of orphan stories.

This is particularly important when considering the theological import of the orphan story, for, as Jeffrey writes, one important motif in twentieth century writing “seems to have been borne of a deep nostalgia, a yearning after spiritual fulfillment, an ache for a lost beauty paved over, even . . . a yearning for a love which somehow got lost through willed or unwilled *absence* of the fathers” (120; emphasis original). Twentieth-century works are more or less obviously aware of the significance of the father in his very absence, often demonstrating “the uncompleted aspiration and yet healing trajectory of a father’s love” (130). As Jeffrey and the Christian metanarrative suggest, this pattern of desire for the father is fulfilled in communion with God the Father, who is described by the biblical psalmist as “father of the fatherless” (*Holy Bible*, Ps. 68:5).¹²

In the case of *The Horse and His Boy*, the Christian metanarrative and the theological orphan story narrative are at work in both the physical and the spiritual levels on which the story operates. Monika B. Hilder recognizes these two levels when she writes of the novel’s theme of fugitiveness that it is evident in “not only physical flight but a flight from mental and spiritual bondage” (98). To demonstrate the tale’s use of physical and spiritual orphanhood, we now turn to the novel, where we will consider first Shasta’s physical orphanhood and

¹² The parallel between the Christian metanarrative and the orphan story is not a perfect one-to-one correspondence. For instance, I am aware, in making the claim that the Companion is a representative of Christ, that the role of the Companion is not as significant in the life of the Orphan as is the role of Christ in the life of the Christian. Likewise, some may object to God the Father fulfilling both the role of the Absent Parents and the Sanctioning Figure, arguing that, if this is the case, the story is not a true orphan story at all. However, there are clear parallels between the Companion, who welcomes the Orphan to and aids the Orphan in entering the Community, and Christ, through whom the Christian gains access to God the Father and by whose grace she lives the Christian life. Again, there are parallels between the Absent Parent/Sanctioning Figure, whose absence causes trauma and whose sanction brings wholeness, and God the Father, whose absence is evil and whose acceptance is joy.

restoration to his biological father with the help of various characters along the way, and then all four travelers' spiritual orphanhood and restoration to "holy" space of Narnia and the North by the help of Aslan. At both of these levels, we will see the theological meaning of the orphan story pattern in the creation, fall, restoration, and redemption that the characters experience.¹³

Shasta's physical separation from his family is the novel's most obvious use of the orphan trope.¹⁴ Separated from his biological and noble family at a young age and brought up by the abusive fisherman Arsheesh, Shasta's early life is anything but pleasant. He is exposed to trauma both in his separation from his parents and in the abusive treatment to which he is put by his so-called father. Early in the novel we learn that, when Arsheesh's daily fishing or trading go badly, the fisherman "would find fault with [Shasta] and perhaps beat him" (2). Shasta is in danger of such treatment even when he asks a simple question, for "if the fisherman was in a bad temper he would box Shasta's ears and tell him to attend to his work" (3). This abuse extends also to the labor to which the boy is put. As the Tarkaan early in the novel observes, Arsheesh "had ten times the worth of his daily bread out of him in labor, as anyone can see" (7). After overhearing the conversation between Arsheesh and the Tarkaan, the narrator tells us that Shasta's "life was already little better than slavery" (8). Though "adopted" by the fisherman, Shasta in fact receives abusive treatment at his

¹³ Nancy-Lou Patterson calls this the tale's "Christian dialectic of good created, marred, and restored by a new good" (24).

¹⁴ I say "most obvious use" because, for one, Shasta is not properly an orphan at all, for his father is still alive, though he is unaware of the fact until late in the novel. In addition, Bree and Hwin, both of whom were stolen from their families when they were young (10, 32), and Aravis, who has chosen to run away from her family in order to avoid an undesirable marriage (44), are also orphan characters of sorts, inasmuch as they, like Shasta, are separated from their families with little hope of being reunited.

hands, which, especially coming from one who is supposed to be filling the role of father, could justifiably be called traumatic. As Hilder writes, the liveliness of Corin, Shasta's long-lost twin, highlights Shasta's "inner slavery," "underscor[ing] the extent of Shasta's wounding in Calormen" (110). Shasta undoubtedly fulfills the role of Orphan, particularly in this traumatic wounding brought about by separation from his family.

Though Arsheesh's willingness to sell Shasta (for a proper sum) could reasonably lead to further trauma for the boy, the discovery of his history and the subsequent discovery that the Tarkaan's horse is a Narnian talking beast prove to be the beginnings of Shasta's redemption from slavery and restoration to his biological family. In his willingness to travel north with the boy, Bree actively participates in Shasta's redemption by occupying the sphere of the physical Companion to Shasta's physical Orphan. As Shasta tells Bree when he suggests going north, "I've been longing to go to the North all my life" (13); however, it is only after Bree, himself "a free Narnian" (12-13), proposes they escape together that Shasta makes any definitive move toward pursuing his desire. Similarly, it is with the help of the Narnians in Tashbaan, toward whom Shasta feels an undeniable attraction and desire for friendship (63), that he, Bree, Hwin, and Aravis manage to cross the dessert. The Hermit of the Southern March aids Shasta in reaching King Lune by telling him his direction and urging him to "run, run: always run" (156); Aslan interferes several times in the boy's story to unite him with Aravis and Hwin, comfort him when he is alone at night at the tombs, protect from jackals, guide the boat in which he slept as an infant to Arsheesh (175-76), and keep him safe as he travels through the mountains in

dense fog (180); and the band of Narnians who go to the aid of King Lune ultimately lead Shasta to the father from whom he had been so long separated.

In being restored to his father, Shasta demonstrates the variant yet prototypical pattern of separation from and restoration to biological parents, as well as the significance of the role of the father, that is essential to the theological narrative meaning of the twentieth-century children's orphan story. Indeed, the mother of Shasta/Cor and Corin receives only slight reference throughout the novel. It is King Lune to whom Shasta is restored, King Lune who shows love for his long-lost son, King Lune who, as Hilder says, "is overjoyed that Cor will take his place and does everything in his power to train the crown prince to replace him in a legacy of just rule" (105). Though he was initially only tagging along with the Narnian Bree, hoping to find a home in the northern country to which he was a stranger, Shasta's identity as son of King Lune provides him with home, family, and a sure community. As the final pages of the book assure us, Shasta/Cor is fully confirmed as part of the community of the north, joyfully established on his throne, happily married to Aravis, father of "the most famous of all the kings of Archenland," and often visited by his Narnian friends (241). The fatherless orphan has been identified as the descendent of a great and noble line. Thus, the theological significance of the orphan story inheres in Shasta's story of physical orphanhood, paralleling the Christian understanding of relationship with God as ultimately important to eternal satisfaction.

The second level on which the orphan trope operates in *The Horse and His Boy* is spiritual, where all four of the fugitives from Calormen—Shasta, Aravis, Bree, and Hwin—are restored to the "holy" space of the north, with the help of and to communion with Aslan. At this spiritual level, all four of the fugitives

from Calormen are orphaned, separated from communion with Aslan. Shasta's spiritual orphanhood is evident in his moral poverty and lack of imagination; though he longs for the north (symbolically for relationship with Aslan/triune God), he is unable to form any plan of getting there on his own. Likewise, Bree, though claiming from the beginning of the novel to be "a free Narnian" (12-13), is terribly afraid of lions (27, 160)—of relationship with God as represented by the lion Aslan—even going so far as to deny that there is anything to the stories of Aslan being a lion (214). Hwin, the most spiritually mature of the four at the beginning of the novel, demonstrates a degree of meekness—a characteristic which, according to Christian tradition, indicates spiritual maturity—that borders on servility (46, 49). And Aravis inherits the sinful scorn and pride that are characteristic of the aristocratic class from which she comes (33, 56). Each of these characteristics shows the spiritual orphanhood of the characters. Rather than having confidence in their standing before a loving heavenly Father, they instead operate out of fear, servility, and self-conceit.

However, as the novel progresses, and particularly when they encounter Aslan, these spiritual orphans are redeemed from their spiritual orphanhood and restored to spiritual childhood. That Aslan is Narnia's Christ figure is beyond dispute. As Peter Schakel writes, "Aslan does not *stand for* Christ, he *is* Christ, in his Narnian incarnation" (10; emphasis original). More than that, Aslan "mysteriously imag[es] the Trinity, a single God in three persons, one of the most enigmatic of Christian mysteries" (12). Marvin D. Hinten unpacks the triunity of Aslan's character as demonstrated in his response to Shasta's request to know who is walking beside him. Aslan answers Shasta's question of who he is by repeating three times in different tones of voice that he is "Myself" (176). Hinten

writes that Lewis here draws on a literary device that “occurs occasionally in English Renaissance religious poetry” by which different words are symbolic of different persons of the Trinity (18). Thus, “[t]he three-fold repetition of ‘Myself’ represents the Trinity, with a deep voice being the Father (for power), the clear voice the Son (for brightness), and the whispered voice the Spirit (with associations of Greek ‘pneuma’ and Latin ‘spiritus’ with breath and wind . . .)” (18).

The triune character of Aslan is important when considering the theological meaning of *The Horse and His Boy* because the lion plays the roles ascribed to God the Father (Absent Parent and Sanctioning Figure) as well as that ascribed to God the Son and God the Spirit (Companion). As this Narnian incarnation of Christ/ the Holy Spirit, Aslan plays the role of the Companion to the fugitives’ Orphan. When Shasta at last speaks to the phantom walking beside him in the mist, Aslan explains his role in Shasta’s adventures:

I was the lion who forced you to join with Aravis. I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals away from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the Horses the new strength of fear for the last mile or so that you should reach King Lune in time. And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay, a child near death, so that it came to shore where a man sat, wakeful at midnight, to receive you. (175-76)

When he later speaks to Bree, Hwin, and Aravis, Aslan proves foolish Bree’s high-minded denial of Aslan’s lion’s form (215), makes Hwin bold in her approach to the beautiful beast (215), and teaches Aravis the value of all people as such (216). It is through Aslan’s direct aid that the major events of the story take place, and it is through his aid that the fugitives come to know their own position, both in its humility and in its power.

In addition to fulfilling this role of Christ/Holy Spirit as orphan-story Companion, Aslan also fulfills the role of the Father as orphan-story Absent Parent/Sanctioning Figure. Thus, it is in separation from Aslan that the fugitives are subject to spiritual orphanhood; because they do not know the power and the kindness of Aslan, they must rely on their own ability, or retreat in fear because of their inability. In entering into relationship with the lion, they experience spiritual childhood, resting in his fatherly ability to protect, direct, and care for them. As Hilder explains, Shasta's "intuitive longing for the north, as for all four fugitives, is a restless search for the numinous that is at last answered in receiving Aslan" (111). When he finally encounters the lion, "Shasta learns that in the truest sense he was never an orphan, never ultimately destitute" (112); though apparently alone, he and his companions have always been under the care of the powerful lion.

In its physical and spiritual use of the orphan story trope, *The Horse and His Boy* illustrates the theological significance of the twentieth-century children's orphan story structure. We see this first in the novel's use of the Christian metanarrative of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration as the characters experience of physical and spiritual orphanhood, from which they are redeemed through the help of various companions to relationship with their physical or spiritual father. And we see it second in the way that the orphan story pattern varies as the characters are restored to the physical or spiritual family from which they had been separated, and in the novel's highlighting of the father as the key parental figure.

While it thus demonstrates the theological narrative of the orphan story structure, as with the historical-mythological narrative in *A Little Princess*, *The*

Horse and His Boy does not demonstrate the “pure” theological meaning suggested above. In any specific instance of a trope’s appearance, the text in which that trope appears is, as Barthes suggests, intertextual and laden with various meanings that may complicate the trope itself. Thus, even with its variations, *The Horse and His Boy* inheres the traumatized orphan structure of all twentieth-century children’s orphan stories. While it clearly emphasizes the theological narrative, the novel does so through the structure of orphanhood as traumatic experience proposed above, assuming a level of psychological trauma in its protagonist that must be overcome through a process of narration with the help of a caring community. Like any other orphan story, *The Horse and His Boy* contains psychologically significant elements, demonstrating the universality of traumatic experience to orphanhood.

Gilly Hopkins and the Orphaned Psyche

The third structural narrative of the orphan story considers specifically its psychological significance. This interpretation draws on the research presented in the introduction of this study to argue that orphan stories demonstrate psychological development in young children, empowering them to face subconscious fears and suggesting the importance of narrative as a means of living a connected life. In this final section of the chapter, I will explore Katherine Paterson’s 1978 novel *The Great Gilly Hopkins* as demonstrating the psychological meaning of orphan-story structure. I will draw on psychological theory as set forth by Sigmund Freud, still an important figure in literary studies, and by more recent researchers, who have built on and developed from Freud, to argue that the structure common to twentieth-century children’s orphan stories illustrates

three important features of psychological theory: the importance of relationship with the mother, how traumatic experience can lead to neuroses, and how narration can aid in overcoming that trauma.

The psychological significance of the attachment bond between mother and child has been established already in the introduction to this study. The idea of attachment to the mother as essential in the development of a child's mind is one of the most important features of Freud's theory in general and in relation to the question of orphaned characters in particular. More recent studies, especially those conducted by John Bowlby and Mary Salter Ainsworth, have confirmed that the mother-child relationship is extremely important, showing time and again that attachment to the mother in a caring and enjoyable relationship is essential to a child's development. As a result of this, when the mother is absent from the child's life, the child is likely to experience various negative psychological consequences.

Putting these observations on the importance of the mother-child bond in terms relating directly to the spheres of action in twentieth-century children's orphan stories, the importance of the Absent Parents is of particular interest in the life of the Orphan. In abandoning their child (function I), the Absent Parents leave him without the care and affection necessary to his development. Far from depriving the child of her the desire for family, however, the absence of the parents—especially, as Freud and later attachment theorists help us to see, of the mother—causes the desire for family to become even more intense. Hence the search for entrance into a typically familial Community that often arises as one of the most prominent features of these stories, as the child seeks to learn about his past in order to integrate into the community of his present.

This process is particularly evident in Katherine Paterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. Galadriel Hopkins, an eleven-year-old girl who has just entered her third foster home in three years, has been called by foster mother Phyllis Stokes "the synthesis of foster children—believable in her hostile attitude, her naïve faith in her natural mother's concern for her, her independent sense of humor, her pain and struggle for survival, and her ultimate giving of love to her new foster family" (20). Gilly's story is especially interesting in the present study because of its accurate representation of foster children and because the title character is not strictly speaking an orphan: she was put into the foster system at a young age by her mother, who is still living. Because this is the case, Gilly is able to fantasize (unreasonably, but not without possibility) about being reunited with her mother at some point in the future, heightening the tension experienced by all orphaned children as they long for reunion with their parents.

Throughout the story, Gilly's longing for her Absent Parents is remarkable both in her constant thoughts of her mother and in the notable lack of interest in her father. Gilly frequently fantasizes about her mother, about being reunited with her at some point in the future, and even about escaping from her foster home to travel across the country to California where her mother lives. In the second chapter of the book, we learn that "[t]he word 'mother' triggered something deep in [Gilly's] stomach" (9), which she quickly stifles by burying her mother's picture underneath the clothes in her bureau drawer, repressing the desire that threatens to overcome her. Later, when her mother sends her a postcard with a short note saying, "*I wish [you had moved] here. I miss you. / All my love*" (28; emphasis original), Gilly breaks down in the grief at being away from "[h]er beautiful mother who missed her so much and sent her all her love" (29).

While Gilly's thoughts of her mother feature throughout the story, she never mentions her father, thus demonstrating, as Freud and attachment theorists suggest, the special importance of the mother in a child's development. Gilly is constantly and palpably aware of her mother's absence, fantasizing about the woman who was "like a goddess in perpetual perfection" (108). Her longing for her mother shapes the way that she views all the world around her, even though she never speaks directly of her mother to anyone in the story, thus demonstrating Freud's suggestion of the longing for the mother that is present with the child even when the mother herself is absent.

This leads to the second point of psychological theory that relates to twentieth-century children's orphan stories: the idea of traumatic experiences and their relationship with neurotic behaviors. In his lecture "Fixation Upon Traumas: The Unconscious," Freud explains that the neurotic behaviors exhibited by his patients were invariably linked to some traumatic event or period of their life upon which they had become fixated. Thus, he writes, it is "a fixation to the moment of the traumatic occurrence" that underlies the neurotic symptoms of the patient (243). Freud defines the traumatic experience that can lead to such behaviors as "one which within a very short space of time subjects the mind to such a very high increase of stimulation that assimilation or elaboration of it can no longer be effected by normal means, so that lasting disturbances must result in the distribution of the available energy in the mind" (243). Because the traumatic event cannot be assimilated into the experience of the patient by typical means, those experiences are forced into the unconscious, from whence their repeated attempts to emerge cause neurotic behaviors. It is

not until the traumatic experience is brought to the patient's attention that she is able to process them adequately.

Interestingly, Freud explains that "[i]n the majority of cases it is actually a very early phase of the life-history which has been thus selected [as traumatic], a period in childhood, even, absurd as it may sound, the period of existence as a suckling infant" ("Fixation" 243). One need not be conscious of the trauma in order for it to occur, and to have a lasting effect. Judging from his emphasis upon the importance of relationship with the mother in a child's life, we can assume that separation from or abandonment by the mother could be classed as an early traumatic experience leading to neurotic behavior. In another lecture, Freud makes this claim more explicitly, calling "a separation from the mother" "the primary anxiety state during birth" ("Anxiety" 353). This anxiety, if unaddressed, can lead to childish neuroses, "derived . . . from undischarged libido, . . . substitut[ing] some other external object or some situation for the love-object which it misses" ("Anxiety" 354). If the child's libidinal desire for the mother is not satisfied as a result of a separation between parent and child, the child will force the desire for the mother into another channel, often resulting in neurotic behaviors.

Trauma and attachment theories have developed from Freud's ideas, confirming that psychological disorders may arise from traumatic experiences, even when they occur at a young age. As Bowlby writes, "prolonged or repeated disruptions of the mother-child bond during the first five years of life are known to be especially frequent in patients later diagnoses as psychopathic or sociopathic personalities" ("Separation" 100). Bessel A. van der Kolk similarly writes, "failure to develop [attachment bonds between mother and peers] is

devastating. . . . In both children and adults, this may lead to temporary or lasting disruptions in the capacity to modulate emotions and engage in social affiliation” (“Separation” 35). Elsewhere he explains, “Chronically traumatized children tend to suffer from distinct alterations in states of consciousness, including amnesia, hypermnesia, dissociation, depersonalization and derealization, flashbacks and nightmares of specific events, school problems, difficulties in attention regulation, disorientation in time and space, and sensorimotor developmental disorders” (“Developmental” 404-05). Though current researchers would not say with Freud that neuroses per se arise from a child’s separation his mother, these recent studies show that there are still plenty of disorders that may result because of such separation.

Though neuroses are often absent as such from twentieth-century children’s orphan stories, the structure does suggest that the child faces the trauma of separation (function II), which in turn gives rise to the Opposing Force, in this case in the form on an internal repression. This repression often causes the orphaned child to resist entering into the community to which he has been introduced. In psychoanalytic terms, the orphaned child becomes fixated upon the trauma he has undergone in losing his parents, causing him to experience symptoms related to neuroticism. This results in undischarged libido, which is repressed through the trauma of the initial separation itself and/or through a conscious effort that the orphaned character exercises in order to protect herself from the desire for her parents.

We see evidences of trauma in the behaviors, occasionally bordering on neuroticism, demonstrated by Gilly. As mentioned above in the discussion of Gilly’s fascination with her mother, the girl is fixated on that time many years

ago where she was sent away from her mother into the foster system. She is convinced that if only she could return to her mother, all that is wrong in her life would come right. As she says to her mother in an imaginary conversation after receiving her letter, “I’d be good for you. You’d see. I’d change into a whole new person. I’d turn from gruesome Gilly into gorgeous, gracious, good, glorious Galadriel. And grateful. Oh, Courtney—oh, mother, I’d be so grateful” (30).

Though she is convinced that she would immediately change and all would be right with the world if her mother came back, Gilly is determined not to be “gorgeous, gracious, good, glorious Galadriel” as long as she remains in the foster system. Instead, she is reluctant to attach herself to any of the other characters in the book, doing her best to maintain control of the situations she encounters by distancing herself emotionally from them all. We see this in the frequent glimpses into Gilly’s thoughts that the narrator provides. For instance, at the beginning of the book Gilly refuses to comb her hair in an attempt to “run Trotter wild” (16), and later intentionally gives the same lady “the 300-watt smile that she had designed especially for melting the hearts of foster parents” (48). Gilly’s calculated moves show that she is doing all she can to remain in control of the situation at her foster home. We also see Gilly attempting to control her environment at school, initially by “stopping work just when the teacher had become convinced that she had a bloody genius on her hands” (53), and, when she recognizes that this technique will not phase the apparently impassive Miss Harris, by writing a racist note to her black teacher. When these attempts to control both Trotter and Miss Harris fail, Gilly is forced to face her unfulfilled desire for her mother (function VIII), and to allow herself to accept the fulfillment

of that desire that is offered by her foster family (function VIII) and ultimately by her grandmother (functions VIII and XII).

Here we come to the third and final point of overlap between psychological theory and children's orphan stories to be discussed here. Throughout his works, Freud suggests the efficacy of what he calls "the 'talking cure'" in addressing the neurotic symptoms of his patients (*Five Lectures* 8). In *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud tells the story of a young lady suffering from hysteria, whose case initiated this cure and helped to lay the foundation for psychoanalytic theory as a whole. He explains that after the young lady had explained a number of the "phantasies" the suppression of which was causing her hysteria, "she was as if set free, and she was brought back to normal mental life" (8). Though the symptoms are usually caused by "the convergence of several traumas, and often the repetition of a great number of similar ones" (10), therefore requiring numerous meetings to get to the root of the illness, and though patients often resist bringing forth the suppressed desires or traumatic experiences that underlie their illness, Freud claims that in bringing these desires or traumas forward the patient can experience psychological healing (9). Repressed desires or traumas are thus only overcome by being brought into the conscious mind through a process of storytelling.

In an essay on creative writing, Freud builds on these ideas, making a connection between the mental processes of the creative writer and the day-dreamer. He suggests that the creative writer is one who turns his phantasies (often forced into the unconscious on principal or through trauma) into fictional writing, which can then be enjoyed by those who also have such phantasies, but who choose to repress them or are unable to make them explicit of their own

accord. Thus, novels create “a day-dream or phantasy, which carries about it traces of its origin from the occasion which provoked it and from the memory” (“Creative” 147-48). That is, the story of the novel is a re-writing of the original phantasy entertained by the writer, creating or bringing to the forefront a similar phantasy in the mind of the reader.

Early in the same essay, Freud makes a connection between children at play and the creative writer. He suggests “that every child at play behaves like a creative writer, in that he creates a world of his own, or, rather, re-arranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him” (“Creative” 143-44). Like the content of the novel, “A child’s play is determined by wishes” (146). Thus, underlying both play and creative writing is desire. Though Freud does not explicitly state the connection between the day-dreamer / creative writer / child-at-play and the neurotic patient in this essay, we might point out that the similarity between the act of bringing forward desire in each of these situations, suggesting that reading or writing fictional works, and, by extension, participating in child’s play, might prove to be efficacious in helping a traumatized person process their repressed traumatic experiences. Taking it a step further and putting it in the language of this study, Freud’s essay shows that participating in an act of the imagination (function VI) enables the orphaned character to accept their state (function VIII) and experience transformation (function XI).

Again, more recent theorists have built upon Freud’s observations to develop a more complete trauma theory. In the introduction I explained how trauma theorists point out the importance of storytelling in processing traumatic experience. Kalí Tal explains mythologization as one method of coping with

trauma, which “works by reducing a traumatic event to a set of standardized narratives (twice- and thrice-told tales that come to represent 'the story' of the trauma) turning it from a frightening and uncontrollable event into a contained and predictable narrative” (6). As Caruth writes, “the history of a trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another” (“Introduction” 11). Though this process may look different from an outright telling of the story of the trauma when it is a child who has been traumatized, van der Kolk writes, children “tend to communicate the nature of their traumatic past by repeating it in the form of interpersonal enactments, both in their play and in their fantasy lives” (“Developmental” 405). Though the means of narration may vary, a narrative act is necessary for those who are dealing with a traumatic event.

Once again, we see this psychological theory point of the importance of storytelling reflected in the structure of twentieth-century children’s orphan stories. One of the most pivotal features in these stories is function VI, in which the orphaned character engages in an act of the imagination, either in telling or learning the story of their past, in imagining an alternative life, or in entering into a literal or figurative imaginative space. It is this act that enables the orphaned character to accept their state as orphaned (function VIII), to experience transformation (function XI), and thence to be established in their new life (function XII).

This imaginative act, and the resultant transformation and integration that it enables, directly parallels the effect of psychoanalytic narration and creative writing as dream fulfillment. By engaging in an act of the imagination, the orphaned character accesses the desire for family that has been suppressed

through his traumatic loss of his parents, even when that desire may not feature directly in the imaginative act itself. In so doing, the orphaned character is able to recognize those desires for what they are and to reinterpret his past, processing his traumatic loss and integrating it into his understanding of himself and of the world around him.

We see this act of imagination demonstrated in Gilly's story. Though Gilly day-dreams about being reunited with her mother, it is ultimately in expressing the desire for beauty, connection, and meaning given by parental relationship that she is able to accept her circumstances and begin to live a more integrated life. This begins with Lily's encounter with Wordsworth's poetry. After reading a poem aloud to Mr. Randolph, Trotter, and William Ernest, Gilly unintentionally calls the poem "Stupid," and then feels "forced to justify an opinion which she didn't in the least hold" (39). Despite this uncertain beginning, it is only after this first imaginative experience that she begins to become attached to William Ernest, notably by playing with him and the paper-airplane that she had made. Though she continues to behave in a self-protective way after these first acts of the imagination, stealing money from Trotter and Mr. Randolph and attempting to escape to San Francisco to be with her mother, Gilly's repression of her desire for and of the trauma of separation from her mother begins to weaken, opening the door for her later attachment to her foster family that is finally manifest when her grandmother appears to take her from them. When this happens, Gilly is as anxious to get back to Trotter and William Ernest as she was to leave them at first; however, with Trotter's encouragement, Gilly agrees to imagine a new life for herself, reinterpreting her past in light of her new knowledge of her mother's lack of love for her and creating a new community with her grandmother.

In its presentation of the importance of relationship with the mother, the way that traumatic experience can lead to neuroses, and how narration can aid in overcoming that trauma, *The Great Gilly Hopkins* illustrates the psychological significance of twentieth-century children's orphan stories. Gilly's story demonstrates her psychological development from neuroticism occasioned by a traumatic separation from her mother through a process of engaging in various imaginative acts. In this sense, Gilly occupies the position of traumatized Orphan, who must overcome the traumatic separation from her Absent Parents through engaging in an act of the imagination (function VI), whereby she is able to experience cognitive transformation (function XI) and enter into a new and lasting Community. Her growth throughout the tale, and her eventual acceptance of Trotter and William Ernest, and finally of her grandmother, is a psychologically important process illustrating the traumatic nature of orphanhood.

Conclusion

In their demonstration of the structure of children's orphan stories, *A Little Princess*, *The Horse and His Boy*, and *The Great Gilly Hopkins* emphasize the necessity of seeing orphanhood and adoption as a process of growth and transformation that is inherently psychological. All three interpretations—historical-mythological, theological, and psychological—are undoubtedly valid; we have seen them worked out above. And, indeed, all three narratives are related to and present in each of the stories: Sara's relative psychological stability during her time of deprivation and abuse stems from her constant engagement in psychologically significant imaginative acts as encouraged by her friends;

Shasta's reentrance into his biological family and appointment as heir to the throne demonstrate the story's acceptance of family and class structures; and Gilly's ability to accept her grandmother stems from Trotter, Mr. Randolph, and William Ernest's Christ-like, redemptive love.

While all three narrational meanings are thus valid and in some way evident in all orphan tales—a fact that bears more consideration, and could compose a study in itself—the very structure of these stories, even at the functional level, assumes psychological trauma that the orphaned characters must recover from through a process of storytelling or imagination. Orphanhood, this structure tells us, is an inherently psychological, inherently traumatic experience. Indeed, it is only in recognizing this psychologically significant pattern that we can gain some understanding of the significance of the orphaned character. As Cathy Caruth points out, traumatic experience breaks down the comfortable knowledge structures and understanding of time that are assumed by those who have not experienced trauma, alienating the traumatized individual from those who have not experienced such a break (*Unclaimed* 59-63). Because this is the case, if we fail to recognize the traumatic nature of orphanhood, and thus of the orphaned experience, we will continue to read these characters as “normal” children, denying the magnitude of their struggle and misunderstanding the significance of their ability to function.

Thus, orphan stories structurally reveal psychological truths about the nature of orphanhood. Though the content of these stories may not seem accurate to the experience of orphans in the real world, their structure demonstrates the same patterns identified by psychological theorists as significant in recovering from trauma, validating an approach to literary

orphanhood as traumatic experience. In so doing, these stories help us understand how little we know of the orphaned experience—of the traumatic shattering of a world that is caused by the loss of parents, of the difficulties that hinder orphaned children from embracing a new familial community, and of the importance of persistent friendship and compassion from friends and parental figures in the lives of those who have undergone the traumatic experience of orphanhood.

CHAPTER THREE

Gender Difference in the Function of Orphanhood

With the basic structure of the orphan story in mind, I move now to another broad yet important claim about all orphan stories, this time having to do with the way that the gender of the orphaned character affects the function of their orphanhood. In this chapter I will answer the question: what difference does the gender of the orphaned characters make to the way that they function as orphans in their stories? Or, more specifically, and reminiscent of one of the controlling questions of this study: how does the gender of the orphaned characters affect them as characters, their relationship with other characters in the story, the story as a whole, and us as readers? In answer to this question, I will argue that orphanhood typically functions socially for female characters and politically for male characters. Though this is true of orphan stories regardless of the age of the character or the age of the audience for whom the character was written, in this chapter I will look at four stories featuring protagonists who are in their early adult years: Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905), E.M. Forster's *Howards End* (1910), Evelyn Waugh's *Love Among the Ruins* (1953), and J.D. Salinger's "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor" (1950). In each case, I will consider how gender affects orphaned characters, their relationships, the stories in which they appear, and the readers of their stories, demonstrating the social and political function of orphanhood for female and male characters respectively.

Gender and Its Function

Before delving into specific texts, we must define the three major terms of the chapter: gender, social, and political. The first of these terms is key for the chapter as a whole. By gender, I mean not the essential characteristics or behaviors of people who possess a certain set of biological features, but rather the actions and attitudes that are culturally prescribed to those who possess such features. This understanding of gender is found in the writings of Judith Butler, who argues that gender can be understood as historically constructed and played out in prescribed, rehearsed, repeated actions. Butler differentiates between sex as a person's biological features, which "pos[e] as 'the real' and the 'factic'" nature of a person ("Gender Trouble" 335), and gender as "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through *stylized repetition of acts*" (332; emphasis original). Though "gender appears to the popular imagination as a substantial core which might well be understood as the spiritual or psychological correlate of biological sex," because gender attributes are performed rather than expressed, the performative actions themselves "constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal" ("Performative" 527-28). Martha Nussbaum, though she objects to several features of Butler's argument, also recognizes the constructed nature of gender, and points out that it has been similarly acknowledged by various philosophers and feminist critics of the past, including Plato, John Stuart Mill, Catherine MacKinnon, and Andrea Dworkin (343-44). With this backing from one of her principal critics, we can take Butler's definition of gender as culturally constructed performative actions to be sound.

The constructed nature of gender is important to acknowledge here because in the following pages I will consider the way that orphanhood functions differently for characters of different genders. In so doing, I am suggesting that the function of orphanhood is constructed by the dominant culture inasmuch as it is lived out by someone of either masculine or feminine gender. In other words, the assumptions about, behaviors assigned to, and implications of orphanhood differ for characters who occupy the masculine or feminine spaces to which their culture has assigned them. As female characters live out their orphanhood, they do so in a feminine way that has typically social consequences; as male characters live out their orphanhood, they do so in a masculine way that has typically political consequences. In that sense, what I recognize in this chapter is not necessarily an inherent feature of male or female orphanhood, but rather one of the cultural, historical consequences of orphanhood based on the gender of the characters in question.

Having defined of gender, we now turn to the pair of terms “social” and “political,” which describe the effect that gender has on the way that orphanhood functions for female and male characters respectively. By saying that orphanhood functions socially for female characters, I mean that most often female characters experience social consequences, typically in their domestic relationships, as a result of their orphanhood that they would not have encountered had they been part of a stable biological family. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “social” has a number of different meanings: “Devoted to home life; domestic,” “Expressive of or proceeding from sympathy; sympathetic,” “Of or relating to society,” and “characterized by association in groups or communities” are but a few. For the purposes of this chapter, social

consequences for the female orphan are those that primarily involve their personal, typically domestic relationships to other characters in the story—friends, siblings, spouses, children, coworkers, etc. For example, Dorothy’s ruling desire is to return to her home (*The Wizard of Oz*); Janie’s process of self-discovery occurs through her marital relationships and in telling her story to a friend in a domestic space (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*); and Violet Baudelaire is threatened with marriage to the evil Count Olaf (*The Bad Beginning*).

By saying that orphanhood functions politically for male characters, I mean that orphanhood typically has public, politically significant consequences for male characters. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “political” can be defined as “Of, belonging to, or concerned with the form, organization, and administration of a state, and with the regulation of its relations with other states,” “belonging to or forming part of a civil administration,” “Involved, employed, or interested in politics,” or “Relating to or concerned with public life and affairs as involving questions of authority and government; relating to or concerned with the theory or practice of politics.” “Political,” like “social,” refers to interpersonal interaction, but this time in the public rather than the private sphere. For the purposes of this chapter, therefore, political consequences of orphanhood for male characters are those that primarily involve them in public relationships with often civil consequences. Thus, Philip creates and saves the magic city from the evil schemes of the Destroyer (*The Magic City*); Johnny Tremain becomes involved with the rebel party during the American Revolution (*Johnny Tremain*); and Frodo Baggins engages in an epic quest to destroy the Ring and save Middle Earth from the power of the evil Lord Sauron (*The Lord of the Rings*).

Some may object that the differences that I notice here between the function of orphanhood for male and female characters are merely those that could be found in any story, regardless of the familial status of the protagonist. Feminist critics of literature and culture often focus their studies on the way that women are relegated to the domestic sphere and are not given the same public opportunities to gain power that are given to men. So what makes my observation of social and political functions of orphanhood worth developing?

To this I answer that critics who point out these differences are correct in their claims, and that stories featuring orphaned characters can provide even more evidence for the validity of those claims. The difference between my thesis and theirs, and the thing that makes the orphan story unique, is the way that the characters' orphanhood magnifies the gender differences that other critics have noted. When characters, child or adult, operate outside of the biological family structure, the situations in which they find themselves are often more intense, and have more serious consequences, than they would have been if the characters were under the care or guidance of their parents. Thus, the respectively social and political function of female and male orphanhood is worth developing because it contributes to our understanding of both orphanhood as a magnifier of human experience and of the nature of gendered spaces.

Moreover, this feminine social/masculine political paradigm is complicated by the fact that the difference between masculine and feminine orphanhood does not always hold true. Orphanhood for certain female characters has a primarily political function, and orphanhood for certain male characters has a primarily social function. For example, Katniss Everdeen

experiences the political consequences of her partial and functional orphanhood, which is itself enforced by the governmental powers of Panem, when she becomes a symbol of the rebellion (*The Hunger Games* trilogy), and James of the Giant Peach experiences social transformation in making friends with the various creatures who occupy the peach and travel with him to New York. More than that, one could argue that the social and the political are inseparable; both are concerned with relationships, and private relationships always inform public relationships, and vice versa. Every character, regardless of gender, always plays both a social and a political role. For example, Harry Potter, though his orphanhood has primarily political significance in that it puts him in a position of freedom to sacrifice himself for the good of the community, sacrifices himself also for the good of particular people with whom he has formed social relationships throughout his years in the wizarding world, and Sara Crewe, though her orphanhood has a primarily social significance in that she comes through it into a new domestic sphere, in so doing emphasizes political, public class structures. However, though the gendered paradigm is complex and sometimes inconsistent, in most cases the differences proposed above hold true.

While the gendered differences in the function of orphanhood are evident in all orphan stories, those differences are more evident as the characters grow up, for it is in adult life that men and women are typically relegated to different spheres. Thus, the four stories examined below—Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, Forster's *Howards End*, Waugh's *Love Among the Ruins*, and Salinger's "For Esmé—With Love and Squalor"—feature protagonists who are in their early

adult years.¹ In these stories, we see the social function of orphanhood for female characters in Wharton's Lily Bart and Forster's Margaret and Helen Schlegel, and the political function of orphanhood for Waugh's Miles Plastic. Finally, in Salinger's story, Sergeant X's encounter with the orphaned Esmé suggests the importance of both feminine social and masculine political function by illustrating how interactions between male and female characters suffering from different types of trauma have a positive effect on their ability to integrate traumatic experience into their emotional and mental lives.

Beyond the Cage in Wharton's The House of Mirth

As Lily Bart sits at dinner at Bellomont the evening of Lawrence Selden's arrival, she reflects on the difference between him and her other friends:

[H]e had preserved a certain social detachment, a happy air of viewing the show objectively, of having points of contact outside the great gilt cage in which they were all huddled for the mob to gape at. How alluring the world outside the cage appeared to Lily, as she heard its door clang on her! In reality, she knew, the door never really clanged: it stood always open; but most of the captives were like flies in a bottle, and having once flown in, could never regain their freedom. It was Selden's distinction that he had never forgotten the way out. (54-55)

These images of birds in a cage and flies in a bottle inform the story that unfolds in the following pages. As Lily seeks social refuge in first one place and then another, she swings between love for the beauty, affluence, and luxury of the social cage in which she moves and a desire to move beyond² the constraints that

¹ They also provide a range of authorial and character gender and nationality: Wharton, Forster, and Salinger's primary orphaned characters are female, and Waugh's is male; Wharton is a woman, Forster, Waugh, and Salinger are men; Wharton and Salinger are American, Forster and Waugh are British. In this regard, the texts provide a good range to prove the claims made in this chapter.

² This term itself is of interest in the story. When Selden receives a note from Lily giving him permission to come to her after the *tableaux vivants* at the Bry's, he notices that the seal featured the word "*Beyond!* Beneath a flying ship" (154; emphasis original). Selden sees this as the

world imposes. While many critics have discussed how Lily's femininity forces her into that social cage and prevents her from escape, none explore the way that Lily's orphanhood affects her situation, and none recognize that Lily's status as orphan plays a significant role in her overpoweringly social function in the novel.³ I will show how Lily's orphanhood functions socially by arguing that it both augments Lily's feminine entrapment in the cage of upper-class New York society and allows her to be aware of that entrapment—and of the fact that the door “stood always open.”

That Lily is trapped by her femininity has been widely discussed, and in much greater depth than I will venture here. Nancy Von Rosk argues that Lily embodies the Edwardian confusion over women's roles in the transition from Victorian ideals to the “New Woman.” She writes, “A spectator as well as a spectacle, a New Woman as well as an embodiment of Victorian propriety, Lily Bart embodies the ambiguous and uncertain role of woman in the new urban landscape in an especially dramatic way” (323). Margaret Bertucci Hamper explores Lily's New Woman identity farther, suggesting “that *The House of Mirth* is a novel that allows women only those freedoms conventionally feminine” (19)—specifically those that are domestic. She argues that the novel depicts women as “often ineffective workers, better suited to the duties of the domestic,” and that “Lily Bart's ordeal serves as a cautionary tale about the tragedy and

cry of Lily's soul, and resolves to “take her beyond—beyond the ugliness, the pettiness, the attrition and corrosion of the soul” that characterize her existence (154).

³ Nancy Von Rosk, Erin Mahoney, and Michael Mayne mention Lily's orphanhood in passing, noticing it as one of the characteristics that have caused critics to read her sympathetically (Von Rosk 322), as one of the similarities between Lily and Cinderella (Mahoney 37), and as the reason that Lily has no real home (Mayne 8). However, even in these cases its significance is only dimly realized.

immorality of transgressions of the new woman's path" (21). Linda Kornasky traces Lily's relationships with various suitors, suggesting through them both Wharton's implicit racial bias (in rejecting Jewish Rosedale) and Lily's subjugation to a sexist system. Erin Mahoney writes that Lily is an example of fairy-tale-princess-like "moral and physical beauty" and is therefore "no match for the fire-breathing antics of a cutthroat society" (38). And Gavin Jones argues that Selden's "republic of the spirit—the middle-ground between poverty and pauperism—is closed to Lily because she lacks access to the type of professional career, the breadwinning opportunities, which could make it possible" (167). In each of these critics, we see an emphasis on Lily's femininity as the key factor in her social failure and her inability to transcend the social environment of which she is a part.

It is evident that Lily herself (whether reliably or unreliably remains open to debate) sees her femininity as necessitating a socially advantageous marriage. In her first encounter with Selden in the novel, Lily asks him if he would be willing to marry for enough money to allow him to escape the routine of daily work and to buy all the rare books he pleased:

Selden broke into a laugh. 'God forbid!' he declared.

She rose with a sigh, tossing her cigarette into the grate.

"Ah, there's the difference—a girl must, a man may if he chooses. . . . If I were shabby, no one would have me [to dine]: a woman is asked out as much for her clothes as for herself. . . . We are expected to be pretty and well-dressed till we drop—and if we can't keep it up alone, we have to go into partnership." (12)

Here we see that Lily views herself as captive to the social customs assumed by her femininity. She cannot, like Selden, seek a career as a means of providing for herself. If she wishes to continue moving in the upper-class circles of which she

is a part, she must marry, must hear the door of the social cage clang on her, trapping her into a partnership that she may not otherwise have chosen.

Significantly, Lily's perceived inability to escape this fate is affected not only by her femininity, but also by her orphanhood. This is true both in that Lily understands her orphanhood to necessitate a marriage for wealth and status, and in that it prevents such a marriage from taking place. Lily's understanding of her orphanhood as making a socially advantageous marriage necessary is evident in her reflections on her childhood and early adulthood on her first night at Bellomont. The death of her father and mother, brought on respectively by financial ruin and its consequent social dinginess, leave Lily to the care of her relatives. Though Mrs. Peniston, her father's widowed sister, agrees to take Lily in and provide her with room, board, and generous clothing stipends, Lily is aware "that at all costs she must keep Mrs. Peniston's favor until, as Mrs. Bart would have phrased it, she could stand on her own legs" (38). Given Mrs. Bart's previously described eagerness for a wealthy marriage purchased by her daughter's pretty face (34), we can assume that "stand[ing] on her own legs" means obtaining fortune and status through matrimonial alliance. Though marriage was necessary for Lily after her father was financially ruined, it becomes all the more so when, on the death of her father and then her mother, she is left to the charity of her relatives. Though Mrs. Peniston supports Lily, the niece understands that she is not obliged to do so in the same way that her parents would have been. As an orphan, therefore, Lily sees that it is all the more necessary for her to gain independence, and the only way to accomplish that goal is by forming a propitious marriage.

Lily's reflections on her past also reveal that she sees her orphanhood as hindering her marriage. Though she had periodically supplied Lily with liberal gifts, "Beyond this, Mrs. Peniston had not felt called upon to do anything for her charge: she had simply stood aside and let her take the field" (38). Though Lily had at first seemed to thrive on this social freedom, "now she found herself actually struggling for a foothold on the broad space which had once seemed her own for the asking" (38). Lily is at times tempted to blame her diminished power on Mrs. Peniston's lack of involvement, by implication crediting the fact that "she was nine-and-twenty, and still Miss Bart" to the want of the care and guidance that she would have received from her mother or father (38). In other words, Lily sees her diminished social standing and her continued singleness as owing to the lack of parental involvement in her life, and thus as stemming from her orphanhood.

Lily's view of her social position is more explicitly revealed at the Van Osburgh wedding. As Lily and Gerty Farish admire the wedding gifts, Gerty, unaware of her friend's hopes of marrying Percy Gryce and his fortune, happily tells Lily that the young man is "perfectly devoted to Evie Van Osburgh" (91). Lily is stunned by the news, and reflects with despair on her own condition:

Ah, lucky girls who grow up in the shelter of a mother's love—a mother who knows how to contrive opportunities without conceding favours, how to take advantage of propinquity without allowing appetite to be dulled by habit! The cleverest girl may miscalculate where her own interests are concerned, may yield too much at one moment and withdraw too far at the next: it takes a mother's unerring vigilance and foresight to land her daughters safely in the arms of wealth and suitability. (91)

Lily clearly sees her orphanhood as standing in the way of an advantageous marriage. She, unlike Evie, "The youngest, dumpiest, dullest of the four dull and dumpy daughters" (91), has no mother to act on her behalf to secure a desirable

union. Lily is on her own and is therefore subject to all the miscalculations that are liable to befall the endeavors of youth. A socially advantageous marriage is necessary for her because she is a woman, but she remains unmarried because she is an orphan.⁴

While Lily's orphanhood thus intensifies her feminine social function in the novel, at the same time it allows her to see and to desire the possibility of escape from the social cage. Unlike the last, this point is less dependent on free-indirect insights into Lily's thoughts than it is on the development of Lily's character, particularly as it is seen through her relationship with Selden. In her encounters with Selden, Lily becomes increasingly aware of the possibility of freedom from the daily round of New York upper-class society, and it is the memory of Selden that makes her captivity, and the prospects of finalizing that captivity through marriage, particularly abominable to her.

Significantly, Lily's encounters with and memories of Selden have the effect that they do because she is orphaned. This is true first because her relationship with Selden and awareness of his freedom from social bondage would have been impossible if she had been married young. Though she may have known Selden if her parents had remained alive, it is plain that if they had, Lily would have been married at a young age. Given the behavior of the other

⁴ Note that both the necessity and the impossibility of marriage occasioned by her orphanhood exist in Lily's perception. The narration frequently employs free indirect discourse, limiting itself to the perspective of the character and painting a picture of events that is at best only possibly reliable. As an objective observer of Lily's situation, the reader can question whether she must, or even ought, to marry for wealth and status, and therefore whether the death of her parents was as much a social death sentence as she seems to think. As Ashlynn Ivy suggests, Lily is at least as much captive to her own refusal to take responsibility as to fate or family circumstances; she "is haunted by fate because she leans on it when her own choices end badly" rather than because it is inescapable (47). Lily is trapped by her femininity and her orphanhood in the social cage of upper-class New York, but her entrapment is at least in part due to her reliance on her own perception of events.

wealthy married women in upper-class New York, this event would doubtless have caused Lily to become so cemented into her luxurious lifestyle that even if she had, like Bertha Dorset, entered into some form of relationship with Selden, she would not have been led by that relationship to question the efficacy of her existence to the extent that she does. Indeed, the only two who seem to be aware of life beyond the confines of the social cage are Selden and, as a result of her encounters with him, Lily Bart. Even early in the novel it is plain that Lily's friends are unaware of either the cage or its open door. The passage quoted earlier reveals that Selden is unique in "having points of contact" outside the cage (54). By implication, then, everyone else who is gathered at Bellomont, "huddled" in the cage "for the mob to gape at" (54), is effectually locked into the heavily staged social life that they lead because they know of no other way to be. Lily is unique in recognizing Selden's freedom—a recognition that is possible because of her own position as an orphan.

Moreover, Lily's orphanhood puts her in a situation where she can recognize the value of the freedom that Selden represents through the increasing distress of her circumstances. Though Lily is aware of life beyond the cage at the beginning of the novel, as her story progresses, her circumstances become worse and her love for Selden grows stronger until she becomes finally aware of the primacy of her desire for freedom. Thus, in her first encounter with Selden over tea in his flat while she still has a relatively secure place in the upper-class circles, Lily is resigned to her fate, willing to use even those precious moments with Selden to acquire information that will assist her in obtaining the socially advantageous end of marriage to Percy Gryce. Even when Lily expresses her dawning awareness of "the republic of the spirit," entrance into which Selden

sees as the final sign of success (68), her desire for freedom is not yet primary. The sound of a passing automobile reminds her of Gryce and his millions, effectively returning her to the gilt cage (74), and the next day she is disappointed that Gryce has returned to the city without making the anticipated proposal (75).

While Lily is thus only slightly aware of the value of freedom at the beginning of the novel, as time passes and her circumstances grow more desperate she becomes more conscious of the oppression of the cage and of her desire to move beyond its confinement. After Gus Trenor's attempted rape, her first thought is to turn to Selden. When she hears that he has sailed for Havana, Lily seems willing to accept Rosedale's offer of marriage as a refuge from Trenor. However, when she is on the point of writing to Rosedale "to tell him to come to her," apparently with designs of accepting his proffered hand (179), she receives a note that she immediately hopes is from Selden. Lily's hopeful response shows that her desire for the social escape to the republic of the spirit that Selden represents is stronger at this point in the novel even than her desire for the sure financial escape from debt to Trenor that marriage to Rosedale would secure. Indeed, as her distress has increased since she was rudely awakened to how she stood toward Trenor—a position she would probably have avoided with parental guidance—so has her desire for freedom from the social bondage—a desire that exists because of her interactions with Selden, which are likewise made possible by her orphanhood. Her status as orphan thus allows her to fall into distressing circumstances, through which she begins to recognize that Selden's freedom is even more valuable than Rosedale's fortune.

Though Lily continues to depend on social habit, luxury, and comfort for some time after this scene, her love for Selden and the freedom that he represents continue to grow stronger as the desperation of her circumstances increases, finally winning her over in an ultimate acknowledgement of the value of freedom from the cage. Thus, when she resolves to gain Rosedale's favor and hand by visiting Bertha with Selden's letters, her affection for Selden finally prevents her from doing so. On her way to Bertha's home with that lady's illicit letters to Selden, Lily finds herself outside of Selden's flat. This discovery "loosened a throng of benumbed sensations—longings, regrets, imaginings, the throbbing brood of the only spring her heart had ever known" (304). The language here is significant, suggesting specifically the imaginative potential of Lily's relationship with Selden. In spite of her luxurious social habits, Lily has seen in Selden the possibility of a different kind of existence, the sight of which has enabled her to perform an Act of the Imagination that opens to her the idea of freedom from the guilt cage. Though she has effectively suppressed her imaginings of what a life of freedom would be like for some time, even a chance passing of Selden's flat brings to her memory the imagined possibility of another existence.

With her imagination thus aroused, Lily makes a final decision for the republic of the spirit. Unable to resist the urge to call on Selden, Lily veers wildly between her resolution to purchase Rosedale's good favor by betraying Selden with Bertha's letters, and her love for Selden and desire for the social freedom that he represents. She tells Selden, "I have never forgotten the things you said to me at Bellomont," which "have helped me, and kept me from mistakes; kept me from really becoming what many people thought me" (307). Though she had

refused his nonchalant offer early in the novel of escape from her social bondage through marriage to himself, it was “not too late to be helped by the thought of what I missed” (308). In spite of her return to the social cage after their conversation on the hill at Bellomont, Lily had never lost sight of the open door and the possibility of escape that Selden had offered. After several minutes of internal debate between love for her past life and desire for all that Selden represents, Lily finally walks to the fire and quietly drops the letters into the flames. Her love for Selden and desire for life beyond the petty constraints of social luxury that he represents, both of which are possible because of her orphanhood, win her over, and Lily leaves his flat free from the gilded cage.

Having thus been brought by her orphanhood into the distressing circumstances that have allowed her to see and to choose the social freedom that Selden represents, the final pages of the novel confirm that Lily is content with the choice she has made. Even when the language of the narrative is nostalgic—she returns her dresses to her trunk, “laying away with each some gleam of light, some note of laughter, some stray waft from the rosy shores of pleasure” (317)—Lily demonstrates a peace that she had not formerly known and that she evidently values even more than the social luxury of her past. Thus, when she receives the letter containing her small inheritance, even as she recognizes her poverty, she is more concerned with her “deeper impoverishment,” her “inner destitution compared to which outward conditions dwindled into insignificance,” than with her material condition (318). She reflects on her encounter with Nettie Struther immediately following her time with Selden that evening, recognizing that in the poor woman’s familial home she had caught “her first glimpse of the continuity of life” (319). It is in the home of this socially

insignificant woman, not in the hubbub of her former upper-class circle, that Lily recognizes that life can be meaningful. Through her violent, painful break with the circles into which she had been born, which had itself been brought about by her position as an orphan away from the protection and guidance of her parents, Lily sees her life objectively and becomes fully aware of what she has lost in pursuing social luxury rather than accepting spiritual, domestic freedom. Exhausted by her day, Lily takes an extra dose of chloral and falls into the deep and unending sleep of death.

Lily's actions during the last evening of her life suggest that she is putting away her old existence for good and all, laying it down to take up instead the new life beyond the cage. Through the increasing distress of her circumstances, Lily is enabled to see finally that she values Selden and all that he represents to her more than the life of luxury that she would likely have been early cemented into if her parents had remained alive. It is only because of her poverty, itself caused by her loss of her parents and the guidance into an early and wealthy marriage that they would have provided, that Lily is forced to finally make a decision for Selden's republic of the spirit over and against social luxury.

Thus, Lily's orphanhood operates in both enhancing her position as a dependent female and in allowing her to become aware of and move toward life beyond the upper-class social confines into which she was born. Through this double significance, we see that Lily's orphanhood has profound social implications, both magnifying her feminized entrapment to her social realm and allowing her to form a relationship that enables her to see the possibility of freedom from that realm. It is because she is orphaned that Lily reaches a point of not only desiring but recognizing the primacy of her desire for a different kind

of social life than that in which she was raised. Though there were problems in her family before she lost her parents,⁵ it is that loss that ultimately allows her to see that those problems existed. In allowing her to recognize the instability of her social existence through opening the possibility of relationship with Selden, Lily's orphanhood functions socially as an essential factor in revealing the freedom and beauty of life beyond.

"Only Connect": Reconciling Gender in Howards End

As in *The House of Mirth*, orphanhood functions in Forster's novel as a magnifier of the feminine, social interests of the female protagonists, adding weight to the novel's predominant interest in the relation between the genders. In this section, I will consider how gender affects the orphaned Margaret and Helen Schlegel, particularly in their relationships with other characters. As the novel develops its central problem of how difficult it is to "[o]nly connect" (159), Margaret and Helen's orphanhood plants them yet more firmly in the socially-interested feminine position from which they must connect to the essentially masculine, family-based Wilcoxes in order to establish a healthy community.

That *Howards End* is interested in the question of gender is plain throughout the novel. From the title page, which bears the epigraph, "*Only connect . . .*" to the last pages of the novel, where the ambiguous ending suggests a reconciliation of classes and genders in the hodge-podge family at Howards End, the novel explores the tension between binaries—lower class and upper class, masculine and feminine, emotion and reason, conservative and liberal, art

⁵ James Baltrum points out that Lily's father "performed services for the family more than belonging to the family" (292), and Sean Scanlan writes that Lily's "two primary problems" are "her lack of a stable home and a supporting family" (207).

and commerce—expressing the desire for connection in a rapidly fragmenting world. Perhaps the most important of these binaries, if we are to judge by the amount of space given to its exploration in the novel, is that between masculine and feminine. The narrator and the characters return again and again to the question of gender difference, in private meditation and in conversation, in universal statement and in particular example. As Elizabeth J. Hodge writes, gender differences in *Howards End*, though “not so much [meant] to make a point about the essence of the sexes,”⁶ are nonetheless central to the action of the novel (49). As she explains, “Male and female are to [Forster] different approaches to existence” (49). Whereas “[w]omen embody the passion, the poetry, what is implied in the transcendent” (49), men embody “the conscious, ordered, controlled, analytic, and entirely intellectual” (54). In developing and exploring these differences, *Howards End* makes central the question of difference between the genders.

What is more, the novel ties the characteristics of the genders to particular families and particular homes. Wilcoxes and Schlegels are set up early in the novel as representing the different genders, and the tension between their primary objects and motivating desires illustrates the tension between masculinity and femininity. The Wilcox home is described as “irrevocably masculine,” while the Schlegel home is “irrevocably feminine” (37). Margaret and Henry’s marriage hits a crisis point when Margaret takes a stand “for

⁶ Elizabeth Langland similarly observes that the distinctions between the genders are in Forster’s economy not meant to be absolute statements of the differences between men and women, but are rather a means by which he explores the tension between the two: “In his personal embattlement with gender and his embattlement with patriarchal culture, Forster exposes the constructed nature of gender and his own ambivalent relationship to traits coded ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in his culture” (252).

women against men” at *Howards End*, where the presence of the house itself seems to back her efforts (247). And peace comes when the genders are reconciled to and reliant on each other, “building up a new life, obscure, yet gilded with tranquility” (287), when “Differences—eternal differences” are united and accepted as “planted by God in a single family, so that there may always be colour” (288). The different ways of being represented by masculine and feminine are each necessary, and must necessarily be united in the structure of the family and in the space of the home.

This importance of the family leads us to the connection between gender and orphanhood. While the novel presents both masculine and feminine as necessary to a properly functioning society such as the one we see at the end of the novel, *Howards End* sets up a world in which orphanhood itself is gendered as feminine. It is the Schlegels, representing the feminine throughout the novel, who are orphaned; their orphanhood serves to enforce their femininity, removing them from the consciousness, order, and control provided not only by men, but also by parents. In that sense, orphanhood functions in the novel in relation to gender rather than vice versa, magnifying the difference between the masculine and the feminine that the novel establishes by aligning orphanhood with the social, connecting impulses of femininity there developed.

One possible way in which orphanhood acts as a magnifier of feminine characteristics is by enhancing Margaret and Helen’s feminine vulnerability.⁷

⁷ You will notice that I do not focus here on Tibby, the orphaned Schlegel brother. I do not treat him here because, though he is a male, he is yet gendered feminine, in his orphanhood and also in his alignment with the “irrevocably feminine” Schlegel household. Indeed, Helen at one point calls him “Auntie Tibby,” and wishes to Margaret “that we had a real boy in the house—the kind of boy who cares for men” (36). In that sense, he maleness does not disprove my point about orphanhood being aligned with femininity, but rather complicates the assignation of “feminine” characteristics exclusively to women. In this, to quote Langland, “Forster exposes the

These two lost their mother at the ages of thirteen and five respectively, and their father five years later at eighteen and ten (11). Though their separation from their parents occurred when they were old enough to escape from some of the early childhood trauma in which such separations often result, they are yet, even in their early adult years, typical orphaned characters: their separation from their parents functions in this story, at least on the surface, as leaving them without the protective guidance of someone older and wiser telling them what to do, which in turn creates space for those “gold” moments that they would not otherwise have experienced. As their aunt, Mrs. Munt, is painfully aware, the unprotected girls’ monetary and social habits “w[ere] dangerous, and disaster was bound to come” (12). Though the “disaster” that Mrs. Munt aims to divert at this point in the novel proves to be unfounded, later the novel deals more directly with the consequences of such lack of protection in Helen’s pregnancy by Leonard Bast. Thus, the Schlegel sisters are, in their orphaned state, and at least on the surface, typically unprotected—a fact that enhances their culturally perceived vulnerability as women.

While their vulnerability is consistently complicated (it is the small-minded Mrs. Munt and the irrevocably masculine Henry Wilcox who most often voice the opinion that the girls need protection), there is another sense in which orphanhood is aligned with feminine characteristics that is more consistently supported by the action of the novel: both women value interpersonal relationships. While the irrevocably masculine Wilcoxes think only, as Helen explains to Margaret, of “a great outer life” in which “telegrams and anger

constructed nature of gender and his own ambivalent relationship to traits coded ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ in his culture” (252).

count," the irrevocably feminine Schlegels believe that "personal relations are the real life, for ever and ever" (23).

While Helen⁸ initially voices this opinion early in the novel after her broken engagement to Paul Wilcox, she repeats her conviction about the superiority of the feminine Schlegel position later in the novel when Margaret tells her of her intention to marry Paul's father Henry. After receiving this news, Helen bursts into tears, begging Margaret not to be deceived by what is really "[p]lanic and emptiness" instead of remaining true to "personal relations" which "are the important thing for ever and ever" (147-48). In both of these instances, Helen dichotomizes the two positions: the logical, material, irrevocably masculine Wilcox outlook on the world is, according to her view, diametrically opposed to the emotional, spiritual, irrevocably feminine Schlegel outlook. The supremacy of personal relations, coded feminine by its association with her and her sister, must always stand in opposition to "the outer life of telegrams and anger" that is the object of the masculine Wilcoxes (148).

This belief in the supremacy of the inner life of relationship over and against the masculine appreciation for the outer life of business is the point at which Helen's extreme femininity and her status as orphan come together. Langland describes Helen as coded feminine in that she is "emotional, impulsive, impatient of logic, impatient of all restraint on her generous impulses" (258). Notice the social implications of Helen's feminine coding: she is "impatient of all

⁸ Though Margaret is the older of the sisters, and thus in some regards could logically be treated first, I start with Helen first because she is the most obviously feminine of the two sisters. This makes it easy to see how the novel codes desire for social, personal connection as feminine. Second, I start with Helen because, though she plays an important role in the novel, she is not as central as Margaret, and therefore the older sister will bear more discussion.

restraint on her generous impulses." Helen's femininity causes her to abound in an often-irrational impulse to exercise generosity toward other people; there is in her femininity an impatient desire for relationship. But the intensity of that desire, irrational as it may seem in itself, is both enhanced and made more acceptable to the reader by Helen's orphanhood. Because she has not had a consistent, foundational relationship with her mother since she was five and her father since she was ten, it is easy to read as natural Helen's craving for and high valuing of personal relations.

This is particularly true of Helen's relationship with Leonard Bast, which, though scandalous for the time, is presented sympathetically as revealing her belief in the power of personal relations, even when up against the boundaries of class. Though Helen sees masculine and feminine as diametrically opposed, she believes in the possibility of enlightening even those who are much less privileged than herself to the ultimate value of personal relations and the beauty of the world. This belief is what leads her to pursue relationship with the Basts, and particularly with Leonard, whose desire to appreciate literature and art captures her interest. When the Schlegels attempt to help Leonard with a hint about the probable failure of his company, he receives their advances badly, declaring as he leaves his disappointment with their afternoon together. At this, Helen accuses him of being "very rude" (121), leading to a regular row in their sitting room. Though the narrator tells us that "the Schlegels had never played with life," and that "[t]hey had attempted friendship, and *they* would take the consequences" (121; emphasis added), it is significant that Helen is the one who responds to Leonard's remark. If we can judge by later interactions, Helen is more invested in this relationship than her sister, more ready to believe in the

possibility of Leonard transcending his class and grasping the culture that he longs to understand.

Helen's greater eagerness for relationship with Leonard is most evident in the eventful evening at Oniton. Horrified at the condition in which she finds the Basts, Helen rashly brings them with her to Oniton to confront Henry, who had first hinted to the sisters about the precarious condition of Leonard's company. Though Margaret is at first hesitantly willing to try to help them, she quickly writes them both off as "not at all the type we should trouble about" when she discovers Mrs. Bast's history with Henry (206). In contrast, Helen, on learning the whole of the story from Leonard, expresses her sympathy for him by sleeping with him and becoming pregnant with his child. When telling her sister of the evening they spent together at Oniton later in the book, Helen credits her actions not to attraction to Leonard, but rather to compassion for his loneliness and destitution: "I was going to tell him that he must be frank with me when I saw his eyes, and guessed that Mr. Wilcox had ruined him in two ways, not one. I drew him to me. I made him tell me. I felt very lonely myself. He is not to blame" (267). Helen cites her own loneliness as one reason for her compassion for Leonard, which is made more believable to us by the fact that Helen has no parents to turn to in the event of her sister's upcoming marriage. It would be much harder to believe Helen and to accept her actions if she had a loving mother and father to turn to in both the distress of finding the Basts destitute and the loneliness of losing her sister to marriage. In addition, though both Margaret and Helen's responses to the discovery of Jacky's past are rash (Margaret herself later recognizes that her effort to shield Henry was hopeless [267]), it is significant that it is Helen whose first response is one of compassion, if

misguided compassion. Unlike her sister, Helen believes in the reconciliation of the classes through personal relations—a reconciliation that is realized in her child at the end of the novel.

Though her feminine coding is not as obvious and is complicated by her role as mediator between the genders, Margaret, too, represents the socially gendered function of orphanhood in her belief in the supremacy of relationship. Unlike Helen, however, Margaret's belief in the supremacy of relationship holds relationship to be powerful enough to connect even the forces of masculinity and femininity, of outer life and inner life, that her sister sees as diametrically opposed. In a private soliloquy, the free-indirect discourse of the narrator reveals Margaret's passion for connection: "Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its highest. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die" (159). Margaret's two-word sermon demonstrates the same passion for relationship that we see in Helen's less hopeful dichotomy of outer and inner life. Like her sister, Margaret holds connection between even these seemingly opposed forces to be of highest value.

The difference between the positions held by the sisters lies in the fact that, while Helen believes personal relations to be in conflict with the world of telegrams and anger, Margaret sees the two as redeeming each other. Margaret believes that through connection, both "the beast and the monk"—the outer life and the inner life, the physical and the spiritual, the masculine and the feminine—will be "robbed of the isolation that is life to either," and therefore "will die" (159). According to Margaret, both sides of the Helen's dichotomy are

necessary. She can both utter a fervent “Amen!” in response to Helen’s first speech on the ultimate value of personal relations (23), and can wonder a few pages later if “the very soul of the world is economic, and . . . the lowest abyss is not the absence of love, but the absence of coin” (52). Margaret is capable of seeing the value of both the spiritual and the economic. Unlike her sister, she longs not for personal relations to reign, but rather for a connection between the outer life and the inner life that will kill both the beast and the monk, exalt both the prose and the passion, and show human love—the ultimate connector—to be supreme.⁹

Margaret’s belief in connection, while it sets her apart from her sister’s avid and extreme femininity, also serves to confirm her as demonstrating a different model of femininity in her position as the mother figure in the novel. Though Helen is the only sister to bear a child of her own, and though Margaret even goes so far as to tell Helen, “I do not love children. I am thankful I have none” (288), Margaret unquestionably fills the role of mother to her siblings and to the Wilcoxes throughout the novel.¹⁰ This is first and most obviously seen in her relationship with her siblings. Eight years older than Helen and thirteen years older than Tibby, Margaret functions as mother to both. This role is first evident when Helen announces that she and Paul are in love. Margaret deeply desires to be with her sister “at this crisis of her life” (8), but eventually concedes to her aunt’s proposal to go to Howards End in her place so that she can remain

⁹ As Langland writes, “Forster’s feminist vision . . . reinterprets Margaret as the principle that will complicate the hierarchical oppositions and provide a new kind of connection. That new connection is not the old androgyny, a merging or blurring of terms and traits; it is a condition that preserves difference” (256).

¹⁰ This fact is perhaps one more way in which Forster complicates binaries in this novel.

in London acting as mother to Tibby, who is in bed with hay fever (9-10).

Margaret's position as mother to her siblings is, like Helen's loneliness, made believable by her orphanhood. While Margaret as oldest sister may have had some motherly responsibility toward her siblings if their biological mother had been alive, it would certainly not have been as significant as it is when she is not.

We also see Margaret's position as the mother in the way that she manages the household. As Scott F. Stoddart writes, "Margaret's conversations take on the language of the maternal as she manages her household . . . not simply feminine but maternal, in the sense of a female's orchestration in respect to domestic responsibility" (119). This is particularly evident when Margaret takes on house hunting, a job that may have fallen to a father rather than a mother, but which she approaches, as we see in a conversation between herself and Mr. Wilcox, in a very feminine way. "One bit of advice," Henry offers her: "fix your district, then fix your price, and then don't budge" (132). To this Margaret replies, "But I do budge. Gentlemen seem to mesmerize houses Ladies can't." (132). For Margaret, house-hunting puts her in a maternal position toward her siblings: she takes the parental responsibility for finding them a home (a responsibility that is again believable because she is orphaned), but in that responsibility is bound by her feminine fluidity.

The way that Margaret is consistently paralleled with Ruth Wilcox, Henry's first wife, also highlights Margaret's position as mother. Ruth has been described by M. I. Raina as "something of a mother-goddess" (23). Louise Harrington similarly describes her as "trusting, faithful and otherworldly, the metaphorical mother of the nation" (289). It is significant that both of these critics recognize the symbolic proportions of Ruth's motherhood: she is "a mother-

goddess” and “mother of the nation”; she is the novel’s prototypical mother, bearing three children herself and treating even the independent and capable Margaret as her child (Forster 62). As the novel progresses, Margaret herself is increasingly aligned with Ruth, first as husband to Henry Wilcox, then as mistress of Howards End. As Richard Rankin Russell writes, Margaret becomes “Ruth Wilcox’s spiritual heir” when she comes into “the nurturing, feminized space of Howards End” (214). Stoddart similarly recognizes that Margaret’s interest in the mythology of Howards End suggests to Ruth that the younger woman “will act as a surrogate mother” to her children (122). The novel connects the two characters in their love for the house and in their motherly instinct to draw the characters together in the home that they create there.

Margaret’s motherly role is finally illustrated in her position as the link connecting masculine and feminine at Howards End. Though critics vary in their opinion of the success of Margaret and Henry’s marriage,¹¹ I understand the final pages of the novel to be showing that Margaret has succeeded in forming a hodge-podge family at Howards End. Though the endurance of that family may be tenuous—the “red rust” of London is creeping ever closer to their tranquil home (289)—for the time being they are able to live together happily, forming a family that is stronger by the very fact that it contains both the extremely masculine Henry and the extremely feminine Helen. As she reflects on the past year with Helen, Margaret notices the “eternal differences, planted by God in a single family, so that there may always be colour; sorrow perhaps, but colour in

¹¹ Paul B. Armstrong calls Margaret’s relationship with Henry “disastrous” because she fails to fulfill her dream of changing Henry (194). Langland, on the other hand, sees Margaret as victorious in creating space for difference (262), and Stoddart similarly calls Margaret’s “reconstruction of the Wilcox/Schlegel clan” her “singular triumph” (133).

the daily gray" (288). Margaret views the differences between the family members gathered at Howards End as a part of the beauty of that family. Though its beauty does not preclude sorrow, it is yet better than living in a place where all is the same—where masculine and feminine exist only in their own separate worlds. Helen, in response to Margaret's statement, credits the beauty of the family at Howards End to her sister: "you picked up the pieces, and made us a home" (283). Though Margaret responds that she did only what was logical given the circumstances, and that she was helped by "things that I can't phrase" (283), we yet see in this a motherly, social force that is stronger in Margaret by virtue of the fact that she has been acting as mother to her siblings since the death of their parents.

In each of these instances—in Helen's passionate desire for personal relations across social boundaries and in Margaret's quieter but no less convinced desire for connection between the genders—we see both of the Schlegel sisters consistently gendered feminine in their desire for intimate social connection. More important to this study, Margaret and Helen's feminine desire for connection is enhanced by their orphanhood. The sisters' valuing of personal relations and only connection is magnified by the fact that they are orphaned, separated from the relational continuity provided by loving parents. Though Margaret and Helen are not young children who would be physically dependent on their parents, they yet desire a stable relational base, and the lack of such a base enhances their desire for connection with others. Their feminine passion for relationship is more believable and more powerful because they are removed from the continuity of care and community that parents provide. In this regard,

their orphanhood magnifies their femininity in both making them less connected and increasing their desire for connection.

The Plastic Orphan in Love Among the Ruins

While Lily Bart and Margaret and Helen Schlegel illustrate the social function of orphanhood for female characters, Evelyn Waugh's *Love Among the Ruins: A Romance of the Near Future* illustrates the political function of orphanhood for male characters through the orphaned pyromaniac Miles Plastic. This novella has been critiqued as poorly written and even "virtually indefensible" as a political satire (Miles 7). However, critics including Damon Marcel DeCoste, Naomi Milthorpe, and even Peter Miles himself have recognized that, behind its overdrawn satire, Waugh's novella masterfully depicts the problems of a humanist society where art has supplanted God and where human beings are seen as just another material to be shaped for human purposes.

The novella develops this materialization of the characters most fully in Miles and in his relationship with ballet dancer Clara, which occupies the majority of the story. Indeed, Miles's orphanhood itself is used as a material, a Plastic, by the political authorities in the novella for their own political ends. I will argue that Miles's orphanhood functions politically both in the New Britain of the story and in the satirical purpose of the story, in the former as material for creating an "ideal citizen" and as a propagandistic tool to create sympathy for corrupt politicians, and in the latter as a means of suggesting the problems of a welfare state and the political importance of the family.

First, we see Miles's orphanhood functioning politically in the world of the story in the way that the political authorities, who have had the responsibility of overseeing his upbringing, view his status as Orphan as an opportunity to make him into an "ideal citizen" and thereby to promote their welfare-state philosophy.¹² We see this first in the way that the narrator describes Miles's upbringing. His history, stored "in multiplet in the filing cabinets of numberless State departments" (466), is a bleak one. His parents, destitute because of the actions of politicians, were divorced early in his life, and "infant Miles" was then "quartered" with his aunt, who shortly afterward "died of boredom at the conveyer-belt" at the factory where she worked (466-67). Left thus without parents or guardian, Miles becomes the sole responsibility of the State, which, with its emphasis on welfare and mental stability as achieved through adequate opportunity and advantage, spends "[h]uge sums" on providing Constructive Play, adequate air, a healthy diet, and monthly psychoanalysis sessions for the young Miles (467). The political authorities of New Britain view Miles's orphanhood as an opportunity to provide him with all of the privileges they deem necessary to the creation of an ideal, healthy citizen.

And, as far as they allow themselves to see, their attempt succeeds. Miles's upbringing as a member of "a privileged class" makes him into "the Modern Man" (466), and ideal of contemporary masculinity. The fact that this descriptor comes in the context of an (highly satirical) account of Miles's pathetic past suggests that it is meant, in the world of the novella, to arouse awe at the powers

¹² In exploring this point, I will temporarily ignore the fact that the novella is a satire, as much as is possible in so blatantly satirical a story. Doing so will allow us to understand the political function of orphanhood from within the novel, as it is viewed by the people occupying the dystopic "Near Future" world of New Britain.

of the State. In addition, the capitalization of this descriptor suggests that Miles is not an individual but a type, unique from any previous versions of manhood promoted by the political mythology of the time. Rather than answering the model of Victorian gentleman, Renaissance man, knight, pagan, or noble savage, Miles is the ideal citizen of the world in which he lives (466). Because he is an Orphan, Miles exists as “a child of welfare” (478), raised by the State for the purpose of creating what they deem the best of the best. More specifically, Miles is a *son* of welfare, and so is able to hold a politically significant position in the male-led welfare state of New Britain. Miles experiences the political function of orphanhood for male characters: the political authorities view him in his masculinity and in his orphanhood as a successful political experiment, the perfect product of careful training made possible by his orphaned status.

Having formed their ideal citizen, the State then uses Miles as propaganda. We see this in the various ways that the political authorities promote and display Miles’s status as State-created ideal. When Miles is charged with “Arson, Willful Damage, Manslaughter, Prejudicial Conduct and Treason” for burning the Air Force base where he was placed after leaving the Orphanage, the initial accusation is “reduced to a simple charge of Antisocial Activity” by the Court, whose “sympathies . . . were with the prisoner” (467). Eventually, “The case developed into a concerted eulogy of the accused” (468), and Miles is sentenced to serve time at Mountjoy Castle, a pleasure house for those who have performed violent acts because they “are only the victims of inadequate social services” (471). The sympathy of the Court in this instance suggests that Miles, as an Orphan raised by the State, is viewed by them as above reproach. To admit that his acts were as heinous as the initial charges suggest would be to admit that

the State's project has failed (which they are already implicitly doing in placing him the category of those who are "victim[s] of inadequate social services"), so they remain willfully blind to the quality of his actions, treating him instead as the ideal they desire him to be.

After being released from Mountjoy, Miles again experiences the favor of the State in being placed as an office worker in the Euthanasia unit at the Dome of Security in Satellite City. On his first day at his new home, Miles's "fellow sub-officials gathered round to question him" (476). After exclaiming over his luck in being placed in such a fast-growing unit, one of them asks if he is an Orphan. When Miles responds in the affirmative, the man replies, "That accounts for it. Orphans get all the plums" (477). As an Orphan, Miles is given every advantage possible to affirm and promote his status as ideal citizen of the State.

That Miles's orphanhood functions as propaganda is finally and most pointedly seen in his "sudden, dizzy promotion" from his job at the Dome of Security (498). Because (unbeknownst to the political authorities who give him the promotion) Miles has once again committed arson in destroying Mountjoy, he survives as the only evidence of the success of the penal system enforced there (499). In this passage, fraught with irony for Miles and the readers, who are aware that he is if anything farther from cured than he was at the beginning of the novella, the Ministers of Welfare and of Rest and Culture explain to Miles that "the whole future of penology is in your hands" (499). They explain their plan to use Miles as "Counter propaganda. . . . Exhibit A. The irrefutable evidence of the triumph of our system" (500). Miles, chosen from among Orphans and criminals as the ideal of State-created, gender-specific Modern

Manhood, is to be displayed as final proof of the success of the system in which he was raised.

Though Miles is chosen to display the success of the penal system that he experienced after he was removed from the Orphanage rather than the success of the Orphanage system itself, his orphanhood affects his ability to play the role assigned to him and contributes to the political authorities' understanding of him as ideal material for propaganda in his existence as the Modern Man. Thus, while they are discussing Miles's new role, the Ministers explain that "perfect rehabilitation, complete citizenship should include marriage" (501). They suggest Miss Flower, the "gruesome young woman" who has been present during their interview (499), as an ideal candidate, unless he has a "preferable alternative to offer" (501). When Miles replies in the negative, having destroyed both his affection for Clara and his grief over the loss of their unborn child when he set fire to Mountjoy, one of the ministers praises him: "Spoken like an Orphan. I see a splendid career ahead of the pair of you" (501). Though the Ministers of Welfare and of Rest and Culture are hiring Miles to represent the success of the penal system, they see that success, or at least the propagandistic value of that success, as contingent on his role as an Orphan. Because he is an Orphan—specifically because he is a male orphan and thus is on an equal footing with the other, all male, political leaders of New Britain—and has as such been made into the ideal Modern Man, Miles is in the position of obtaining the "splendid career" that the Minister foresees.

Having demonstrated the political function of Miles's orphanhood within the world of the novella, we now turn to consider how it functions in the novella as satire. In its obvious and overdrawn use of satire, the novella employs Miles's

status as orphaned to suggest the problems of a welfare state and the political importance of the family. In each of these points, Miles's orphanhood serves a political function, for the readers of the novella and for the characters that it depicts.

Nearly all of the few critics who have written on the novella recognize that *Love Among the Ruins* is a sharp critique of the welfare state. Jeffrey Heath calls it "an attack on the secularized and featureless welfare state" (206). Peter Miles critiques the novella as one where "Waugh grossly overestimated or overstated the tendency toward the totalitarian left inherent in the fact of the Welfare State" (32). DeCoste, who calls the novella a "mid-century satire of the welfare state," argues that Waugh is critiquing a society that has made that state its god, particularly in believing that the state can make humans—that people are plastic, capable of being formed and molded as the state may choose (33). Milthorpe, similarly recognizing the political authorities' belief in human malleability, writes, "*Love Among the Ruins* describes the consequences of secular modernity's faith in human perfectibility by human means, a process that renders every potentially perfectible person simply one in an endless line of simulacra" (*Evelyn* 137). In each of their various arguments, these critics discuss the masterful or excessive way that the story satirizes the society of this "Near Future" Britain.

Miles's orphanhood plays into this satire in that Miles, presented by the State as the Modern Man, the idealized masculine creation of a carefully controlled upbringing, is to the readers very obviously a failure. This is evident primarily in his three murderous acts of arson. The first of these takes place before the beginning of the novel and is the cause for Miles's time at Mountjoy.

Far from showing any remorse for this action, Miles is able to speak of it quite calmly, if not nostalgically, to Clara. One evening, as they enjoy the moonlight together at one of the waste building sites, Miles observes, “on a night such as this I burned the Air Force Station and half its occupants” (486). This observation is made all the more horrific by the nostalgic air with which it is offered and the lazy way it is received. The State has created not an upright and ideal citizen, but a psychopathic pyromaniac who doesn’t care two pennies for the pain and destruction he has caused.

Later, Miles repeats his act of arson at Mountjoy, setting fire to the dry silk curtains in the drawing-room and watching with pleasure as the flames take their course:

Paint and paneling, plaster and tapestry and gilding bowed to the embrace of the leaping flames. . . . The murderers were leaping from the first-story windows but the sexual offenders, trapped above, set up a wail of terror. He heard the chandeliers fall and saw the boiling lead cascading from the roof. . . . He watched exultant as minute by minute the scene disclosed fresh wonders. Great timbers crashed within; outside, the lily pond hissed with falling brands; a vast ceiling of smoke shut out the stars and under it tongues of flame floated away into the treetops. (493)

The language of this passage indicates the delight that Miles takes in watching the destruction of the place. Timbers burn, lead boils, men risk their lives jumping from windows or cry in despair with no hope of escape, and Miles observes all from a safe distance, exulting in the magnificence of the scene. Power, triumph, and sadistic pleasure are the only emotions evidenced by the narration.

Miles’s acts of arson are not without their own perverted explanation. The day after he burns Mountjoy, the narrator explains, “He had made a desert in his imagination which he might call peace. Once before he had burned his

childhood. Now his brief adult life lay in ashes" (495). Separated from all that he had known and loved, the only way Miles knows to alleviate the loss he feels is to create "a dessert in his imagination" where once stood what he had cared for. Far from forming a whole and healthy citizen, the Welfare State to which Miles owes his upbringing has only created in him a recognition of the void of his life, which recognition he feels a strong impulse to destroy.

Miles's last act of arson appears in the final lines of the novella. As he stands "ill at ease" during the ceremony in which he is married to Miss Flower, Miles fidgets with the lighter in his pocket, "a most uncertain apparatus" (501). When Miles is about to set fire to the curtains at Mountjoy, the narrator explains that the cigarette lighter "often worked" for Miles, as it did that evening (493). It is this same possible failure to light that the narrator alludes to here. However, as in the earlier scene, "instantly, surprisingly, there burst out a tiny flame—gemlike, hymeneal, auspicious" (501). Though the political authorities may refuse to recognize the fact, Miles proves only the failure of their system. Bored with life and aware of the void that his carefully monitored upbringing has left, Miles fails to perform as the ideal citizen, finally destroying himself with the same pyromaniacal impulse that he has already shown himself susceptible to. In one sense, Miles does indeed succeed, but only in sadistic opposition to the willfully, blindly optimistic Ministers.

This failure of the Welfare State's Orphanage to produce a well-adjusted citizen ultimately serves a political purpose in the novella by emphasizing the political importance of the family in creating functional men. One of Miles's most troubling features as Welfare-State-ideal-Modern-Man is his lack of connection to the past. Early in the novella, the narrator, in describing Mountjoy, explains that

it had been built “in the years of which [Miles] knew nothing” (463), and that he, having no sense of or care for the past, views the beauty of the place as “for his enjoyment this very night under this huge moon” (464). Again, the narrator writes that “All that succession of past worthies”—Victorian gentleman, Renaissance man, knight, pagan, and noble savage—“had gone its way, content to play a prelude to Miles” (466). Laden with irony as this passage is, it is nonetheless an accurate depiction of Miles’s view of the world around him. Miles is unaware of the past, and therefore can see the world only as created for and revolving around himself.

Miles’s lack of knowledge of the past is aligned with his orphanhood in the story of his past. His heritage, rather than being something he himself knows and cherishes, “appeared in multiplet in the filing cabinets of numberless State departments” (466). As far as we understand, Miles neither knows nor cares to know anything of his past. He is able to assure his fellow sub-officials in Satellite City that he is an Orphan, but that seems to be all that he or anyone else needs to know.

What is more, Miles seems drawn to Clara in part because of her connection to the past. Though he is obviously attracted to her from their first meeting in the Euthanasia unit at the Dome of Security, and certainly experiences some kind of love for Clara herself, that love is enhanced by the setting in which they spend most of their evenings: Clara’s “cubicle in a Nissen hut” which “was unlike anyone else’s quarters in Satellite City” (485). Here Miles encounters things of the past—and not just any past, but Clara’s. There are two paintings “unlike anything approved by the Ministry of Art,” “a looking glass framed in porcelain flowers, a gilt, irregular clock. She and Miles drank their sad, officially

compounded coffee out of brilliant, riveted cups" (485). Clara tells Miles that the paintings are "[m]ore than two hundred years old," and the narrator explains that "[a]ll her possessions had come from her mother" (485). These trinkets are family heirlooms, inherited by Clara and connecting her to her past. Miles is as enchanted with the room as he is with Clara: "It reminds me of prison," he tells her, giving the little room "the highest praise he knew" (485). Miles is touched by Clara's connection to her past as evidenced by the various articles she has around her home that she inherited from her mother, which stand opposed to the mass-produced, mechanistic, modern world in which they live.

Miles's lack of historical perspective is one of the contributing factors in his acts of arson. Because he has no connection to the past and has not been trained to see his own life in historical perspective, Miles does not know how to cope with memories—particularly with memories of a thing that can no longer be. Accordingly, the only way he can conceive to deal with his past is to destroy it. He makes "a desert in his imagination which he might call peace" by "burn[ing] his childhood" before the story begins, and by burning his "brief adult life" in destroying Mountjoy, a place he has connected with Clara (495). This second act of arson comes after Miles learns that Clara has aborted their child. Not only is he unable to cope with the past, but Miles is also, as Milthorpe puts it, "unable to cope with the pain caused by the loss of his child," so he "transforms his joy" in the tranquility of Mountjoy and in love for Clara "into destruction" ("Death" 215). Separated from his past by his orphanhood and seeing the destruction of his future in Clara's abortion and experimental surgery, Miles does not know how to deal with memories, with the idea of the past and

failed hope for the future. Accordingly, he destroys the past and its hopes to create a blank space in which his mind can rest.

In its emphasis on the importance of the family as forming a connection to the past that is necessary for mental health, *Love Among the Ruins* suggests through Miles's orphanhood the political importance of the family, especially to men. The historical-mythological narrative meaning of the orphan story, emphasizing the importance of traditional family structures, is evident in Miles's tale. The ideal Modern Man raised from early childhood by the Welfare State, Miles is mentally unstable because of his disconnection from the past as it would be known through significant family relationships, and therefore is unable to function as a political leader in the male-dominated governmental system of New Britain. By implication, then, through Miles the story makes the political claim that the family, not the state, is of primary importance in forming well-adjusted, artistically aware, compassionate citizens and leaders.

Thus, in both the world of the story and the satirical purpose of the story, Miles's orphanhood functions politically. In the dystopian world of the story, this is true in that the political authorities view Miles as material to be formed as they will into their ideal citizen, and in that they use Miles as male Orphan as propaganda to support their political system. In the satirical purpose of the story as seen by the readers, Miles's orphanhood functions politically as a means of suggesting the problems with a welfare state and the political importance of the family in forming well-adjusted, historically conscious citizens. Thus, in two different spheres, Miles as male orphan experiences the political function of orphanhood.

Social and Political Connection in "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor"

Unlike the last few stories, J. D. Salinger's "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor" does not feature an orphan as its main protagonist. And, unlike the last few stories, the primary orphaned character is not an adult. Instead, this story depicts a soldier suffering from PTSD who helps and is helped by an orphaned girl whom he has met during his time abroad. Though "For Esmé" is thus in one sense outside the strict bounds of this chapter, it is worth considering here in that it shows the benefits of interaction between people experiencing different types of trauma and the necessity of both feminine-social and masculine-political interests. Esmé, the orphaned girl, experiences the consequences of traumatic orphaning, which functions socially in that it isolates her from those around her. Sergeant X, the first-person narrator, suffers the consequences of traumatic wartime experience, which functions politically in that it makes a statement on the detrimental effects of war. Both are restored through their interaction with each other. In this section I will look at the connection between Esmé and Sergeant X to argue that in its depiction of a relationship between a traumatized, male soldier and an orphaned, female child, "For Esmé" shows the power of joined feminine social and masculine political interests in restoring cognitive structures that have been shattered by traumatic experience.

Significantly, X is paralleled with Esmé in having experienced trauma and been separated from his family. Though he has not experienced the early-childhood trauma of being separated from the care and community provided by parents, X is clearly dealing with the after-effects of traumatic wartime experience during the second part of the story. In what he calls "the squalid, or moving, part of the story" (156), the unnamed narrator, alias Sergeant X, has "not

come through the war with all his faculties intact" (157). His inability to read, shaking hands, incessant smoking, and aching body all serve as obvious markers that he is suffering from battle fatigue or PTSD.

Most importantly, X, who told Esmé earlier in the story that he was a writer (150), is unable to form letters on a page. After attempting to write a quotation from Dostoevsky in response to an inscription on the flyleaf of a book that belonged to the Nazi official whom he had arrested a few weeks before, X "saw—with fright that ran through his whole body—that what he had written was almost entirely illegible" (160). Though he could presumably communicate via spoken word and possibly typewriter, X's inability to form legible hand-written letters suggests that he is unable to tell stories—specifically the story of his trauma, which, as the trauma theorists mentioned in the introduction to this study explain, is necessary to reintegration after a traumatic event. X has been cut off from his career and is to some degree without hope for recovery because of his inability to write.

In addition to this evident trauma, Sergeant X is similar to orphaned Esmé in that he is isolated from his family, both by distance and by complete lack of understanding. That he is separated by distance is obvious; an American first in Devonshire and then somewhere in continental Europe, X is certainly far removed from blood kin. But his separation from them goes deeper still. After he has failed at writing the Dostoevsky inscription, X "quickly picked up something else from the table, a letter from his older brother in Albany" (160). Though he is "[l]oosely resolved to read the letter straight through," he does not get far: "He stopped after the words 'Now that the g.d. war is over and you probably have a lot of time over there, how about sending the kids a couple bayonets or swastikas

...'" (160; ellipsis original). Though this may be, as John Wenke suggests, the sort of light-hearted banter that X and his brother engaged in regularly before the war, the fact that this request for "accouterments of the very same war which threatens to destroy X's being" is made to a soldier who is clearly suffering from the after-effects of meeting with bayonets in action for and against swastika-clad people makes it both insensitive and atrocious (257). That his brother could make such a comment shows that he is clearly out of touch with the emotions and experiences that X has been subject to as an active officer. X is isolated by his traumatic experiences from the understanding of his family, and therefore is in a position similar to that of Esmé and other orphaned characters. He is himself experiencing "the suffering of being unable to love" that the quotation from Dostoevsky suggests is the essence of hell (160), and the insensitivity of his family is doing nothing to aid him in recovery.

As is the case with Miles Plastic and other orphaned male characters, the trauma that X experiences functions politically. It results from his experience at war, serving as a member of the American army fighting against the Nazi forces during World War II. Because this is the case, his suffering is politically laden, suggesting the problems of war and sending a subtle pacifist message. Thus, though his trauma is not caused by orphanhood, it functions politically, in the same way that orphanhood functions politically for Miles and other male orphaned characters.

Like Sergeant X, Esmé also experiences trauma—in her case the trauma of orphanhood, which, as with the stories of female orphans previously discussed, functions socially, particularly in the way that it isolates her from those around her. This is evident first in her distress at the loss of her parents, specifically her

father. Her affection for her father is apparent first in visual cues. When Esmé sits down with X in the tearoom, he notices that “her nails were bitten down to the quick” (140). This habit, seemingly incongruous with the rest of her carefully controlled demeanor, appears to be the result of anxiety over the loss of her father. Esmé speaks of her mother’s death and of her mother herself as “an extremely intelligent person. Quite sensuous, in many ways” (144), without any visible signs of distress. However, when she starts speaking of her father, she begins biting her nails (146). This nervous habit clearly indicates her continued distress over the death of her parent.

This correlation is confirmed by the fact that Esmé wears her father’s wristwatch—“a military-looking one that looked rather like a navigator’s chronograph” (140). X remembers the size of the wristwatch, once again incongruous with her generally tailored air, writing that he “wanted to do something about that enormous-faced wristwatch—perhaps suggest that she try wearing it around her waist” (144). Though the watch is thus comically large for her small wrist, Esmé wears it as a gift that her father “gave . . . me just before Charles and I were evacuated” (151). It serves as another visual cue of her continued affection for her father, even after they have been separated by death.

Esmé’s affection and high regard for her father is further evidenced in the way that she speaks of him. After a few minutes in conversation with X, Esmé tells him that Charles “misses our father very much” (146). Though Esmé attributes this emotion to her younger brother, it is safe to infer that Esmé is admitting that she herself misses her father more even than her brother. This is confirmed in the following conversation. After telling X that her father “was s-l-a-i-n in North Africa,” she bites her cuticle reflectively as she explains family

resemblances and makes observations about her parents' relationship (147). She held her father, and her relationship with her father, very highly.

In the following pages, Esmé continues to speak affectionately of her father. Before his death, Esmé's father told her that a sense of humor was important, so she tells X that this is true as "a statement of faith, not a contradiction" when he asserts otherwise (148). She then explains that "Charles" (read Esmé) "misses him exceedingly" (148). He was "extremely lovable," "extremely handsome," "had terribly penetrating eyes," "was intransigently kind" (148-49), and "wrote beautifully" (150). In spite of Esmé's comic trips of the tongue, this litany of her father's strengths shows the magnitude of her affection for him.

This affection, commendable as it is in its own way, ultimately has a socially isolating effect on female orphan Esmé. Though she was evidently very fond of her father, she is unable to speak of her affection for him, or his for her. Esmé tells X that Charles "misses our father very much," and that "Father adored him" (146). Though these facts may be true, Esmé is in a way speaking in code of her own relationship with her father. Charles has said and done nothing to lead up to this topic. The only reason that it might come up is that Esmé herself experiences the emotions she credits to her brother. When X asks about her watch, Esmé gives a brief answer and then "guided the conversation in a different direction" (151). Incapable of communicating her own feelings about her father or his death, Esmé has to rely on indirection to express her sense of loss. This results in isolation from those around her.

Esmé's loss of her father, especially as combined with her inability to express grief, results in loneliness, a second way in which Esmé is isolated by her

orphanhood. Esmé lives with her aunt, brother, and governess, all of whom seem in their different ways to be intent on making sure that Esmé is “adjusted” (144). However, Esmé does not seem to have in any of these relationships one sufficiently close to recompense her for the loneliness she has experienced in the loss of her father. She approaches X not because she is “terribly gregarious” but because “I thought you looked extremely lonely” (144). Though Esmé’s lack of gregariousness is up for debate, the fact that she notices X’s loneliness and makes an effort to greet him suggests that she, too, is suffering from the same loneliness that she recognizes in him.

Esmé’s comments about her parents’ relationship also refer indirectly to her own relationship with her father. Though she observes that that “Mother was an extremely intelligent person” (144), and that her parents were “quite well mated,” Esmé goes on to say that “Father really needed more of an intellectual companion than Mother was” (147). The contradiction between her mother’s intelligence and her parents’ suitability as marriage partners on the one hand and her father’s need for a more intellectual companion on the other is owing to the fact that Esmé is viewing her parents’ relationship in light of that between herself and her father. As James Bryan observes, “What Esmé really meant about her father, of course, was that he needed someone like herself” (287). Esmé reads her parents’ relationship as wanting only because she saw herself as necessary to her father’s wellbeing—and, by implication, he to hers. If Esmé believes that she and her father were thus necessary to each other, it stands to reason that she herself experiences the loneliness that she attributes to her father as a result of his death. In being deprived of her father and able to express her loneliness only indirectly,

Esmé is isolated from those around her, experiencing the social function of orphanhood for female characters.

Finally, Esmé is isolated by her personal demeanor. Early in their conversation, Esmé tells X, “My aunt says I’m a terribly cold person” (144). Esmé responds to this by “training [her]self to be more compassionate” (144). She has received a similar critique from her father, who “said I have no sense of humor at all. He said I was unequipped to meet life because I have no sense of humor” (148). Though she does not say as much, it is safe to assume that her response to this critique from her father is measured by her response to her aunt. Analytical and carefully controlled, Esmé is aware of those relational, social shortcomings that the authorities in her life have pointed out, and of the isolation that she experiences as a result.

In each of these instances, Esmé’s account of the facts could be taken as false. Esmé imagines her relationship with her father to be close, but it could be read as distant, and her sense of his loss as enhanced by the fact that she always wished to be closer to him than she was. She seems lonely, but is surrounded by an aunt, brother, and governess who are in their different ways affectionate toward her. She sees herself as cold and humorless, but her willingness to engage with X and her evident intelligence suggest that this may not in fact be the case. While it could be argued that this implicit contradiction discounts the idea of Esmé as isolated, I would suggest that her perception of isolation is just as significant as true isolation would be. As Esmé seeks to process the loss of her parents, her reliance on the memory of her father, her sense of loneliness, and her perception of herself as cold and distant are as isolating as though she were really dependent, alone, and cold.

In this way, it is the sense of isolation that Esmé experiences that acts as the internal Opposing Force that Esmé must overcome in her story as an orphan. After being separated from her parents by war and death, Esmé, in typical female orphan fashion, must overcome the socially-significant isolation that she feels and learn how to relate to others. Though Bryan reads Esmé as “far from bitter” and as having “adequately adjusted to orphanhood and is responsibly attending to the upbringing of her younger brother” (280), I would disagree. At this point in the story, at least, Esmé has not adjusted, but is suffering from an internal weight of feelings of isolation resulting from the loss of her parents. As Wenke writes, “Esmé, midway between childhood and adulthood, must cope with the pain of having lost both parents at the same time that she must bear the responsibility of taking care of her brother” (255). Neither of these tasks are typical for a child of twelve or thirteen, and it is understandable that Esmé would feel isolated by her experience even if she were surrounded by a loving and supportive community.

This observation leads into the next point: that both X and Esmé undergo healing from the effects of their different traumatic experiences through interaction with each other. Esmé’s healing begins in the first part of the story, as her interactions with X allow her to see him as a surrogate father figure. That Esmé forms a connection between X and her father is evident first in the increasing openness with which she speaks to him. Early in their conversation, Esmé talks about Americans in the abstract, then mentions and describes her aunt, mother, and brother. It is not until a couple of pages later that Esmé first mentions her father, speaking of his death and its effect on Charles. Throughout the rest of their conversation, Esmé mentions her father frequently, finally when

she interrupts X's complaint about American editors to tell him, "My father wrote beautifully" (150). This comment is interesting in the way it connects Esmé's father and X specifically in their ability to write. That this skill, so important, as White and Espton suggest, to forming a coherent mental model for how the world operates,¹³ would be the point of connection for Esmé between her father and X suggests that X is coming to represent for her an authority on the meaning of her life in the same way that her father had been. Though their conversation is brief, Esmé's request that X write her a story and insistence on taking down his name and address so that she could write to him suggest that it has been important to her.

That their conversation was important is confirmed at the end of the story, when X finds that Esmé has sent him not just a letter, but also her father's wristwatch. The letter, written the day after D Day, is not itself very remarkable. Esmé explains why she has delayed in beginning their correspondence and expresses both joy at the recent developments and hope that X had come out unscathed. The most notable part of the letter is the postscript, where Esmé explains her gift. She writes that she is "quite certain that you will use it to greater advantage in these difficult days than I ever can and that you will accept

¹³ About the importance of writing, White and Epston write, In striving to make sense of life, persons face the task of arranging their experiences of evens in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of themselves and the world around them. Specific experiences of events of the past and present, and those that are predicted to occur in the future, must be connected in a lineal sequence to develop this account. This account can be referred to a story or self-narrative (see Gergen & Gergen, 1984). The success of this storying of experience provides persons with a sense of continuity and meaning in their lives, and this is relied upon for the ordering of daily lives and for the interpretation of further experiences. Since all stories have a beginning (or a history), a middle (or a present), and an ending (or a future), then the interpretation of current events is as much future-shaped as it is past-determined. (10)

it as a lucky talisman" (172). Though Esmé believes literally that X will put the watch to better use than herself—the beginning of the postscript describes the watch's merits, many of which could be helpful to a soldier in active service—her comment has another meaning more important than the first. Esmé herself has been using the watch not for its many mechanical virtues, but because it reminds her of her beloved father and comforts her in her loss. It is in this sense "a lucky talisman" that has seen her through the difficult days of her grief at the traumatic loss of her parents. That she is able to send it to X, and that she recognizes in whatever way that he will be helped by it more than she herself can be, shows that Esmé has been helped on the path to emotional healing by her interactions with father-figure Sergeant X. She returns the watch to its rightful home, and in so doing indicates the progress she has made from her former isolated state.

In turn, Esmé's gift of her father's watch serves as the catalyst of healing for Sergeant X. Critics have had a variety of responses to the end of this story, but by and large they read it as demonstrating (more or less realistically) the power of love in the midst of squalor. In an oft-quoted line, Ihab Hassan praises the story as "a modern epithalamium" (147). Fidelian Burke writes, "The letter and the gift of her father's watch are high points of Esmé's generosity and of her beneficial effect upon X" (346). Bryan reads the gift as restoring a sense of time to X, by which "simple act of kindness, Esmé rekindles in X a hope for the world and for himself" (284). In a less typical reading, John Antico argues that Esmé gives the gift as one part of her assumed role of war-story heroine, which act restores X's sanity not as a symbol of love, but because he sees "the absurdity of the gesture," which restores "his sense of humor, his sense of the ironic" (333). And Gloria Emerson suggests that the story "has a false hum": "A man who had

been hospitalized, who could not sleep or write, would not be consoled by the letter of an English child he had not seen for so long or a dead man's wristwatch. He would not be so easily restored" (228).

Though a few critics have recognized the significance of Esmé's own experience with squalor to X's restoration,¹⁴ they have not considered the full significance of Esmé's orphanhood in her gift of the watch. Though her statement that X "may keep [the wristwatch] in your possession for the duration of the conflict" implies that Esmé does want the watch returned when the conflict is over, it is remarkable here that she has given the gift at all. Unlike the letters he receives from his family, which contain complaints (his wife writes that "the service at Schrafft's Eighty-eight Street had fallen off" [137]) and requests (his mother-in-law asks him to "please send her some cashmere yarn first chance I got away from 'camp'" [137], and his brother asks for swastikas and bayonets for his children [160]), Esmé's note expresses concern for his wellbeing and gives him a gift that she herself treasures very highly.

More significantly, because this gift is one that symbolizes Esmé's traumatic loss of her father, X receives it both as a something that sustains during the throes of traumatic experience and as a sign of hope for restoration. If we understand Esmé's certainty that the watch will help X as referring to the way that the watch has brought, and she believes will bring, comfort in trauma (172),

¹⁴ Burke suggests that "If Esmé and X find solace in their brief meeting, therefore, it is against the background of how each is isolated and insecure, how each wants to be accepted, how each is experiencing, and variously accommodating to, a certain amount of life's squalor" (343). Esmé affects X precisely "as one who adjusts to the difficulties of her situation" (344). Similarly, Wenke writes, "Like X, Esmé has been ravaged by the war and, emotionally, her experiences and problems are similar to the Sergeant's: she has been stripped of her former source of coherence, order, and love through the death of her parents; Sergeant X's former way of ordering experience no longer pertains to his life; both need to reconstruct their lives after being 'wounded' by the war" (257).

then we can see that Esmé is giving X an object that will help him recover from the traumatic cognitive fracturing that he has experienced through his time at war. In this way, Esmé gives X the gift of hope for recovery through a restored narrative.

Moreover, in her gift of the watch, Esmé also gives X a reason for writing, and assumes that he will in time be able to do so. Esmé's simple expression of concern for X in the battle that occurred the day before Esmé wrote shows that she cares for X. Antico reads this fact as proving that Esmé doesn't really care for X, but was merely reminded of his existence by the recent battle. He reads the sending of the watch and letter as proof that "she has read enough war fiction to know that sending a sentimental token to a serviceman is just what is required in Step Number Ten of the Do It Yourself Plan on How to Be More Compassionate in Ten Easy Lessons" (334). Though I agree with him in his reading of the story as a parody of "the typical sentimental war story in which the Love of The Girl Back Home boosts the Morale of the Intrepid War Hero and Saves him from Battle Fatigue" (326-27), his reading of Esmé herself falls short of the mark. Though Esmé is indeed intentionally practicing compassion, the fact that the story is framed as written for her on the occasion of her wedding six years later suggests both that Esmé's letter is the first in a lasting and personally important correspondence between herself and X, and that she has in fact become more compassionate, and is able even to love and be loved by her fiancé. The writing of this story to Esmé shows that she did care, and that her gifts, of the wristwatch and of a reason for writing, have indeed had the effect that she believed they would.

In this way, we see that Sergeant X experiences healing through his relationship with Esmé, as she does through her relationship with him. Esmé's orphanhood allows her and X to connect as two traumatized people. In seeing X as a surrogate father, Esmé feels less isolated so is able to move on from the loss of her parents and become a well-adjusted, compassionate young woman. In witnessing Esmé's reconstruction as it is evidenced by the gift of her father's watch, X sees the possibility of restoration after a traumatic experience and has hope for his own reconstruction. Both the giving and the receiving of hope are subconscious, implicit rather than explicit in this story; neither Esmé nor Sergeant X are obviously aware of what is going on in the moment. But it is nonetheless true that the connection between them allows healing.

"For Esmé," in addition to showing the importance of interactions between people who are experiencing different types of trauma, also demonstrates the way that the feminine social and masculine political functions of orphanhood can work together to bring healing. I have shown that orphanhood for Esmé as feminine functions primarily socially, and that trauma for X as masculine functions primarily politically. Significantly, while the story confirms the political and social function of traumatic experience, the healing that both masculine and feminine characters undergo takes place in community with each other. Esmé, whose orphanhood has a social function in that it affects her ability to form connections with other people, demonstrates a resilience through her interaction with X, which in turn helps him as a traumatized soldier, whose trauma results from social fracturing for a political cause, to overcome the "squalor" of his experience. As with *Howards End*, "For Esmé" shows the necessity of joined feminine social and masculine political interests. Esmé needs

the male father-figure who is doing and surviving the same thing that took her biological father's life in order to reconstruct her shattered world; Sergeant X needs the female child who is practicing in order to reconstruct the social fabric that she has lost in order to reconstruct his. Both roles are necessary, and interaction between them is essential for healing.

Conclusion

In their different depictions of orphanhood, Edith Wharton's Lily Bart, E. M. Forster's Margaret and Helen Schlegel, Evelyn Waugh's Miles Plastic, and J. D. Salinger's Sergeant X and Esmé prove the thesis of the chapter: that orphanhood as traumatic experience functions socially for female characters and politically for male characters. In so doing, these works demonstrate the importance of both feminine-social and masculine-political interests for both male and female characters. Particularly in *Howards End* and "For Esmé," but also to some degree in *The House of Mirth* and *Love Among the Ruins*, we see that, while social and political, feminine and masculine, can be separated, they are yet closely connected and necessary to each other. It is not possible for the social to function without the political and without political consequences, nor is it possible for the political to function without the social and without social consequences. This point merits closer attention and could be useful to feminist criticism in its conversations about the equality of and value in difference, though further development of the idea of dependence between those occupying different paradigms is beyond the scope of this study.

In raising this point for further study, these stories demonstrate the value of reading orphaned characters as orphaned. Recognizing that orphanhood is

psychologically significant encourages us to read characters in light of their orphanhood. Recognizing and considering the effect of a characters' familial status enhances our understanding of gender difference in a way that would not be possible otherwise. As with many other features of a character's life, we see that orphanhood operates as a magnifier of gendered characteristics and of the value of interaction between genders, demonstrating that orphanhood is more important to character development than many readers are aware.

CHAPTER FOUR

Orphanhood and the American Landscape

Having explored patterns that are broadly true of literary orphanhood, we now move to close readings of orphanhood in specific, American contexts. This chapter will consider the significance of orphanhood in stories that deal with the American landscape, both as a natural environment and as a space of historical consequence. I will begin with Gene Stratton-Porter's 1904 novel *Freckles*, a work that critics have overlooked but that was immensely popular in the early years of the twentieth century and that clearly exhibits the orphan story structure and demonstrates a strong understanding of the power of nature. I will then consider Willa Cather's 1925 novel *The Professor's House*, yet another instance of orphanhood overlooked in a work that has received a moderate amount of critical attention. In this novel, the orphan narrative is complicated through a second traumatic experience, demonstrating the way that natural place and human community work for and against the process of healing from trauma. Through both of these readings, I will argue that the American landscape serves as a place where orphaned characters can experience wholeness and heritage as they connect with the ecologically and historically important features of the natural world.

Nature, Place, and the Process of Healing

This chapter's claims about the significance of the American landscape in the stories of orphaned characters draws on the theoretical and psychological

work that has been done on the value of the natural environment in human development and restoration. The theoretical field of ecocriticism recognizes the importance of place to the human person and considers how the interconnection between people and the environment in which they live affects our understanding of the function of literature. Similarly, the psychological field of ecologically-based therapies—wilderness therapy, ecotherapy, and therapeutic horticulture—recognizes the importance of human connection to the natural environment, whether it be specific places or the general out-of-doors.

For both ecocriticism and ecologically-based therapies, natural place plays an important role—as it does in the orphan stories featured in this chapter. In particular, these stories illustrate the significance of the American landscape to their protagonists. Both the noun “landscape” and the adjective “American” are important to this study. The term “landscape” has been defined by Andrea Abraham and her colleagues “as a continuum between ‘wild’ nature and designed environment such as urban and rural forests, green spaces, parks, gardens, waters, and neighbourhood areas” (59). It is a multisensory term, including not only the sights, but also the sounds, smells, and feelings of a particular environment (59-60). Thus, in using the term “landscape,” I imply that the characters are not only affected by the view of their surroundings, but also by the multisensory, tactile experience of those surroundings as they live and work in their particular natural environment.

The landscapes in question in this chapter are specifically American landscapes. This is important first because it indicates and emphasizes the narrowing of the scope of this study in this and the next chapter. While landscapes in other countries are doubtless of importance to fictional residents of

all familial backgrounds, this chapter will look at orphaned characters who are affected by the American environment. Second, this chapter's focus on orphans in an American environment is important because the American landscape—specifically the early American frontier—has been important to the conception of America and its mythos since Columbus first sailed the ocean blue. For America, the landscape itself—the untamed wilderness, the open skies and mountain ranges, the potential farmland—has figured significantly in the imaginations of Americans, from early settlers to twenty-first-century school children. While historians increasingly recognize the importance of the history and customs of the Native American people to the conception of America, the Eurocentric idea of America as untamed and unpeopled wilderness is particularly important in early-twentieth-century literature, especially where that literature is concerned with orphaned characters.

In particular, the American landscapes discussed in this chapter are significant because they become specific, personal, intimate places for the orphaned characters to experience cognitive reintegration after the traumatic experience of being orphaned. In his study of the fundamentally subversive nature of ecology as the study of interrelation, Neil Evernden writes of the “human phenomenon . . . that is described as aesthetic and which is, in effect, a ‘sense of place,’ a sense of knowing and of being a part of a particular place” (100). This sense of place is important not only because of the aesthetic pleasure that knowing a place brings, but because humans find in being part of a place a sense of identity that is crucial in human functioning. Evernden writes, “there is some connection between the individual and his particular place and . . . , as Paul Shepard says, knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you

are from” (101). Indeed, “There is no such thing as an individual, only and individual-in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place” (103). This is particularly important to placeless orphaned characters, who typically experience a lack of home as a result of the loss of their parents.

More important still in the context of this chapter is the fact that the particular kinds of places that Freckles and Tom inhabit are natural places. In his bestselling book *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv writes about “the accumulating research that reveals the necessity of contact with nature for healthy child—and adult—development” (2). He explains, “A widening circle of researchers believes that the loss of natural habitat, or the disconnection from nature even when it is available, has enormous implications for human health and child development. They say the quality of exposure to nature affects our health at an almost cellular level” (43). Time in natural places is essential to proper human functioning, especially in children.

In addition to this research on the importance of natural environments in child development, other studies suggest that they also have potential healing qualities for those who are suffering from trauma-spectrum disorders. Abraham and her colleagues argue that “landscape should be understood to be a multifaceted resource for physical, mental and social health and well-being” (65). They provide a review of various studies that have been performed on the benefits of landscape, suggesting the importance of interaction with the multisensory natural environment. In another literature review, Lucy Keninger and her colleagues look at different foci in studies on nature interaction in order to suggest where further research needs to be done. Their research showed that most studies on the benefits of nature interaction “focus on psychological

benefits, which can broadly be divided into psychological well-being benefits and those associated with cognitive performance. Interaction with nature can increase self-esteem and mood, reduce anger, and improve general psychological well-being with positive effects on emotions and behavior” (919). Nevin J. Harper’s review shows that “Research across allied fields of health promotion, therapy, and education have [sic.] shown positive results in addressing numerous issues such as depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders through contact with nature and outdoor activity” (69). He shows that studies on wilderness therapy found that it was effective for youth dealing with substance abuse, self-harming behavior, trauma, grief, anxiety, and depression. Benefits included improvement in the young peoples’ home life and relationships with their parents, reduced substance abuse and symptoms of trauma, greater levels of independence and self-esteem, and improved psychosocial function.

In addition to these reviews, more specific ecotherapy, wilderness therapy, and therapeutic horticulture studies have explored the benefits of time in the natural world for those suffering from trauma-related disorders. George Carter Herrity’s study on the benefits of wilderness therapy for adolescents suffering from trauma showed that, while the therapy did not result in decreased trauma symptoms per se, it did show “a significant increase in psychosocial functioning . . . , and a near statistically significant increase in psychological resilience” (46-47). Claire M. Renzetti and Diane R. Follingstad’s study of the benefits of therapeutic horticulture for victims of domestic violence “indicate[s] that the TH program is perceived by staff to have significant physical, psychological, and social benefits for shelter residents, including exercise and better nutrition, reduction in stress, increased self-esteem, sustained sobriety,

and reduced social isolation" (687). And Dorothe Varning Poulsen and her colleagues explain that their ten-week study with veterans suffering from PTSD found that time in the therapy garden was described by the participants as "calming and meaningful," which, they suggest, "could be interpreted as the first step towards changing their lives outside the therapy garden" (8). The fact that the veterans' time in the therapy garden provided them with meaning is significant, demonstrating, as Evernden suggests, the importance of place as assisting in the process of cognitive restructuring after a traumatic event. Each of these studies demonstrates the benefits, whether psychological or social, of nature-based therapies for those suffering from trauma-related disorders, and, by implication, for orphaned characters who have experienced the trauma of separation from their parental attachment figures.

Natural Place and Stages of Healing in Gene Stratton-Porter's Freckles

Although Gene Stratton-Porter's *Freckles* was initially written for and immensely popular among an adult audience, it is often read as a work of children's literature (Phillips 100). This is not surprising, for the novel's straightforward storyline and often-overdrawn sentimentality can seem absurd to critical and contemporary tastes. As Lawrence Jay Dessner explains, the novel has been "derided or ignored by critics" since its publication in 1904 (139-40). He himself follows in this tradition, finding the novel inconsistent in its ideology and overdrawn in its prose, far from instructive inasmuch as it is based purely on emotion. As he writes of the language employed in the novel, "This relentless insistence, this lack of moderation, this sensationalism in the novel's language is so customary, so seemingly habitual, that one feels the presence of presumably

unconscious, expressive needs. It is as if the novel's intellectual and ideological muddle is merely a superficial layer of flotsam bobbing on a boiling sea of emotion" (156).

Dessner's unfavorable reading of Stratton-Porter's novel is tempered by critics who recognize the importance of her work to the early twentieth-century popularization of natural history. Her novels, which abound in detailed descriptions of the settings in which they take place, brought the content of field guides to a popular-literary audience. Thus, Anne Elizabeth Raine, while recognizing that Stratton-Porter has not been highly regarded for her literature or for her cultural criticism, also remarks that several of her contemporaries "regarded her as a female counterpart to Theodore Roosevelt in her influence on the nation" (21). This is no small compliment and is especially relevant to the present study. While Stratton-Porter was never considered to be a great author, and while her works are perhaps more valuable as literature for children or young adults than for adults, her significance as a popular writer of works that emphasize the beauty and importance of the natural world prove her to be worthy of greater attention than she has received.

Stratton-Porter's novel is relevant in this study because the titular character, Freckles, is an orphan. Abandoned as an infant at an orphanage in Chicago, Freckles is left to find his own way in the world with the help of only one hand and his inherent honesty. As a "romantic child in nature" (Dawson 48 n. 23), Freckles finds in the Limberlost the home that he never had, falls in love with a girl whose bravery and integrity are excelled only by her heavenly beauty, and finally discovers the respectable heritage that is necessary for him to obtain the Happily Ever After that he deserves. While there may be some truth in

Dessner's claim that the novel "dramatizes assumptions about class, gender, and sexual identity that are at best ambiguous, at worst retrograde" (140), the following reading will set those issues aside to focus on how Stratton-Porter deals with Freckles as an orphan in his specific environment of the Limberlost swamp of Indiana. Though orphaned Freckles escapes psychological disintegration, he experiences the consequences of the loss of his parents in the traumatic fracturing in his history and his community. However, throughout the novel Freckles regains both history and community in the four stages of work, interest, love, and blood. Underlying and informing each of these different spheres of wholeness is the Limberlost, which provides both the space and the catalyst for Freckles' final restoration.

Unlike many orphaned children, Freckles does not exhibit psychological disorders as a result of his orphanhood. He is neither emotionally withdrawn nor inappropriately sensitive about his past. Bessel A. van der Kolk writes that these responses are common in "children who have been exposed to disruptions of their attachment to their primary caregivers through separation or through abuse or neglect" ("Psychological" 15). He explains that two common responses to psychological trauma are emotional outbursts and withdrawal: "the response to psychological trauma has been described as phasic reliving and denial, with alternating intrusive and numbing responses" ("Psychological" 3). Unlike those that van der Kolk discusses who are suffering the psychological consequences of traumatic events, Freckles is neither intrusive nor numb; he feels deeply and responds appropriately even in difficult situations.

This is evident from our first introduction to Freckles as he seeks work with the Grand Rapids Lumber Company, headed by Mr. McLean. Though he

“might have been mistaken for a tramp,” Freckles is in fact “truly seeking work,” “intensely eager to belong somewhere and to be attached to almost any enterprise that would furnish him with food and clothing” (3). He finds the scene of the camp “intensely attractive” (3), and flushes with embarrassed pride when the cook dismisses him after seeing that he has only one hand (4). When McLean reproves the cook for writing Freckles off so easily, calling the lad by the possessive “my man,” “Freckles stood one instant as he had braced himself to meet the eyes of the manager; then his arm dropped and a wave of whiteness swept over him” (5). While he waits for McLean to finish his bookkeeping, Freckles fixes himself up, attempting to hide signs of fatigue and deprivation behind a straightened cap and cleaned coat. When McLean finally turns to him, Freckles meets his gaze with “steady gray eyes” full of “unswerving candour and the appearance of longing not to be ignored” (7). In these first few pages, the novel effectively presents Freckles as a character with deep emotions. His responses to his lack of work, to the camp, and to his reception by the cook and McLean are stylistically sentimental and overdrawn, but not inappropriate given his circumstances. Far from demonstrating the “extreme reactivity to internal and external stimulation,” “overreact[ion] to frustrations and . . . trouble tolerating anxiety” (“Psychological” 15), and inability “to modulate emotions and engage in social affiliation” (“Separation” 35) that van der Kolk identifies as common symptoms of attachment-related trauma disorders, Freckles modulates his just anger at the cook’s dismissal and responds appropriately to a stressful situation. His capacity to experience appropriate emotion has not been damaged by his childhood experiences.

Nor is Freckles sensitive about or protective of his history. When McLean shows him kindness and respect, Freckles quickly tells him the pathetic story of his past: how he was abandoned as an infant, bruised black and with his hand cut off, outside of a charity home; how he was taken in and cared for, kindly but inadequately, by the people who ran the home; how he was sent by the home's new superintendent to work for a man who beat him when he saw he had but one hand; how he ran away to make his own way in a world where "[b]ig, strong, whole men are the only ones for being wanted" (12). Once again, Freckles' openness about his past and the language that he uses to tell his story are sentimental but appropriate. He is neither using his story to attempt to manipulate McLean into offering him a job out of sympathy (though that is the effect of his recital), nor is he reticent to share a story that would in most cases be debilitatingly painful. A character who had been psychologically damaged by his experiences would have shown one of these two responses. Because he does not, it is evident that Freckles as a character manages to escape the psychological consequences of the separation, neglect, and physical abuse related to his orphanhood.

While Freckles escapes the psychological consequences of trauma, his story does exhibit the historical and communal fracturing that are common in traumatic experience. On historical fracturing, Kalí Tal explains that trauma shatters one's relation to the historical myths assumed and taught by culture at large, instead creating personal myth that often contradicts, or at least does not fully align with, the dominant historical myths. Accordingly, the traumatized individual is unable to integrate her experience into the mythology of the nation, often repressing the traumatic experience in order to avoid contradicting the

norm. Cathy Caruth similarly recognizes that trauma is a break in our experience of time, caused by something that happens too quickly or unexpectedly to be processed. She explains that traumatic events, specifically events that could cause death but which the individual survives, repeatedly and unavoidably intrude on the human psyche, shaping human experience in a way that often contradicts dominant conceptions of historical progression. Thus, a wound to the mind

is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. . . . [T]rauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on. (*Unclaimed* 4)

Traumatic experience causes historical fracturing for the one experiencing the traumatic event, typically with accompanying psychological disturbance.

Though Tal and Caruth are particularly interested in the psychological consequences of historical fracturing, their comments relate to Freckles' story in that his own history, or rather lack thereof, dominates his interactions with others and his understanding of himself. In his case, this historical fracturing is very concrete: Freckles has no history in that he does not know where he came from or who were his parents, and that lack of historical grounding crops up at unfortunate moments and excludes him from respectable life. In the novel's first chapter, as Freckles speaks with McLean, he is unable to avoid telling his story. When McLean expresses confusion at Freckles' lack of a proper name, Freckles tells him slowly, "I was thinking from the voice and the face of you that you wouldn't [understand]" (10). The pace at which he makes this opening remark expresses Freckles' reluctance to bring up his questionable past in this context.

Though the lad is willing to tell his story, this particular time seems to him inappropriate; however, he cannot avoid the recurrence of the story that he hesitates to tell. Freckles also explains that he has “spent more time on” the question of his past and his namelessness “than I ever did on anything else in all me life, and I don’t understand” (10). From this statement it is evident that Freckles’ unusual history has occupied his thoughts in a way that assumes historical fracturing. Later, he tells McLean that while he was in school at the orphanage, he “loved me history books. I had them almost by heart” (52). This eagerness to learn the basic facts of history again suggests that Freckles is affected by his own lack thereof. Because he does not know the story of his past, Freckles must either think of it and attempt to reconstruct it for himself or sublimate it by seeking historical coherence in the history of his nation or his world.

In addition to this moderate degree of personal historical fracturing, Freckles’ past also excludes him from the dominant historical myth of respectability. We see this toward the end of the novel, when the wounded Freckles sentences himself to death because his lack of history keeps him from the one thing that he desires above all else: the love of the Swamp Angel. Though the Angel proclaims her willingness to promise herself to him even though he does not know his past, “Freckles Refuses Love Without Knowledge of Honourable Birth,” as the title of the chapter recounting this saga explains (301). Because Freckles does not know where he comes from and suspects that his family was dishonest and cruel, he refuses the possibility of union with the Angel, who has “everything that loving, careful raising and money can give [her]” (303). His unsure history excludes him from the myth of personal

legitimacy as a potential husband to the high-born and well-raised Swamp Angel. He is, as Tal explains of traumatized individuals, unable to integrate his fractured past into the national mythology—in this case, the mythology of respectability. He must repress that experience as much as possible, but not allow that repression to convince him to transgress the boundaries of what is historical-mythologically appropriate.

In addition to this historical fracturing, trauma—specifically the trauma of orphanhood—can have the effect of isolating the traumatized person, fracturing her community. Van der Kolk writes of the way that traumatic events can affect the social capabilities of the traumatized person, particularly if she is not supported through the event. He writes,

Lack of support during traumatic experiences may leave enduring marks on subsequent adjustment and functioning. . . . [Traumatized people's] loss of basic safety often leads to a life-long inability to trust and a chronic rage that may be turned against others or against the self. In both children and adults, lack of social support following trauma heightens the sense of lost security. ("Psychological" 11)

Elsewhere, he writes that "failure to develop such [attachment] bonds is devastating" ("Separation" 35); "In both children and adults, this may lead to temporary or lasting disruptions in the capacity to modulate emotions and engage in social affiliation. The clinical symptoms of this lost trust can be as severe as the symptoms of those in whom basic trust never developed" (35). This serves as a further explanation of what John Bowlby recognized, that "one-third of all those who had spent five years or more of their lives in institutions turned out to be 'socially incapable' in adult life" (*Maternal Care* 68). Trauma, especially in young children and especially if experienced without parental support or

because that support has been removed, can result in social incapacity, and thus communal fracturing.

Though Freckles does not experience the psychological consequences of his traumatic past, he does experience a failure of social affiliation, particularly before the story begins, that aligns him indirectly with the communal fracturing that results from traumatic experience. He is an orphan separated from his parents, and is thus without the natural and important sense of belonging to a familial community. In addition, the new superintendent of the orphanage, “swore he’d weed me out the first thing he did” had recently put Freckles out of the orphanage, which the lad describes as “all the home I’d ever known, and I didn’t seem to belong to any place else” (12). This second rejection mirrors the first, removing Freckles from the place that had been his home and subjecting him to a second fracturing of his sense of community. When he leaves the orphanage, Freckles is sent to a man who needs help on his farm and who abuses the lad when he finds that he is missing a hand. Freckles encounters the same rejection after he runs away from the abusive man: he continues to look for work but is denied employment on account of his missing limb. Freckles is rejected, experiencing communal fracturing, directly because of his disability and indirectly because of his past.

In this way, we see that Freckles experiences a sort of external historical and communal fracturing that is related to though not a perfect illustration of the typical consequences of traumatic experience. Though it would be too far a stretch to say that Freckles is traumatized by his past, we can see in his story elements that would under normal circumstances cause psychological trauma, and that in his case cause fracturing that is related to such trauma. For these

reasons, it is appropriate to say that Freckles' past places him in the role of orphaned character in need of historical and communal restoration in order to function properly in the world.

Not surprisingly, as the model sentimental hero, Freckles gets the restoration that he needs. While it is easy to anticipate this from the genre and early popularity of the novel, what sets Freckles apart and makes his story particularly relevant to this study is the way that his interaction with the natural environment of the Limberlost enables that restoration. As Anne Kathryn Phillips writes, "after learning the language of the swamp, Freckles comes to love it, and to know himself through exposure to it" (140). She calls this process Freckles' "rebirth in the swamp," through which "he is able to understand the arrangements of the community, to identify the sounds he hears in the swamp, and to establish a connection with the creatures he routinely encounters on his trail" (118). Though Phillips focuses on the natural features as evidence of the transcendental influence on the novel, her observations are also relevant to our interest in the importance of the natural environment per se to orphaned Freckles. In particular, Freckles experiences historical and communal restoration through his time in the swamp in four stages, as it provides him with work, interest, love, and ultimately with the recovery of his past.

The first stage of restoration for Freckles is in his work: his Limberlost healing experience begins when McLean hires him to guard the valuable timber with which the swamp is filled. After Freckles has told McLean his story, McLean, "although in his heart he knew that to employ a stranger would be wretched business for a man with the interests he had involved" (13), agrees to hire the lad. This work gives Freckles a reason to walk the seven-mile trail

around the two-thousand-acre plot of swamp that McLean had leased for the sake of its valuable timber. And Freckles needs a reason. During his first few weeks on the job he finds the swamp terrifying. The narrator describes Freckles' response to the swamp:

Each hour was torture to the boy. The restricted life of a great city orphanage was the other extreme of the world compared with the Limberlost. He was afraid for his life every minute. The heat was intense. The heavy wading-boots rubbed his feet until they bled. He was sore and stiff from his long tramp and outdoor exposure. The seven miles of trail was agony at every step. He practised at night, under the direction of Duncan, until he grew sure in the use of his revolver. He cut a stout hickory cudgel, with a knot on the end as big as his fist; this never left his hand. What he thought in those first days he himself could not recall clearly afterward. (17-18)

The structure of this passage conveys Freckles' suffering during these first weeks walking the line. The short, simple sentences in the middle of the passage demonstrate his initial inability to make sense of his multisensory experience of the Limberlost landscape. The two complex sentences at the end of the passage focus on the measures that Freckles takes to learn to protect himself, suggesting in their comparative complexity how important those protective measures are in helping Freckles endure.

Significantly, it is the natural features of the swamp that Freckles finds particularly terrifying. On his first day on duty, Freckles finds the wires surrounding the lease down and has to restring them. After finally completing his task, Freckles must continue his second round of the swamp in the dark:

The Limberlost stirred gently, then shook herself, growled, and awoke around him.

There seemed to be a great owl hooting from every hollow tree, and a little one screeching from every knot-hole. The bellowing of big bullfrogs was not sufficiently deafening to shut out the wailing of the whip-poor-wills that seemed to come from every bush. Night-hawks swept past him with their shivering cry, and bats struck his face. A

prowling wild cat missed its catch and screamed with rage. A straying fox bayed incessantly for its mate. (18)

Freckles is absolutely terrified by this barrage of unknown sounds. The voices of the swamp, the natural setting in which he finds himself, are horrifying in their strangeness.

However, in spite of his nearly overwhelming fear, Freckles persists in his work. That first night, he retraces his steps twice when he realizes that he has not been testing the line in his eagerness to escape the terrors of the swamp, and he continues faithful in his duties. The narrator explains, "If he ever had an idea of giving up, no one ever knew it; for he clung to his job without the shadow of wavering" (19). After a few weeks, Freckles begins to grow accustomed to the work and to feel pride in his ability to accomplish it: "Before the first month passed, he was fairly easy about his job; by the next he rather liked it" (20). This liking does not grow merely from habit or familiarity, but from the sights and sounds of nature that had at first terrified him: "Nature can be trusted to work her own miracle in the heart of any man whose daily task keeps him alone among her sights, sounds, and silences" (20-21).

The work in nature that Freckles is hired to accomplish addresses both the historical and the communal fracturing that he experiences as a result of his orphanhood. When McLean explains the work before he agrees to hire Freckles, he tells the lad about one John Carter, or Black Jack as he is known in those parts, who is on a desperate mission to fell some of the most valuable trees in the swamp and sell them to McLean's business rival. Freckles' work of walking the line is necessary and dangerous because Black Jack "has sworn to have these trees if he has to die or to kill others to get them" (10). By taking on the work of

guarding McLean's lease, Freckles is entering into the history of Black Jack's rivalry with McLean, taking his place in that story as the guard of the goods that Black Jack has threatened to steal.

Freckles' work also allows him to enter into the greater history of the swamp itself. Near the middle of the novel, the Swamp Angel tells Freckles, "This swamp is named for a man that was lost here and wandered around 'til he was starved" (171). The Indiana State Park website corroborates this story, explaining that "the vast forest and swampland" which "was legendary for its quicksand and unsavory characters . . . received its name from Limber Jim, who got lost while hunting in the swamp. When the news spread, the cry went out 'Limer's lost!'" (*Limerlost*). Unlike Limber Jim, Freckles learns the ins and outs of the swamp so that there is little chance of his getting lost there himself. More than that, Freckles gives a new meaning to the name of the swamp. In addition to being named for Limber Jim who was lost in the swamp, in *Freckles* the name "Limerlost" also can be read as referring to its one-handed guard, "a young man who has lost a limb" (Dessner 156). Thus, by taking on the work of guarding McLean's lease, Freckles gains a restored personal history by rewriting the story of the Limerlost in his own lost limb, and in rewriting the story of his tragic past in the history of the Limerlost.

In addition to providing a place for historical restoration, Freckles' work in the swamp offers him a new, complete community, first and foremost amongst the creatures of the swamp. As Freckles overcomes his fear of the swamp, he begins to understand and care for the birds, squirrels, rabbits, and other animals who live there. After his first couple of months in the swamp, where "the only thing that relieved his utter loneliness was the companionship

of the birds and beasts," Freckles begins to "turn to them for friendship" (21). As his work leads him into daily interaction with the swamp, Freckles forms a community with the creatures that occupy that space. Though he has not demonstrated an inability to interact appropriately with other people, it is significant that the first living things that the novel describes as his friends are animals, not humans. The restoration of Freckles' community must begin through mandated work in the natural setting of the Limberlost with the creatures who make that space their home.

"From the effort to protect the birds and animals," the narrator continues, "it was only a short step to the possessive feeling, and with that sprang the impulse to caress and provide" (21). Freckles follows this impulse by collecting scraps of food from around the Duncan's house where he boards to carry to the Limberlost wildlife during the cold and barren winter months. The creatures respond to this so well that "[b]efore February they were so accustomed to him, and so hunger-driven, that they would perch on his head and shoulders, and the saucy jays would try to pry into his pockets" (22). Freckles' sense of community with the birds leads him to interact with them as though they did in fact belong to him, through which process he also comes to belong to them. Mrs. Duncan remarks to her husband that the birds provide for Freckles a community "that keeps the eye bright, the heart happy, and the feet walking faithful the rough path he's set them in," and Duncan calls the wild birds Freckles' "chickens" (24). As he faithfully carries out his task of walking the Limberlost trail and observes and feeds the creatures of the swamp, Freckles forms a mutual community with those creatures, they depending on him for food and he on them for

companionship. Through this experience, Freckles knows “the first hours of real happiness in [his] life” (23).

In addition to regaining a sense of history and community through his work in the Limberlost, Freckles also experiences a restoration of interest through his time in the Limberlost. His initial experience of friendship with the creatures grows with the spring weather and the return of migratory birds to “an overpowering desire to know what they were, to learn where they had been, and whether they would make friends with him as the winter birds had done” (34-35). As he watches the Limberlost come back to life around him, there stirs in him a deep desire to know the names and the habits of the creatures around him not just through observation, but through study. “Oh, how I wish I knew!” he exclaims several times (38, 41, 43). This desire echoes Evernden’s suggestion that “The act of naming may itself be a part of the process of establishing a sense of place” (101). Freckles realizes that his place in the Limberlost is incomplete until he knows the names of the creatures by which he is surrounded. Finally, as Freckles restlessly walks the line and observes the wildlife around him, “a big green bullfrog, with palpitant throat and batting eyes, lifted his head and bellowed in answer: ‘*Fin’ dout! Fin’ dout!*’” (43; emphasis original). Freckles resolves to do so, purchases field guides with his hard-earned wages, and feeds the interest that the Limberlost has awakened.

This interest, like the work that excites it, provides Freckles with a restored history and community. Historical restoration comes as Freckles gains understanding of the natural history of the swamp. The field of natural history, replaced later in the century with harder sciences including biology and geography, was important in the early twentieth century, especially with the

preservation movement encouraged by Theodore Roosevelt and his contemporaries. Stratton-Porter herself was known for her work as a naturalist or natural historian, and her work provided the inspiration for much of her fiction. As his desire to understand the names and customs of “all the birds, trees, flowers, butterflies, and . . . frogs” grows (45), Freckles enters into the tradition of nature study, gaining both a place in the history of that tradition and a sense of his place in the history of the natural world.

Freckles begins to take this place first when, after he has resolved to find out about the creatures of the swamp, he eagerly tells McLean of all that he had seen and heard:

Freckles decorated his story with keen appreciation and rare touches of Irish wit and drollery that made it most interesting as well as very funny. It was a first attempt at descriptive narration. With an inborn gift for striking the vital point, a naturalist’s dawning enthusiasm for the wonders of the Limberlost, and the welling joy of his newly found happiness, he made McLean see the struggles of the moth and its freshly painted wings, the dainty, brilliant bird-mates of different colours, the feather sliding through the clear air, the palpitant throat and batting eyes of the frog; while his version of the big bird’s courtship won for the Boss the best laugh he had enjoyed for years. (48)

It is significant that the narrator frames Freckles’ description of his experiences as “a first attempt at descriptive narration” (48). Freckles is in this passage telling the story of his experience, performing an Act of the Imagination by engaging in a process of narration that is related to those identified by trauma theorists as necessary to recovery from trauma. As he does so, Freckles begins subtly rewriting his own story in the story of the life of the swamp. Specifically, the narrator credits Freckles’ vivid description to “a naturalist’s dawning enthusiasm for the wonders of the Limberlost” (48), placing him in the tradition that his interest in the swamp is allowing him to enter. When he explains to McLean his

desire for books that will enable him “to be knowing and naming” the “beautiful things” of the Limberlost (51), McLean agrees to order him all the books and supplies that he needs to set up his own natural history lab and classroom in the middle of the Limberlost. As McLean goes on his way, Freckles remarks to himself, “Well, if life ain’t getting to be worth living!” (54). The possibility of entering into the naturalist tradition and thereby gaining an understanding of the history of the life of the swamp makes Freckles all the more content with his place in the Limberlost.

As Freckles’ interest in the swamp leads him into the tradition of natural history, it also provides him with a community—this time with other humans who share his interest in the wildlife of the swamp. Chief among these is the Bird Woman, an otherwise unnamed nature photographer who is modeled after Stratton-Porter herself. Passionate about her work, the Bird Woman may become “blistered and half eaten up; but she never will quit until she is satisfied” with the job she has done (97). When she returns to her carriage after photographing for the first time the baby vulture that Freckles has dubbed his Little Chicken, the narrator explains that “a warmer, more worn, worse bitten creature [Freckles] never had seen” (103). In spite of her condition, the Bird Woman is happy with her day’s work and eager to continue. As she drives away, “Freckles joyfully realized that this was going to be another person for him to love” (105). Through their mutual interest in the wildlife of the Limberlost, Freckles gains another whole and happy community with the Bird Woman.

More importantly still is the girl that the Bird Woman brings with her on her ventures into the Limberlost, whom Freckles names the Swamp Angel. We will discuss her primary role in the novel as Freckles’ romantic interest in a

moment. First, however, it is important to recognize that she is not only a beautiful girl whom Freckles adores. In addition to Freckles' unquestionable and sentimentally overdrawn attraction to her, the two form a friendship through their mutual interest in the beauties of the swamp. The Angel first comes in the swamp because she has accompanied her friend the Bird Woman on her expedition to photograph the Little Chicken. Though the Angel does not go with her into the midst of the swamp, it is not because she is afraid to do so, for her courage in the face of the dangers of the swamp is one of the things that Freckles admires in her most (96). Later in the novel, after the Limberlost's greatest danger has been removed with the death of Black Jack, Freckles and the Swamp Angel enjoy the early-autumnal beauty of the place together. She is particularly entranced by the baby animals with which the place is teeming and takes great pleasure in holding them when Freckles is able to catch them for her. The narrator writes, "She was learning her natural history from nature, and having much healthful exercise" (255). In her interest in the wildlife of the swamp, the Angel provides communal restoration for Freckles as they mutually enjoy the wonders of the Limberlost.

The third stage of Freckles' historical and communal recovery through the swamp is in the love that it provides for him. As the Limberlost provides him with work and with interest, so it provides him with people and places to love and to be loved by. When Freckles tells McLean of his first sight of the vultures and of their comical mating dance, he says, "If anybody loved me like that, Mr. McLean, I wouldn't be spending any time on how they looked or moved. All I'd be thinking of would be how they felt toward me" (50). The lad is starved for love, to the point that he hungers for it even when he sees it in the comical sight

of a vulture wooing his mate. Later, Freckles “stud[ies] the devotion of a fox-mother to her babies” (254). In this instance, the narrator connects his interest directly to his childhood experiences: “To him, whose early life had been so embittered by continual proof of neglect and cruelty in human parents toward their children, the love of these furred and feathered folk of the Limberlost was even more of a miracle than to the Bird Woman and the Angel” (254). Freckles’ desire for love is directly addressed by the love that he sees in the creatures of the swamp, and by the way that his work and interest in the swamp provide context for historical and communal restoration in his broken affections for other people.

The primary way that the Limberlost provides historical healing through love is in McLean’s affection of the boy, which increases as he observes him and his work in the swamp. From the first pages of the book, where Freckles relates his sorry past, McLean is touched by the lad’s honesty and determination, and moves toward him in compassion to give him a sense of belonging. After he agrees to hire Freckles to guard his lease, McLean asks a second time for Freckles’ name. “I haven’t any name,” the boy replies (14). This stubborn response softens as he continues: “I don’t know what [my name] is, and I never will; but I am going to be your man and do your work, and I’ll be glad to answer to any name you choose to call me. Won’t you please be giving me a name, Mr. McLean?” (14). To this McLean responds by offering to call the boy by his father’s name: “If I give you the name of my nearest kin and the man I loved best—will that do?” (14). In offering Freckles his father’s name, McLean ascribes to the lad a history of kinship and love that makes him “feel almost as if I belonged, already” (14). This act of compassion, driven only by McLean’s

appreciation for Freckles' honesty and distress at his orphaned state, is the first act of love toward the lad in the novel, and one of the most important in giving him historical restoration.

In addition to this history of love, Freckles is also received into a community of love through his time in the swamp. This communal love is one of the most important in the novel in terms of the amount of space that it receives. Freckles is first received into an affectionate community amongst the birds and beasts of the swamp. That the creatures have some degree of affection for Freckles is indicated by the way that they flock to meet him when he comes toward them every morning with their food. Though they prove to be very fickle in this affection—when the weather changes and there is food for them in the swamp, they desert Freckles and go about their own business—their “companionship” (21) proves to be a comfort to Freckles on his lonely round of the swamp and awakens in him a sense of “family” (23).

From there, Freckles' work in the swamp leads him into an affectionate community with the Duncans, the family with whom he boards. Their growing affection for the lad is first evident after they accompany Freckles into the swamp to watch him feed his chickens. A week after this event, Freckles comes into the kitchen one morning to find a pan of boiled wheat on the top of the scrap pail, ready to be taken out and given to the birds. When he sees this kindness, Freckles turns to Mrs. Duncan “with a trace of every pang of starved mother-hunger he ever had suffered written large on his homely, splotched, narrow features” (27). When he expresses his desire that Mrs. Duncan were his own mother, she replies, “Why, Freckles, are ye no bricht enough to learn without being taught by a woman that I am your mither? . . . Ance a man-child has beaten

his way to life under the heart of a woman, she is mither to all men, for the hearts of mithers are everywhere the same. Bless ye, laddie, I am your mither!" (27-28). Later, Duncan tells McLean, "I'd as soon see ony born child o' my ain taken from our home. We love the lad, me and Sarah" (84). These touching moments, growing out of the weeks Freckles has spent in the Duncan's home and brought to blossom by the Duncans' wonder at his power over the birds and determination to guard the swamp, reveal the loving community of which Freckles has become a part.

More important still in Freckles' communal restoration in love is McLean's deep, fatherly affection to the lad. Though Dessner suggests this relationship is more than parental when he refers to the "prefervid, the ecstatic—may one say the erotic?—relationship between Freckles and McLean" (154), when read in the context of the novel as an extremely sentimental, early-twentieth-century orphan story, the relationship is more appropriately understood as an overdrawn picture of the love between father and adopted son. As Freckles stays the course in his job of guarding the Limberlost, McLean's initial appreciation for the boy grows stronger. After Freckles has roundly beaten Wessner for suggesting that he betray the trust that McLean has put in him and McLean himself has seen the lad safely put to bed, he returns to Freckles' Limberlost room "and gazed around with astonished eyes" (82). After describing the cathedral-like natural beauty of the place, the narrator explains, "McLean had been thinking of Freckles as a creature of unswerving honesty, courage, and faithfulness. Here was evidence of a heart aching for beauty, art, companionship, worship. It was writ large all over the floor, walls, and furnishing of that little Limberlost clearing" (83). This moment, as McLean views the way that Freckles' soul has been revealed through

his love of the Limberlost, is the moment at which McLean's love for the lad crosses from respect to affection, from temporary admiration to committed love. From this point, McLean speaks of Freckles as more than a faithful employee, telling him, "I intend to take you to the city and educate you, and you are to be my son, my lad—my own son!" (108). When Freckles asks McLean why he would treat him so, McLean answers, "Because I love you, Freckles" (108). Through his time in and love for the beauty of the Limberlost, Freckles gains a deeply affectionate father figure.

Finally, Freckles' communal love is restored in the romantic affection between himself and the Swamp Angel. From the moment he sees her, Freckles is enchanted, nearly overpowered by the impulse to worship. His initial attitude toward her is rather shallow and unquestionably sentimental, based at first on nothing more than his brute attraction to her physical beauty. However, as the story progresses and as Freckles comes to know the Angel better, her courage in the face of the dangers of the swamp and the stares of her peers, her perhaps unbelievable good sense and knowledge of all things, from the names of the passing moths to how to concoct a perfect cold drink for a warm and thirsty traveler to the best way to set up camp for the comfort of all involved, prove her to be worthy of Freckles' wholehearted affection.

Though the reader is made aware from Freckles' first glimpse of the Angel that he is madly in love with her, it is not until he has "Offer[ed] His Life for His Love and G[otten] a Broken Body" that we begin to see the depth of the Angel's affection for him (281). When she learns that he is dying not because of his injuries, but because of his unrequited love for her, the Angel boldly confesses her love for him. Her hesitation in this confession, and her anxiety over that

confession when he has obtained the knowledge of his past that he felt obligated to have before courting her, show that her affection is genuine. Freckles, happy in the knowledge of her love and of his honorable birth, begins the process of recovery knowing that there is for him a hope of long-term, committed community with the Angel.

The relationship between Freckles and the Angel is unquestionably unrealistic in its simplicity and sentimentality, and it could be argued that it is this relationship, among the many others, that the novel presents as the source of Freckles' restoration, not the natural setting of the swamp, as I am arguing here. There is certainly enough about Freckles worshipfully adoring every movement that the Angel makes to provide a reasonable foundation for writing the novel off as sentimental rubbish, and Freckles does lose sight of the swamp in the beauty of the Angel often enough to suggest that she is more important to him than the place where they met. However, both the novel and the character for whom it is named are redeemed by recognizing the significance of the presence of the Limberlost to his relationship with the Angel. From their first meeting, in giving her the title "Swamp Angel," Freckles recognizes her as inextricably tied with the place where they met (101). This is confirmed more explicitly in the novel's final scene, as the rapidly recovering Freckles talks with McLean of his plans for the future and of his love for the Angel—and for the swamp:

Me heart's all me Swamp Angel's, and me love is all hers, and I have her and the swamp so confused in me mind I never can be separating them. When I look at her, I see blue sky, the sun rifting through the leaves and pink and red flowers; and when I look at the Limberlost I see a pink face with blue eyes, gold hair, and red lips, and, it's the truth, sir, they're mixed till they're one to me! (351)

This connection between the Swamp Angel and the swamp itself, recalling “America's oldest and most cherished fantasy . . . of the land as essentially feminine” (Kolodny 171), reveals the underlying complexity of Freckles’ restored love as ultimately stemming from his primary love for the Limberlost. Like Lily Bart, whose desire for freedom from the social cage of upper-class New York is closely tied to her attraction to Selden, Freckles’ love for the Limberlost is closely tied to his love for the Angel. It would be wrong, therefore, to understand Freckles’ restoration as stemming from his affection for the Angel, though this is important to the development of his character and the novel. Instead, a better reading sees the Limberlost as directing and informing all of Freckles’ aspirations and affections, including his passion for the Angel. Even his love for the Swamp Angel takes second place to his love for the swamp.

While Freckles’ communal restoration in love is the most important to the novel in terms of the amount of treatment it receives, the climactic point of restoration is interestingly not a matter of love, but of blood: Freckles’ most important moment of historical and communal restoration comes when he discovers his family. Freckles, who has always believed that his parents had abused him, cut off his hand, and abandoned him at the orphanage where he was raised (10-11), refuses to court the Swamp Angel because of his dishonorable heritage. However, the lad’s innate goodness causes all around him to believe that he could not come from parents who would treat a child so poorly. When McLean first hears him speak, he conjectures, “Somewhere before accident and poverty there had been an ancestor who used cultivated English, even with an accent” (8). Later, McLean’s questioning of how Freckles came to conceive of his room suggests some inborn sense of beauty that must be inherited (82-83). He

sees in the timber of the lad's soul "the making of a mighty fine piece of furniture" (108). Freckles "follow[s] his best instincts and [is] what he conceive[s] a gentleman should be" when he meets the Angel's father for the first time, which "surprise[s] the Man of Affairs into thinking of him and seeing his face over his books many times that morning" (145).

All of this—Freckles' instinctive sense of honor, his respectful treatment of all people, his innate love for beauty—leads the Angel to make the assessment that he must come from good stock:

Where did you find the courage to go into the Limberlost and face its terrors? You inherited it from the blood of a brave father, dear heart. Where did you get the pluck to hold for over a year a job that few men would have taken at all? You got it from a plucky mother, you bravest of boys. You attacked single-handed a man almost twice your size, and fought as a demon, merely at the suggestion that you be deceptive and dishonest. Could your mother or your father have been untruthful? Here you are, so hungry and starved that you are dying for love. Where did you get all that capacity for loving? You didn't inherit it from hardened, heartless people, who would disfigure you and purposely leave you to die, that's one sure thing. You once told me of saving your big bullfrog from a rattlesnake. You know you risked a horrible death when you did it. Yet you will spend miserable years torturing yourself with the idea that your own mother might have cut off your hand. Shame on you, Freckles! (306)

The apple cannot have fallen so far from the tree that the fundamentally honorable Freckles is the child of dishonorable parents. Instead, he must be, as Claudia Nelson writes, "the lost heir of innate virtue and noble parents" (90). Freckles must come from good stock, or he himself would not be good; such virtue must be inherited.

And, indeed, it is. After Freckles has agreed to hold on to life while the Angel proves to him that his parents were honorable, she sets out on a discovery mission, and returns not only with the baby clothes that she meant to find, but also with Lord and Lady O'More, Freckles' Irish uncle and aunt, who have

journeyed to Chicago in search of Lord O'More's long-lost brother's son. In their conversation, it is revealed that Freckles' parents had not beaten and abandoned Freckles, but rather had died attempting to rescue him from the fire that had caused his injuries. Their noble blood and heroic death prove to Freckles that he was wrong in his assumptions about his parents and reveal that the Angel's assessment of like being born of like is correct. Thus, as Dessner argues, "It is basic to [Stratton-Porter's] characterization of Freckles, at the core of her conception of human nature and development, that traits acquired by an ancestor are inherited by his or her descendants" (141). Freckles is who he is by blood, not by chance or rearing.

In this discovery of Freckles' past, his sense of history is finally and completely restored. When the Swamp Angel asks him if he can bear to hear that the story of the lost boy she has been recounting is his own, he is so overcome that he tells her, "I can't bear it! I'll die if you do!" (329). In spite of this initial, overwhelmed response, Freckles does bear it, and after some time looking at his mother's picture, asks silently for his name. The Angel writes it on a slip of paper, complete with "your house and country, so that you will feel located" (331). In receiving his name—an act that recalls McLean's initial bestowal of his own father's name on the boy and Freckles' desire to know the names of the creatures of the swamp—Freckles comes into his heritage, and his history is finally restored.

The discovery of his blood also restores for Freckles the community of his birth family and allows him the possibility of lasting community with the Angel. Not only does the Angel bring to Freckles his story and his name, but she also comes with Freckles' uncle and aunt. Though she is initially leery of the "Lord-

man" (314), the Angel is convinced by his resemblance to Freckles in appearance and manner, and by Lady O'More's devotion to him, that he is worthy of an introduction to the Limberlost guard. A few days after the discovery of his family, McLean visits Freckles, and is initially bitter at the intimacy that has grown up between the lad and his family. Lord and Lady O'More chat amiably with McLean while they wait for Freckles to be ready to receive him and have transformed his room "with every luxury that taste and money could introduce" (343). Though Freckles decides to remain in America with McLean, it is evident from the way that he speaks of his family that he is grateful and cares deeply for them. In discovering his family, Freckles has gained a community amongst his blood kin.

This recovery of his past also makes it possible for Freckles to pursue lasting, committed community in relationship with the Swamp Angel. His first response when the girl tells him of his family is to ask for her father (331), presumably so he may ask for permission to court her, or even to propose marriage to her, as their exchange of rings suggests (344). Regardless of the exact content of this conversation, it is evident from his actions, and from Lord and Lady O'More's eagerness "to do all they could to help bind Freckles' arrangements with the Angel" (342), that Freckles' immediate response on obtaining knowledge of his past is to pursue marriage, and thus secure lasting and loving community, with the Swamp Angel—a pursuit that was not possible until he was sure of his blood.

In recognizing the importance of Freckles' familial past to the novel, we must also recognize how troubling this idea is. Indeed, Roni Natov cites "Porter's insistence on a blue-bloodedness, that, as the Swamp Angel says, 'like breeds like

in this world,' and that Freckles inherited his sensitivity and integrity from 'a race of men that have been gentlemen for ages'" as "[o]ne of the most disturbing attitudes in *Freckles*" (254). This is certainly true as far as it goes, and particularly in a study that seeks to understand the significance of orphan stories for real-life orphans and adoptees. If we agree with Stratton-Porter that one must know one's past, and that one's past must be honorable, in order to merit respect and honor for one's actions, then we are left with little hope of communal recovery from the trauma of orphanhood.

However, if we take the novel's assessment of the importance of Freckles' past as another demonstration of the significance of nature in the process of recovery, then it is possible to understand the troubling implications of the importance of "blue-bloodedness" differently. As the natural setting of the Limberlost lies at the back of Freckles' historical and communal restoration in work, interest, and love, so it is the natural inheritance of his blood that gives him final and complete restoration. Even Natov admits, "*Freckles* is a story about nature: its hero, in many ways, is the swamp itself" (247)—and, I would add to this, the nature that Freckles has inherited from his parents. In a sense, the novel has two threads, the importance of natural environment and the importance of natural inheritance, which are united in their recognition of the value of the natural world. The novel glorifies nature inherited and experienced as a space of wholeness. Only when Freckles has both experienced the fullness of life in the swamp and learned the natural history of his family can the novel properly conclude. He has to experience the healing power both of nature in terms of place and of nature in terms of past.

Thus, through Freckles' time in the natural environment of the Limberlost, he experiences restoration in the historical and communal fracturing that he has experienced as an orphan. This process of restoration moves through four stages, first in work, then in interest, then in love, and finally in blood. Underlying and encompassing each of these stages is the Limberlost. It is not the work or the interest, or even the love or the knowledge of his heritage, that provide the grounds for Freckles' restoration, but the swamp: the swamp that provides the job, that arouses the interest, that is symbolized by the love, and that is connected with his blood as the natural source of all that he is. As Freckles cannot separate the Angel and the Swamp, neither can we separate his healing from the Limberlost.

Healing and Trauma in The Professor's House

Where Freckles' orphan story is fairly straightforward and unquestionably central to Stratton-Porter's novel, the orphan story in the second book we will consider in this chapter is complex both in its plot line and in its role in the novel. Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* tells the story of Godfrey St. Peter as he reaches an abrupt and late end of his vigorous youth and transitions into middle age. While the novel focuses on the Professor and his family, the pervasive yet mysterious presence of the novel's orphaned character, Tom Outland, is told only in bits and pieces in the first and third and in more detail in the second of the novel's three books. Indeed, the mystery surrounding both Tom and his story is one of the most interesting and noticeable features of Tom's character. Even the bits and pieces that we do learn of him throughout the narrative often seem contradictory. The good big-brother character becomes engaged to the elder of

those who were “little girls” when he arrived, while there is a hint that he was involved with the younger as well. He is vitally important to the professor’s work and affections, yet remains detached from him to the point that he can run off with Father Duchene, his first teacher, without any apparent hesitation. Tom will not be constrained by the life of Washington, yet is content to be constrained by the four walls of a laboratory. He is exceedingly careful about his notes on the ruins, but is not careful enough in his experiments to obtain success without Professor Crane’s help.

Of all the seeming contradictions in Tom’s character, perhaps the most intriguing is his almost uncanny ability to attract people to himself while also remaining apparently detached from places, people, and things. We see both the attraction and the detachment in Tom’s relationships with the different members of the St. Peter family, most of whom are intensely interested by the man and his past, but toward whom Tom shows little true affection. I claim that both Tom’s attractiveness and his detachment are owing to his traumatic experience as an orphan, which was aggravated by a second traumatic break when the restoration he was experiencing on the Blue Mesa is disrupted through the sale of the artifacts that he and Rodney Blake had discovered there. More specifically, I will argue that the traumatic fracturing that Tom experiences as an orphan is addressed in his experience on the Blue Mesa, where he discovers an American landscape that provides him with the history and home that he lacked as an orphan. When he loses the history in the sale of the artifacts, Tom is left with a home but without a sense of the past, resulting in an inability to open himself to the other characters in the novel. This inability becomes the mysterious,

attractive force that compels or repels each of the St. Peter family members, ultimately causing the slow demise of their own familial relationships.

Before looking at Tom's experience in the American landscape of the Blue Mesa, it is important to recognize that the traumatic effects of Tom's orphanhood are more visible through and after that experience than before. Though the second structural function proposed in Chapter Two suggests that many orphaned characters show signs of trauma before entering into a process of healing, Tom seems fairly healthy in the little that we learn of his life before the Blue Mesa. Though orphaned when he was about a year old, Tom was immediately and "informally adopted by some kind people who took care of his mother in her last hours" (98). Little-girl Kathleen reports that Tom described them as "just lovely to him" (105). Before leaving for the ranch in New Mexico with Rodney, Tom acted as a call boy—a position that required responsibility and perception in order to keep the trains running on time (98-99). The fact that Tom is capable of happy memories of his childhood and occupied a position requiring attention and responsibility suggests that he was not greatly affected in his early years by the loss of his parents.

However, the connection that Tom forms with the Blue Mesa and the Cliff City and his response when the artifacts that he discovered there are sold reveals that he did experience a degree of psychological, historical, and communal fracturing as a result of his orphanhood that could only be accessed indirectly. Though Tom was relatively whole before his time on the Mesa, the effects of the loss that he experiences after having begun a process of recovery and reintegration are exaggerated, causing a level of traumatic fracturing that would be unreasonable but for his already traumatic past. As glass is more easily

shattered if it is already cracked, so Tom's sense of psychological, historical, and communal wholeness is more easily broken by the sale of the goods because of his previous traumatic experience.

As Freckles experiences healing through his time in the natural setting of the Limberlost, so Tom experiences healing through his time in the natural setting of the Blue Mesa. Tom's healing differs from Freckles' in that there is a psychological, as well as historical and communal, dimension to that healing, and in that it is contingent not only on the natural setting of the Mesa, but on the Puebloan Cliff City that he discovers nested in its center. Though the significance of the Cliff City emphasizes its national history rather than its natural history, the contrast between his time in the Native American Cliff City and the United States Capital suggests that for Tom the importance of the city lies in its natural setting, in the intimate connection between the construction and the place. As Adam Ellwanger writes, the Cliff City is "a monolithic monument to the possibility of a symbiosis between nature and culture" (56). The symbiotic relationship between the city and the cliff into which it is built places an emphasis on the American *landscape*—on the multisensory experience of the American out-of-doors, not on America as a nation—as of importance to Tom.

Tom's psychological healing is primarily evident in his increasing connection to the land. Ellwanger writes of how "[t]he boundaries between subject [Tom] and object [Cliff City] begin to blur" as Tom tells his story, "and the result of this phenomenon is an unprecedented feeling of happiness and completeness" (57). It is in his connection with Cliff City that Tom feels the greatest happiness. Raine similarly notices the way "Tom Outland's Story" reveals "Cather's empirical faith that to gain meaningful knowledge of nature

you have to experience it in the flesh” (167). She writes, “In ‘Tom Outland’s Story,’ Cather shows how active, embodied investigation of the mesa—fording rivers, scrambling up cliffs, tasting the water and drinking in the air—can produce an intimate familiarity with nature” (179). Such familiarity was an ideal for Cather, who was a strong believer in the connection between experiencing nature, especially if that experience is aesthetic, and true happiness.

In addition to and motivating Tom’s psychological development is the historical and communal recovery that he experiences on the Mesa. Tom’s historical recovery comes with his discovery of the Cliff City and in his growing understanding of the history and the art of the people who formerly inhabited it. Like Freckles, Tom is both aware of and uncomfortable with his lack of personal history. This is evident in the way that Tom does or does not speak of his past. When Tom first appeared at the St. Peter residence in Hamilton, the Professor remembers that he shared a bit of his story: “His parents, he said, were ‘mover people,’ and both died when they were crossing southern Kansas in a prairie schooner” (98). Kathleen reveals more of Tom’s story later on, when she eagerly tells her mother how Tom’s mother died without telling the O’Briens when Tom was born or how old he was, and that Tom’s parents were traveling West for his mother’s health. These fragments of information are all that we learn of Tom’s past and are presumably all that Tom knows himself.

That Tom is uncomfortable with his lack of knowledge is revealed especially in the beginning of his first conversation with St. Peter. When the Professor asks Tom for his age, he replies that he is twenty. After giving this answer, “[h]e blushed, and St. Peter supposed he was dropping off a few years, but he found out afterward that the boy didn’t know exactly how old he was”

(97). Tom's reaction, and the fact that after his early conversation with the Professor Tom prefers only to tell the romanticized and exiting version of his story to the little girls rather sharing information about his past with their father, reveals that Tom is uncomfortable with the fact that he knows so little about his past. With only a basic understanding of his history, Tom prefers to avoid the topic in adult conversation when possible.

Because he is thus without knowledge of his heritage, Tom is particularly impacted by the similarly mysterious history of the people of the Cliff City that he discovers in the Blue Mesa. Tom first took note of this landmark during the summer before he and Rodney took the cattle to graze near its base. While the two "r[od]de the range with a bunch of grass cattle all summer" (165), they often noticed the Blue Mesa. It "was much stronger in colour" than the other rock formations in the area, "almost purple. . . . It looked, from our town, like a naked blue rock set down alone in the plain, almost square, except that the top was higher at one end. The old settlers said nobody had ever climbed it, because the sides were so steep and the Cruzados river wound round it at one end and under-cut it" (165-66). Tom remembers and explains the structure clearly, showing that he paid a good deal of attention to it during his time riding the range. But more than that, he also remembers that the local population counted it impenetrable. The mesa stands as a monument to the unknown, which, unlike Tom's past, still maintains a tangible possibility of knowledge. Though others may deem the mesa unsafe and unknowable, Tom remembers that "climbing the mesa was our staple topic of conversation" (166). Aware that their winter camp was located near the base of the mesa, Tom and Rodney resolve to try their luck when the opportunity arises.

This desire is excited all the more when, a few weeks after they have been warned off the mesa by the foreman, Tom discovers an irrigation main and “some pieces of pottery, all of it broken, and arrow-heads, and a very neat, well-finished stone pick-ax” (172) buried beneath sand and rabbit bush near the mesa. When he takes these to Rodney, the two conjecture, “There must have been a colony of pueblo Indians here in ancient times: fixed residents, like the Taos Indians and the Hopis, not wanderers like the Navajos” (173). This discovery has a great impact on the two adventurers: “To people off alone, as we were, there is something stirring about finding evidences of human labour and care in the soil of an empty country. It comes to you as a sort of message, makes you feel differently about the ground you walk over every day” (173). In discovering evidence of the mesa’s history, Tom assigns new significance to the structure. It is no longer just a beautiful and intriguing natural place, but a natural place with a history—one that is overlooked, abandoned, unknown, just like Tom’s own.

With his interest already aroused, Tom takes the first opportunity, the day after some of their cattle have escaped into the mesa, to try the river himself. He crosses easily, enters the mesa, and discovers the Cliff City:

I wish I could tell you what I saw there, just *as* I saw it, on that first morning, through a veil of lightly falling snow. Far up above me, a thousand feet or so, set in a great cavern in the face of the cliff, I saw a little city of stone, asleep. It was as still as a sculpture—and something like that. It all hung together, seemed to have a kind of composition: pale little houses of stone nestling close to one another, perched on top of each other, with flat roofs, narrow windows, straight walls, and in the middle of the group, a round tower.

It was beautifully proportioned, that tower, swelling out to a larger girth a little above the base, then growing slender again. There was something symmetrical and powerful about the swell of the masonry. The tower was the fine thing that held all the jumble of houses together and made them mean something. It was red in colour, even on that grey day. In sunlight it was the colour of winter oak-leaves. A fringe of cedars grew along the edge of the cavern, like a garden. They were the only living

things. Such silence and stillness and repose—immortal repose. That village sat looking down into the canyon with the calmness of eternity. (179-80; emphasis original)

This description of the city is significant on several counts. First, Tom describes the tower at the center of this Cliff City as “the fine thing that held all the jumble of houses together and made them mean something” (180). Little is known about the tower; Tom notes a few pages later that it was fifty feet high (183), and Father Duchene speculates that “it was used for astronomical observations” (197). Even so, it occupies a significant place in the city itself, and, as one of many centralized objects in the novel, suggests the importance of Tom’s time in the Mesa to his life. Structurally, the tower is to the city what “Tom Outland’s Story” is to the novel, what the turquoise mentioned in the epigraph is to the dull silver in which it is set, and what Tom’s time in the mesa is to his life. Because of these structural parallels, Tom’s words about how the tower gives meaning to the city can be brought to bear on the novel as a whole. The tower gives meaning to the city, as does “Tom Outland’s Story” to the novel, the turquoise to the silver, and the mesa to Tom’s life. Each of these centralized objects lends coherence to its setting, providing them with historical, narrational significance.

In addition, Tom’s description is significant because it recognizes that the Cliff City is nestled in a natural environment, edged by “[a] fringe of cedars . . . like a garden” (180). This is important in two inextricably connected ways. First, the cedars are “the only living thing” that Tom can see (180). The fact that Tom notes specifically that there is no other life in the city suggests the importance of those cedars as living counterparts to the long-dead inhabitants of the city. Though the human residents of the city are no longer alive, there is still life in

and around the city because of the cedars. More than that, the city receives much of its beauty from its natural setting. Tom later explains, “the really splendid thing about our city, the thing that made it delightful to work there, and must have made it delightful to live there, was the setting. The town hung like a bird’s nest in the cliff, looking off into the box canyon below, and beyond into the wide valley we called Cow Canyon, facing an ocean of clear air” (191). Though beautiful and fascinating in itself, the Cliff City is nothing without the natural setting—trees, view, air—in which it is found. Thus, the city gets both its life and its beauty from the natural world.

At the same time, Tom says that the trees edge the city “like a garden” (180)—a domesticated natural space. The trees are themselves given order and meaning by the city they surround. As the tower lends meaning to the city, so the city lends meaning to the natural space in which it exists. Taking both the significance of the natural setting and its relation to the city into consideration, we see the importance of both natural world and man-made space in the Cliff City. Without the city, the cedars would be just more trees; without the cedars, the city would be eternally dead. The cedars and the city are dependent on each other, receiving meaning from each other in the same way that Tom receives meaning from the Cliff City while at the same time giving the city meaning through his archaeological efforts.

While Tom’s description of his first sight of the Cliff City is important in the way it indicates meaning and recognizes the connection between natural and domesticates space, it is even more so in that it shows that Tom has a multisensory response to the place. Before he begins to describe the structure that he saw when he “happened to glance up at the canyon wall,” Tom says, “I

wish I could tell you what I saw there, just *as* I saw it, on that first morning, through a veil of lightly falling snow” (179; emphasis original). Tom wishes he could convey not just what he saw, but his experience of seeing it. He regrets that he cannot convey what he saw “just *as* I saw it”—that is, not just the sight, but the response to the sight; not just the place, but his experience of the place.

This sense of the importance of his experience resonates with Abraham and her colleagues’ postulation of landscape as multisensory, involving all of the senses, not just sight. Thus, Tom sees the “veil of lightly falling snow” as part of his experience of the first sight of the city (179). More than just changing how he sees the city, he suspects that the snow may have affected his experience of the air in the mesa as well: “it seemed to me that I had never breathed in anything so pure as the air in that valley. It made my mouth and nostrils smart like charged water, seemed to go to my head a little and produce a kind of exaltation” (178-79). Later his multisensory experience of the place is evident when he describes the crystal-clear water that comes from a spring at the back of the Cliff City:

I’ve never anywhere tasted water like it; as cold as ice, and so pure. Long afterward Father Duchene came out to spend a week with us on the mesa; he always carried a small drinking-glass with him, and he used to fill it at the spring and take it out into the sunlight. The water looked like liquid crystal, absolutely colourless, without the slight brownish or greening tint that water nearly always has. It threw off the sunlight like a diamond.
(187)

The visual beauty of the mesa, the air of the canyon, the water in the Cliff City—all contribute to Tom’s multisensory experience of the place, indicating that it is not just the city itself but also its natural setting that contributes to his experience of the mesa and its city.

Taking all of this into consideration, we can see that Tom understands the naturally important Cliff City as giving his life the meaning that it had lacked.

Significantly, the meaning that Tom receives through the Cliff City and the artifacts that he unearths there is in the form of historical narrative. After Tom and Rodney have completed their time with the cattle company, they stay on in the Mesa with Henry Atkins to continue exploring and excavating. They slowly make their way through the houses and towers in the city, and at the end of the day Tom carefully records all that they accomplish (189). As Tom records their work, he writes his own story into the story of the Pueblo people who formerly occupied the mesa, performing like Freckles the narrational Act of the Imagination identified as a function of the orphan story in Chapter Two. Through his bookkeeping, Tom preserves as best he knows how the history of the Puebloan inhabitants of the city. He recognizes the value of not just the artifacts themselves, but the history attached to those artifacts, and does what he can to keep that history intact. At the same time, as Tom removes the artifacts from the places in which he finds them, stores them in another location, and carefully records what he knows of them, he rewrites the story of the artifacts with himself as protagonist. The history of the Pueblo artifacts is no longer dictated by their original purpose and users but is extended to include Tom as their discoverer, preserver, organizer, and advocate.

In addition to historical restoration, Tom also receives communal restoration during his time on the mesa through the family that he forms with Rodney, Henry, and the mummified Puebloan woman whom they name Mother Eve. That Tom's relationship with Rodney is close is obvious throughout the novel, even before "Tom Outland's Story" gives a more complete history of their friendship. Young Rosamond and Kathleen continually ask for stories about Tom and "noble, noble Roddy" (106), and relish the shadowless stories of their

adventures together. Tom says that Rodney saw himself as Tom's "older brother"—a relation that was made all the easier because "I was a kind of stray and had no family" (165). Rodney, who had "run away from home when he was a kid because his mother had married again" (164), attaches himself to Tom, and the two form a familial friendship that is deepened through their time together riding the range and climbing the mesa.

Though Tom and Rodney are friends for some time before they begin their stint with the Sitwell Cattle Company, it is not until they settle into their winter quarters with Henry Atkins that Tom begins to refer to them as a family. Henry, another stray whom the foreman picks up in town and brings to Tom and Rodney to stay through the winter, proved to be "a wonderful cook and a good housekeeper," and lent to their cabin a homey, cheerful air (176). Tom remarks that they "got to be downright fond of him, and the three of us made a happy family" (176). Later, when Tom and Rodney decide to stay on in the Mesa to continue their excavations after their time with the cattle company is at an end, Henry stays with them to continue the housekeeping work he had done for the past several months.

During their excavations, this family of strays eventually comes across "one of the original inhabitants—not a skeleton, but a dried human body, a woman" (191). After describing the features of this mummified woman—coarse black hair, fine teeth, and face frozen into "a look of terrible agony"—Tom explains, "Henry named her Mother Eve, and we called her that" (192). This last member of the makeshift family, though not actively involved in maintaining the familial environment, is significant in her symbolic role as mother. Her maternal title is apt in that it assigns to her the role of the member of the family who gives

life to the others. And this is, in a sense, what she does in the makeshift family: Mother Eve represents the Pueblo people, the ruins of whose home provide the impetus for maintaining the familial relationship between Tom, Rodney, and Henry. At the same time, Mother Eve gives life to the family in giving them a story to uncover—both her own personal story of supposed infidelity and sudden death (200-01), and the story of her people.

Through this makeshift family formed around the Cliff City and its ambiguous history, Tom receives communal restoration, entering into surrogate familial relationships to replace those that he had lost through his orphanhood. The four become what Tom considers to be a family, formed of the kind of substitute relationships which, as Stuart Burrows writes, “are . . . fundamental to Cather’s understanding of family life” (23). Because of their statuses as orphans and strays, family, for Tom and the others in his party, is necessarily surrogate, formed through common interest in a natural place and its history.

Significantly, the natural place in which Tom’s healing occurs is a uniquely “American landscape.” The Cliff City itself, as a creation of the native Puebloan people, is obviously and significantly American. It is interesting, indeed, that Tom would find his history in the native peoples—an act that, as Diana Loercher Pazicky writes of the early nineteenth-century American orphan stories by James Fenimore Cooper and Charles Brockden Brown, reveals a tendency to “overcom[e] that identification [between unidentified-orphan and outsider-Indian] by displacing orphanhood onto the Indians” (xvi). Though a complete exploration of Tom’s act of rewriting of the history of the Pueblo people is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noticing that his coopting of the native story could be problematic. However, for the purposes of this chapter,

Tom's interaction with the Puebloan Cliff City confirms the uniquely and solidly American nature of the landscape in which Tom finds his place.

Unfortunately, the process of recovery that Tom begins during his time with Rodney and Henry in the Cliff City is brought to a halt, is indeed reversed, through his visit to the anything-but-natural American cityscape of Washington, DC, during which time Rodney sells the artifacts they have gathered to a German collector. Because it was in those artifacts as a part of the natural environment of the mesa that Tom had discovered a history for himself, and because it was around those artifacts that the makeshift family had been built, when the artifacts are sold, Tom loses the history and family that had enabled his recovery. He is aware that he has lost a history that was tangibly his own, and that he has lost a second family that had in some sense replaced the biological family that he lost early in his life. As a result, Tom is unable to experience the full healing that is offered to Freckles, instead suffering a second traumatic fracturing that leaves him in a worse state than he was in at first.

During his time in Washington, Tom first admires and then comes to despise the world of the big city, longing more and more for the home that he had formed on the mesa. Tom tells St. Peter that when he left Washington, "I had no plans, I wanted nothing but to get back to the mesa and live a free life and breathe free air, and never, never again see hundreds of little black-coated men pouring out of white buildings" (213). After months in the depersonalized hubbub of the city, Tom wishes only to return to the mesa, to the natural setting in which he has found a history he counts much more personal than those of the black-coated men.

However, when he returns, Tom learns from the livery stableman that Rodney has sold the artifacts to a German named Fechtig. As a result, Tom finds that he still has the home, but that both the history and the community that had made it worthwhile have been sold off with the Puebloan artifacts. That Tom still feels himself at home on the mesa is evident in his description of his first journey into the mesa after returning from Washington:

Every inch of that trail was dear to me, every delicate curve about the old piñon roots, every chancy track along the face of the cliffs, and the deep windings back into shrubbery and safety. The wild-currant bushes were in bloom, and where the path climbed the side of a narrow ravine, the scent of them in the sun was so heavy that it made me soft, made me want to lie down and sleep. I wanted to see and touch everything, like home-sick children when they come home. (216-17)

Tom's return to the mesa, his joy in once again being in the beautiful and dear multisensory landscape of the trail over which he and Rodney had labored, is for Tom a homecoming. The repetition of the word "home" in the last sentence, though slightly awkward in terms of the construction of the sentence itself, emphasizes Tom's sense of comfort and stability as he returns to the mesa and the family space that he had created there with his friends and with the memory of the Cliff City's past residents. Indeed, the awkwardness of the sentence serves as a marker, self-consciously drawing the reader's attention to the fact that Tom counts the place as much his home as a little child who has been raised in a place surrounded by the care and comfort of family.

Indeed, even after Rodney has disappeared, Tom's description of his last months on the mesa suggest that he still experiences a sense of joy in the place that is not to be scoffed at. When Tom returns to the mesa after searching for Rodney in town, he describes his experience of the natural setting in more elevated terms that he has used to this point. He says that this was "the first

night that all of me was there," that he experiences a sense of "possession" of the mesa (226). He explains, "For me the mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion. I had read of filial piety in the Latin poets, and I knew that was what I felt for this place. It had formerly been mixed up with other motives; but now that they were gone, I had my happiness unalloyed" (226-27). Every day for the next few months that he remains alone on the mesa, he "awakened with the feeling that I had found everything, instead of lost everything" (227). It seems as if it is in the mesa itself that Tom finds his greatest joy.

However, though Tom experiences a sense of delight in the natural space of the mesa itself, that delight is not ultimately enough to compensate for the history and community that he has lost. In addressing this aesthetic experience on the mesa, Ellwanger notices that Tom's "mood is increasingly reflective and elegiac as his narrative unfolds" (57). Ellwanger explains that this tone arises from the fact that Tom knows he cannot regain the aesthetic experience he had on the mesa: "while the singular aesthetic experience itself cannot be repeated, one can repeat only its loss through subsequent attempts to relive the original experience" (60). While Ellwanger emphasizes that the pinnacle of Tom's delight in aesthetic experience occurs in his return to the mesa and the months he spends there after Rodney has left, I propose that the magnitude of that experience is itself possible only because of the loss that he feels in the sale of the artifacts. As Tom says in his account of the experience to the professor, "I had my happiness unalloyed" precisely because his other motives for being there—such as the historical and communal connections to the place—were gone (227). Because Tom has lost those connections, he has an intense sense of the aesthetic beauty of the mesa. But at the same time, because the history and community are gone,

that aesthetic experience ultimately works against his recovery from traumatic loss.

The primacy of Tom's loss is evident from his first return to the cabin. Tom arrives at the cabin at "the time of day when everything goes home," and so "[f]rom habit and from weariness I went through the door" (218). Though he enters into the cabin, Tom "didn't go into the bunk-room, for I knew the shelves were empty" (218). Though he is aware that something has been lost through the sale of the artifacts, Tom is not able to admit that loss immediately. Only after several minutes have passed can Tom explain to Rodney,

I never thought of selling [the artifacts], because they weren't mine to sell—nor yours! They belonged to this country, to the State, and to all the people. They belonged to boys like you and me, that have no other ancestors to inherit from. You've gone and sold them to a country that's got plenty of relics of its own. You've gone and sold your country's secrets, like Dreyfus. (219)

This initial charge against Rodney is noteworthy on several counts. First, Tom begins with a Patriotic American move. Newly returned from the capitol, Tom nobly ascribes the possession of the goods "to this country, to the State, and to all the people" (219). Rather than feeling a sense of personal ownership of the items that he, Rodney, and Henry had unearthed, Tom's initial response seems to view them as belonging to the United States—as American artifacts, retrieved from an American landscape for the benefit of American citizens.

Noble as Tom seems to find these thoughts, his next words give the lie to his original statement—or, at least, they show that there is something more personal that is motivating his desire to keep the artifacts at least in the US, if not in the mesa itself. After he proclaims his feelings of loyalty to the nation, Tom says that the artifacts "belonged to boys like you and me, that have no other

ancestors to inherit from" (219). A few paragraphs later, Tom talks of "the pots and pans that belonged to my poor grandmothers a thousand years back" (219). Here we see Tom recalling a point more relevant to his orphanhood, and apparently more deeply felt, than his original Patriotic American sentiments: Tom desires to keep the artifacts, or at least to keep them in the country, because they provide a familial, ancestral history to himself as an orphan. Tom has "no other ancestors to inherit from," and therefore must cling to whatever history he may be able to find elsewhere—specifically, in this case, to the history that he has obtained from the Puebloan inhabitants of the Cliff City. In selling the artifacts, Rodney has sold Tom's connection to the past.

After making this revealing statement, Tom connects national and personal history by reading America itself as orphaned. He accuses Rodney of selling the artifacts "to a country that's got plenty of relics of its own" (219)—that is, to a country that has a long and full history, unlike America, which is similar to Tom in that relatively little is known of its past. This is significant in that it directly connects Tom's orphan narrative with the narrative of the United States itself as an orphaned child. This interpretation of American orphanhood is not uncommon. As Pazicky writes, "the nature of American historical development left its own distinctive imprint on the orphan trope" (xiii), specifically because of the fact that "[t]here was a direct historical precedent for viewing the relationship between England and America as familial" (xiv). Because of the historical precedent for viewing America as a child separated from the English motherland, Pazicky suggests, orphan stories in American literature often embody national history. There is evidence of this in the way that Tom connects national and personal history. Like Tom, who has no past of his own, America is

starved for history. While its European counterparts—in this case Germany—have plenty of history, America needs all that it can get.

Finally, Tom accuses Rodney of having “sold your country’s secrets, like Dreyfus” (219). This reference to Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jew wrongly accused of selling military secrets, is interesting on two counts. First, it appeals to a situation where the accusation has national consequences. In suggesting that Rodney’s actions mirror those of a national criminal, Tom emphasizes the significance of the sale of the items. Second, in comparing Rodney to a man who had been *wrongly* accused, and who had been acquitted by the time he accuses his friend (Rodney responds to Tom’s comparison by stating, “That man was innocent. It was a frame-up” [219]), Tom hints that Rodney’s actions may not be as serious as he suggests. Perhaps Tom’s accusation is a sort of frame-up in itself; perhaps the situation is similar to the Dreyfus affair not only in the alleged sale of national secrets, but also in that the accusation is ill-founded. In this case, Tom’s reaction to the sale of the items loses its national significance, while the accusation of national significance in itself serves to emphasize Tom’s personal sense of loss.

After Tom’s first comment on Rodney’s actions, their conversation continues to show that the items were important to Tom in providing him with a familial sense of the past. When Rodney explains that “he’d always supposed I meant to ‘realize’ on them, just as he did” (220), Tom retorts, “I’d as soon have sold my own grandmother as Mother Eve—I’d have sold any living woman first” (221). Problematic as this statement is, it certainly reveals how important the artifacts were to Tom, both as familial in particular and as relational in general. Tom counts Mother Eve more significant than his grandmother

(familial), or than any living woman (relational). Though Tom is likely exaggerating his feelings as he speaks in the heat of the moment, this statement shows that there is a sense in which he finds Mother Eve to be more important to his historical and relational experience than anything, or anyone, else.¹

After hours of talking, Tom finally succeeds in making Rodney “understand the kind of value those objects had had for me” (221). After Tom makes it plain that Rodney has broken his trust, the downcast Rodney packs his things and leaves the cabin. Tom follows him, indirectly trying to get him to stay, but Rodney departs, saying, “I’m glad it’s you that’s doing this to me, Tom; not me that’s doing it to you” (224). Tom returns to the cabin and goes “to sleep that night hoping I would never waken” (224). His love of the artifacts leads him not only to grief at their loss, but to words and accusations resulting in the loss of his friend. Thus, in the sale of the artifacts Tom loses both his connection to the past and the sense of community that the artifacts had created.²

¹ The importance of Mother Eve to Tom is also evident in the nonchalance with which Tom recounts Father Duchene’s thoughts on the history of Mother Eve to the Professor. Given how important the mummified woman is to Tom, it would be safe to expect that he would be eager to recount Father Duchene’s speculations about her to the professor. Instead, Tom mentions them only in passing. Tom begins his account of her potential infidelity with a “by the way” (200)—an introduction that does not very well signal the importance of the mummified woman that is suggested throughout the rest of the story. Tom’s offhanded treatment of her history suggests an ambivalence toward Mother Eve as the maternal figure in the makeshift family on the mesa. Having lost not one but two mothers, by the time he speaks to St. Peter Tom is incapable of thinking of the mother rightly, instead treating Mother Eve with an apparent nonchalance that is given the lie by the way that he speaks of her loss to Rodney.

² This interpretation is in contradiction to that of Marilee Lindemann, who argues that the novel’s American plot of an innocent citizen going to Washington and experiencing tension complicates our understanding of Cather’s sexual views. Lindemann argues that “The Blue Mesa . . . is a ‘queer’ space . . . in that it is an ‘out-land,’ a space in which, instead of two men and a baby, as a popular film once put it, we have three guys and a mummy setting up a household, doing the mostly fun work of being cowboys and archaeologists, and building ‘a happy family,’ as Tom puts it” (46). Tom’s “reeducation” in proper, culturally acceptable family structures, begins with his journey to Washington, upon returning from which Tom experiences a “failure of will and imagination that prevents him from transforming his disillusionment in Washington into an active and resistant notion of citizenship, from turning his sentimental nationality into a thoroughly queer and participatory nationality” (53). Where I disagree with Lindemann is in

This loss of both history and community causes Tom to suffer a second form of traumatic fracturing that parallels that he experienced initially in the loss of his parents. When Tom first arrives at the cabin, the sense of loss that he feels in knowing that the artifacts are gone causes him to hear “Blake talking to [him] as you hear people talking when you are asleep” (218). It is as though Tom has been separated from his friend by the sale of the artifacts. This sense of separation is articulated most clearly when Tom tells Rodney, “I don’t know what I can trust you with, Blake. I don’t know where I’m at with you” (222). That Tom specifically feels that Rodney has broken his trust is significant because broken trust is one sign of traumatic fracturing. Van der Kolk suggests that failure to develop attachment bonds between mother and child “may lead to temporary or lasting disruptions in the capacity to modulate emotions and engage in social affiliation”—a condition he refers to as “lost trust” (“Separation” 35). Kai Erickson similarly notes that “the hardest earned and most fragile accomplishment of childhood, basic trust, can be damaged beyond repair by trauma” (197). Though Tom’s experience in this instance is not as acute as those addressed by van der Kolk and Erikson, it is yet evident that Tom feels a similar sense of trauma-related broken trust because Rodney has sold the artifacts.

Because of the traumatic fracturing that he experiences through this second familial loss, Tom is unable through the rest of his short life to form real

seeing Tom as rejecting Rodney because their relationship is not culturally approved. There is little in Tom’s journey to Washington to suggest that it would radically reorient his view of his life on the mesa; indeed, the way that he thinks of that life, both as he returns to it and in retrospect, suggests that it is his life there that is the ideal. Instead, the fracturing of Tom’s relationship with Rodney is a result of the sale of the goods as the sale of Tom’s history, both as an individual and with his friend. When the artifacts are sold, Tom has no historical base on which to construct his understanding of relationships, and is no longer capable of forming close and lasting relationships.

and lasting bonds with others. Unlike Freckles' relationships, which are numerous and apparently strong and healthy, Tom's relationships are weak and problematic. Though he is engaged to Rosamond before he goes to war, there is a hint at the end of chapter nine that Tom was involved with Kathleen as well. Though St. Peter is obviously very fond of the young man and sees him as a protégé, Tom runs off to France—the place that St. Peter had been planning to visit with Tom the following summer—with Father Duchene. Significantly, the last of these facts is revealed only after "Tom Outland's Story" has been told. In the first book, we learn that Tom has been killed in the war; in the second, after we have read the history of Tom's time on the mesa, the narrator reveals when and with whom he had gone. That this fact was withheld until after "Tom Outland's Story" suggests that it can be understood rightly only in light of his time on the mesa—specifically in light of the way it enforced the historical and communal fracturing that he had already experienced as a result of his orphanhood. Given Tom's past, we are meant to infer that his connection to the St. Peter family was never as steady as their connection to him.

Interestingly, the distance at which Tom holds himself is most evident in the almost incredible attraction that the other characters in the novel feel toward him.³ This is apparent first in the fact that Tom is to some degree an enigma to all of the other characters in the novel. Scott McGregor's statement to the Professor

³ In terms of the novel itself, this point is important because "Tom Outland's Story" itself occupies only seventy of the two hundred fifty-eight pages of the novel, while the rest of the novel focuses on Godfrey St. Peter and his family after Tom's death. However, though they occupy a comparatively small space in the novel, both Tom and "Tom Outland's Story" are essential to understanding the novel as a whole. As Glen Love writes, "In several senses of the word, 'reading' Tom Outland, both before and after Tom narrates his own story in Book Two, becomes the principle concern of the Professor's life" (302)—and of a careful and accurate reading of *The Professor's House*.

is telling: "You know, Tom isn't very real to me any more. Sometimes I think he was just a—a glittering idea" (94). Though Scott is the only one to verbalize this impression, it is safe to say that Tom is currently and was before "just a glittering idea" to most of the St. Peter family members. As Raine observes, "Tom Outland embodies the sublime, patriotic image of American nature" (179). Thus, when they are still "little girls," they are enamored of Tom and his tales of the American West. The Professor remembers that Tom

came often to the house that summer, to play with the little girls. He would spend hours with them in the garden, making Hopi villages with sand and pebbles, drawing maps of the Painted Desert and the Rio Grande country in the gravel, telling them stories, when there was no one by to listen, about the adventures he had had with his friend Roddy. (104)

The children "loved to play at being Tom and Roddy" (105). Later, as the Professor talks to the grown-up Kathleen about Tom, he remembers, "You children used to live in his stories" (112). The Daring Adventures of Tom and Roddy provide the imaginary landscape in which the children lived.

Interestingly, Kathleen's response to her father's observation reveals that Tom and his stories are still important to her, even several years after his death. She tells her father, "I still do [live in Tom's stories] . . . Now that Rosamond has Outland, I consider Tom's mesa entirely my own" (112). This statement reveals a something problematic about the girls' relation to Tom. That grown-up Kathleen still finds Tom's stories to be so important to her, and that she counts them exclusively her own, shows that she has allowed her interest in Tom to overtake the other relationships in her life—one of the central problems of the novel. More specifically, the extreme importance of Tom and his history to Rosamond and Kathleen arises from the fact that they do not count him to be a real person. Tom is instead an ideal, a romanticized Hero of the American West, onto whom the

girls can impose their desires and dreams and with whom they are incapable of forming real, adult relationships.

Like Kathleen, the Professor holds a romanticized view of Tom. The first time Tom is mentioned in the novel, it is as the one instance where St. Peter had successfully anticipated achievement based on the level of desire in a student (20). Tom is next mentioned by the narrator in relation to St. Peter as one who was “so well fitted by nature and early environment to help him with his work on the Spanish Adventurers” (39). Shortly afterward, St. Peter observes, “Nothing hurts me so much as to have any member of my family talk as if we had done something fine for that young man, brought him out, produced him. In a lifetime of teaching, I’ve encountered just one remarkable mind; but for that, I’d consider my good years largely wasted” (50). Mrs. St. Peter refers to Tom indirectly as one “who came between us” (78), and the narrator explains that the Professor thinks of his relationship with Tom as a romance “of the mind—of the imagination. Just when the morning brightness of the world was wearing off for him, along came Outland and brought him a kind of second youth” (234). St. Peter thinks of Tom as a type: “Fellows like Outland don’t carry much luggage, yet one of the things you know them by is their sumptuous generosity” (103). He recalls Tom as “a stroke of chance he couldn’t possibly have imagined; his strange coming, his strange story, his devotion, his early death and posthumous fame—it was all fantastic” (233). The success of the last four volumes of his study of the Spanish adventurers “was largely because of Outland,” who gave him the opportunity to explore the country that the historic Spaniards had seen (234). In each of these statements, it is evident that Tom is for the Professor a figure of mythic proportions: the gifted and dedicated student, the ultimate research

source, the intellectual friend. Where Tom is the ideal Hero of the American West for Rosamond and Kathleen, he is just as much the ideal Intellectual Companion for their father.

This romanticizing of Tom's character is magnified by the fact that he is orphaned. His orphanhood makes Tom's role as Hero of the American West even more fitting: his lack of familial connection provides him with the opportunity to have his adventures, and he would not fill the parts he has been assigned quite so well if he had grown up as a part of a caring biological family in Hamilton or another such comfortable midwestern town. Tom's orphanhood also makes his intellectual abilities even more remarkable: if Tom had been raised by his school-teacher father, his capacity for learning and for intellectual conversation would not be remarkable, and he would not have had "the training and insight resulting from a very curious experience" that was so invaluable to St. Peter's writing (234). Tom's heroic actions and mythic proportions are enhanced by the fact that he achieved them without the help of parental care and guidance. In that sense, Tom's orphanhood magnifies the mythos surrounding his character, causing the Professor and his daughters to regard him even more highly than they would have otherwise.

While Tom is thus all the more appealing to certain characters as a result of his orphanhood, that same quality and the dual fracturing, and consequent lack of trust, that is caused by it prevents him from honestly and openly revealing himself to any of the characters in the book. Professor St. Peter remembers, "After the first day, when he had walked into the garden and introduced himself, Tom never took up the story of his own life again, either with the Professor or Mrs. St. Peter, though he was often encouraged to do so. . . .

[O]nly with the two little girls did he ever speak freely and confidently about himself" (106). Though Tom thus shares his past with the children, even that past contains stories with "no shadows" (105). He does in time tell the Professor the more difficult parts of his past, but that is not until some time has elapsed since he arrived in Hamilton. Because Tom's experiences have been difficult, marked twice by traumatic fracturing through loss of biological and makeshift family, Tom avoids addressing his past whenever possible, except with those who will accept that past without questioning its apparent unshadowed adventure.⁴

In this it is evident that, while the other characters are more interested by Tom because he is orphaned, for the same reason he is unable to attach, unable to entrust himself and thereby become human to the other characters in the novel. This in turn is at least one cause of the division in the St. Peter family that dominates the novel. As each of the family members feels a sense of ownership over some part of Tom's story and makes Tom out to be only that one aspect of his experience, they come into conflict with each other, which in turn brings about the slow demise of the family that is depicted in *The Professor's House*.

⁴ Though the Professor remembers Tom as devoted (233), and though both he and his daughters clearly consider him to be an invaluable friend and companion, the tangible evidence of that devotion is lacking. Mrs. St. Peter is the only one of the family to recognize that fact. She does not share the same regard for Tom that is held by her husband and daughters. Though "[i]n those first few months Mrs. St. Peter saw more of their protégé than her husband did" (104), and though he remains more or less in her good graces for the first few years of his residence in Hamilton, the Professor remembers that she "had insisted that he was not altogether straightforward" (150). Eventually, during Tom's senior year of college, the Professor remembers that she "began to be jealous" (151). Before we learn this bit of Tom's history with the family, Mrs. St. Peter quietly reproaches the Professor by reminding him that "it wasn't the children who came between us" (78), clearly suggesting that it was Tom who did. It is important that it is specifically a lack of honesty, of straightforwardness, that keeps Mrs. St. Peter from becoming attached to Tom. Though her family sees Tom as mythically proportioned and assumes the absolute truth of all that he says, Mrs. St. Peter recognizes that he is always holding something back, that he never quite attaches himself to the family in the way that they attach themselves to him.

Thus, Tom's orphanhood proves to be key in understanding Cather's novel, functioning as the point of division in himself and in the other characters. Though Tom experiences the beginnings of restoration in the healing time in the American landscape of the Cliff City and its natural setting, the loss of the Puebloan artifacts and of the history and community that they represent ultimately leaves him incapable of forming deep and lasting relationships. As a result, Tom functions in relation to the Professor and his daughters not as a true friend and companion, but as a mythical figure whose heroism and intellect attract, but whose indifference keeps at a distance. As each of the characters lay claim to one or another part of Tom's story, they come into conflict, causing the tension that is at the root of the family's slow demise. In this way, the natural setting of the Blue Mesa acts as Tom's Mother Eve: the source of life and central attachment figure, and the unfaithful wife whose fickle affections promise what they do not produce.

Conclusion

Through their depictions of orphaned characters in the American landscape, both *Freckles* and *The Professor's House* demonstrate the possibility of healing from the traumatic experience of orphanhood through the natural environment. In Freckles' encounter with the natural wonders of the Limberlost, we see a character who gains a restored history and community in the work, interest, love, and knowledge of his blood provided by his time in a natural environment. In Tom, we see a character who begins to experience the benefits of a more complete history and community than he had known before, obtaining a knowledge of the natural and national past of the Cliff City that provides a place

for familial community. Through their different plot lines and different generic tropes written at different times for different audiences, these stories confirm my thesis that the American landscape in American orphan stories offers a space for orphaned characters to experience healing by connecting with the ecologically and historically important natural world.

While both novels confirm the power of the natural environment in healing from trauma, they differ in their depiction of the complexity trauma, and thus of the healing process. *Freckles* presents a relatively straightforward depiction of basic traumatic fracturing in the title character, which fracturing is reversed through the simple expedient of spending time in the Limberlost. *The Professor's House*, on the other hand, presents a much more complex picture of traumatic fracturing and of the uncertain nature of the healing process. Far from the process of basic fracturing and complete restoration experienced by Freckles, Tom's traumatic fracturing is complicated and worsened by his second experience of familial loss in the destruction of the history and community that the mesa had afforded. In this complication of the healing process, *The Professor's House* shows that the natural environment does not provide a failsafe place of healing from the trauma of orphanhood. While it has potential for bringing about historical and communal healing, the history and relationships gained in the natural space must be maintained for healing to continue.

In addition to confirming the thesis of this chapter, these stories confirm the general patterns of orphan stories set for in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. *Freckles* presents the basic orphan story structure in his traumatic experience, entrance into community, and victory over opposition of various kinds. Cather's novel complicates the orphan story structure in its complication of the healing

process. Though it provides a more nuanced version of that structure than is often found in novels written for the very young or, in the case of *Freckles*, in a sentimental vein, it still inheres many of the basic elements of that structure.

In addition, both novels demonstrate the primacy of the political function and interplay between the social and the political function of orphanhood for both Freckles and Tom. In Freckles' case, the social function of his orphanhood is most obvious in that the primary interest of the novel is in how he comes into the community he was lacking through his time in the Limberlost. However, underlying that is the assumption of the political consequences of his sex: Freckles is restored to a family of landed gentry, and his uncle is a Member of Parliament. Their political status lends itself to the restoration of Freckles' respectability. In Tom's case, while his Patriotic American move in relation to the value of the artifacts is in one important sense undermined by his personal, social interests in the artifacts, it is still true that he understands and appeals to the political importance of his status as an orphan. In both cases, the stories of how the American landscape provides a place of freedom and healing to these men in themselves function as a sort of naturalist propaganda used by the authors to demonstrate the value of the natural environment to their American audience.

In the similarities between these two otherwise widely different stories, we see once again the degree to which orphanhood informs the stories of characters who experience it. While orphanhood is often viewed as nothing more than a plot point creating a difficult situation that makes for a good novel, these stories show that orphanhood has weight in interpreting the story itself. In the case of Freckles and Tom, this is evident in the way that situating these orphaned

characters in the American landscape magnifies the potential healing powers of the natural environment. In so doing, *Freckles* and *The Professor's House* confirm the value of recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

Self, Other, and Creepy Orphaned Children in Southern Gothic Literature

I begin this chapter with two responses to orphaned children, the first of which comes from L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. After Marilla Cuthbert informs Mrs. Rachel Lynde that she and her brother, Matthew, are adopting an orphaned child from an asylum, the astonished Rachel cautions her friend against such a hazardous action:

Well, Marilla, I'll just tell you plain that I think you're doing a mighty foolish thing—a risky thing, that's what. You don't know what you're getting. You're bringing a strange child into your house and home and you don't know a single thing about him nor what his disposition is like nor what sort of parents he had nor how he's likely to turn out. Why, it was last week I read in the paper how a man and his wife up west of the Island took a boy out of an orphan asylum and he set fire to the house at night—set it *on purpose*, Marilla—and nearly burnt them to a crisp in their beds. And I know another case where an adopted boy used to suck the eggs—they couldn't break him of it. If you had asked my advise in the matter—which you didn't do, Marilla—I'd have said for mercy's sake not to think of such a thing, that's what. (7; emphasis original)

Clearly aware of the differences between orphaned children and those who have been raised in a stable family environment and of the potential consequences of letting such a familial other into the home, Mrs. Lynde reads all orphaned children as dangerous. She responds with astonishment and fear to the presence of the orphaned familial other.

The second response, or rather set of responses, to orphaned children comes from a graduate course on Twentieth Century Gothic Literature in which I was enrolled in the Spring semester of 2016. Throughout the course, we identified several tropes of the gothic novel. Haunted houses and super/natural

appearances are perhaps the most common, but we also noticed how often creepy children appeared in these stories. On one occasion, my colleagues drew our attention to the behavior of the creepy child in Flannery O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger." In particular, they objected to Nelson's obstinate defiance of his grandfather's authority, arguing that O'Connor had gone too far with the child's eerily indomitable attitude even for a gothic short story. When I pointed out that Nelson is orphaned, and that such behavior is not uncommon in children who have been separated from their parents, their objections instantly ceased. In this case, my colleagues responded to Nelson as a familial self, and were silenced by my reading of the boy as familial other.

In each of these disparate examples, the readers—Rachel Lynde as reader of Marilla's actions and of the local newspaper, my colleagues and myself as readers of Nelson Head—stand in a category separate from that of the orphaned characters, looking at the orphaned experience from the outside. With varying degrees of sympathy, the readers interpret the actions of the characters based on their own experience of the world, judging the validity of those actions based on that assessment. The readers respond to orphanhood as self responding to other, understanding the experience of the orphaned character as one that is distanced from their own.

It is that understanding of orphan as other that I will take up in this chapter. Building on the discussion of orphans in the American landscape presented in the last chapter, this chapter considers the maybe-not-so-independent orphan in southern gothic literature. Recognizing, as Charles Crow observes, that "all gothic stories are family stories" (15), I will argue that gothic fiction—specifically the southern gothic fiction of Eudora Welty and Flannery

O'Connor—tends to capitalize on the traumatic element of the orphan story, using orphanhood less to create sympathy in and for their characters than to alienate them from those who are part of a biological family structure. In so doing, these stories depict orphaned characters as Freudian *unheimlich*, familiar-unfamiliar personalities, thereby exposing and questioning the self/other dichotomy that exists between the orphaned character and the other characters in the stories, and by extension between the orphan and the readers. Through this process, these stories defamiliarize the biological family, causing characters and readers to view themselves and their world from a position outside the dominant biological familial narrative.

Orphanhood and the Gothic

In order to see why the otherness of the orphaned experience is particularly evident in gothic fiction, we must understand the development of the gothic in literature. Though there are a number of tropes that are common to gothic novels, identifying what exactly constitutes gothic fiction, especially the gothic fiction of the twentieth century, can be a difficult process. The early gothic fiction of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries was identifiable by its formulaic structure and by the presence of certain elements in the story. Dale Bailey writes of the “[c]ommon gothic motifs” in these early stories, “includ[ing] tangled genealogies, subterranean flights, incest, doubles, supernatural incursions, and, of course, hauntings” (4). Crow similarly recognizes early gothic as a “narrow tradition bound by certain props (ruined castles, usually in foreign lands, and imperiled maidens)” (2).

In contrast to the relatively straightforward and formulaic structure of these early gothic stories, modern and contemporary manifestations of the gothic are more complex both in terms of structure and in terms of purpose. Regarding the structural elements alone, Bailey points out that “[t]he contemporary haunted house formula”—one of those that was perhaps the most significant to early gothic novels—“dispenses not only with ghosts, but with the ontological uncertainty—did anything spectral really happen?—at the heart of late nineteenth-century gothic fiction” (6). Bailey’s recognition of the lack of ontological uncertainty in modern stories is particularly interesting in that it reveals a shift in philosophical interest in these tales. While early stories were for the most part fairly straightforward, more recent gothic fiction actively engages with various philosophical and social questions. As Crow argues, American Gothic is no longer defined by its structural or plot elements, but “is now usually seen as a tradition of oppositional literature, presenting in disturbing, usually frightening ways, a skeptical, ambiguous view of human nature and of history” (2).

This formulation of gothic fiction as interested in human nature and history is further developed by Teresa A. Goddu, who argues that “gothic stories are intimately connected to the culture that produces them” (2). Beginning from Richard Wright’s account of the gothic stories he encountered as a boy in a magazine endorsing the teaching of the Ku Klux Klan, Goddu suggests “that the gothic is intensely engaged with historical concerns” rather than operating as escapist literature: “Instead of fleeing reality, the gothic registers its culture’s contradictions, presenting a distorted, not a disengaged, version of reality” (2-3). Fred Botting similarly recognizes the historical element of gothic fiction:

Not only a way of producing excessive emotion, a celebration of transgression for its own sake, Gothic terrors activate a sense of the unknown and project an uncontrollable and overwhelming power which threatens not only the loss of sanity, honour, property or social standing but the very order which supports and is regulated by the coherence of those terms. The terrors and horrors of transgression in Gothic writing become a powerful means to reassert the values of society, virtue and propriety: transgression, by crossing the social and aesthetic limits, serves to reinforce or underline their value and necessity, restoring or defining limits. Gothic novels frequently adopt this cautionary strategy, warning of dangers of social and moral transgression by representing them in their darkest and most threatening form. The tortuous tales of vice, corruption and depravity are sensational examples of what happens when the rules of social behavior are neglected. (7)

Rather than seeing gothic literature as sensational fiction disconnected from the cultural and historical setting in which it was written, these critics understand twentieth-century gothic fiction as dealing directly with issues of historical fact and social tension in the era during which they were written.

While these critics are particularly interested in the historical and social implications of gothic fiction, their recognition of how these stories deal with opposition, transgression, and suppression is particularly relevant to this study of literary orphanhood as traumatic experience. In southern gothic fiction, orphanhood itself operates as a kind of social and familial transgression for orphaned characters, the characters with whom they interact, and the readers of the novels in which they appear. Specifically, orphanhood causes characters and readers to recognize their own alienation, defamiliarizing their situations and personal histories so that they can see themselves from the position of the orphaned character—that is, so they can see themselves otherwise. As Crow writes, gothic literature “is deeply skeptical that either individuals or societies can be perfected. The Gothic insists that humans are flawed and capable of evil, and that the stories we tell ourselves in our history books may leave out what is most

important for us to understand" (2). While American literature, especially that written for children or for a popular adult audience, often presents childhood as a period of innocence and helplessness during which family acts as a stable and protective environment in which these children can grow, orphans in gothic fiction challenge those assumptions by presenting children whose tendencies are far from innocent, who insist on their own independence, and whose families are broken and harmful.

In thus challenging conceptions of familial and childhood normality, orphanhood in southern gothic literature clearly employs Freud's principle of the *unheimlich*, or uncanny. In his 1919 essay on this topic, Freud argues that "the uncanny is that class of frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" ("Uncanny" 220). After providing the definitions of the words *heimlich* (homely) and *unheimlich* (uncanny) found in various German dictionaries, Freud notes that *heimlich* can mean both familiar or homely and "Concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others" (223). Because of this duality, "*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way or other a subspecies of *heimlich*" (226). Thus, Freud suggests, the uncanny "is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression" (241). In other words, something uncanny, something *unheimlich*, is a new thing that recalls something long known but suppressed, something that brings up thoughts or feelings that are uncomfortable not in their newness, but rather in their familiarity.

This feeling of discomfort is particularly evident, Freud suggests, in doubling. Freud cites E. T. A. Hoffmann, “the unrivaled master of uncanny literature” (233), as particularly adept at *unheimlich* doubling, creating characters who are identified with another in appearance or thought or character trait. Through this process of doubling, Freud argues, Hoffmann and other authors who employ literary doubles express the human desire for immortality and self-preservation. In the later stage of the ego’s development, the self-critical agency of the superego, “which is able to treat the rest of the ego like an object,” treats these early desires as “belong[ing] to the old surmounted narcissism of earliest times” (235). In addition to recalling early desires for immortality, doubling brings up “the unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling in phantasy, all the strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed, and all our suppressed acts of volition which nourish us in the illusion of Free Will” (236). Thus, Freud explains, “the quality of uncanniness . . . comes from the fact of the ‘double’ being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted—a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect” (236). Doubling, therefore, is *unheimlich* in that it recalls the familiar desires of the past made unfamiliar by the critical action of the superego.

Significantly, the familiar-unfamiliar of the *unheimlich* in general and of doubling in particular is clearly seen in orphan stories, especially those that demonstrate gothic tropes. In her book on the mythic, storied nature of orphanhood and adoption, Betty Jean Lifton recognizes doubling as an essential part of the adoptee experience. She writes,

The Adoptee, however, forced by circumstances to lead a double life, is haunted by a series of doubles—even the double has a double. There is the other possible self one might have been had one been kept by one’s birth

parents. There is the self one might have been had one been chosen by a different couple. There is the child one's adoptive parents might have had, had they been fertile, or the child they did have, who died. (34-35)

We can extend these observations of the doubled experience of the adoptee to orphaned children who are not taken into a new family. The orphan, aware of the traumatic shattering of her past and of her consequent lack of fixed identity, is aware of the doubled nature of her experience. Orphanhood leaves identity open such that the orphan is always "haunted by a series of doubles," aware of the "selves" she might have been had things happened differently.

In southern gothic fiction, the openness of the orphaned identity is further evident in the way that other characters interact with the orphan. In these stories, orphaned characters act as doubles of the other characters or of their readers, recalling emotions and desires that have been repressed. The doubled nature and open identity of the orphaned experience extends to other characters and readers as well, forcing them to view themselves differently as they recognize the tentative nature of identity and selfhood. As Bailey writes, gothic stories "often provoke our fears about ourselves and our society, and, at their very best, they present deeply subversive critiques of all that we hold to be true" (6). This is certainly true of gothic orphan stories, where the characters are presented in such a way as to defamiliarize the biological family structure and the security that it brings.

In the following pages, I will consider this movement in three twentieth-century southern gothic stories: Eudora Welty's "Moon Lake" (1949) and Flannery O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger" (1955) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960). Specifically, I will argue that "Moon Lake" presents orphaned character Easter as processing her trauma by creating personal narrative, bearing witness

to the trauma she has experienced and recreating herself through the act of narration. Through this process, Easter becomes a double of all the girls at Moon Lake, allowing the Morgana girls who are in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood to face their imminent maturation and independence. In O'Connor's stories, I will argue that the orphanhood of Nelson Head and Francis Marion Tarwater others the characters in order to expose their sinful human condition. In so doing, the narration reveals Nelson and Tarwater as doubles of the readers, suggesting the necessity of divine mercy in order to achieve spiritual wholeness. In all three cases, the orphanhood of the characters magnifies human isolation and loneliness, thereby suggesting the importance of looking outside of the biological family for ultimate belonging.

*Seeing Self Otherwise in Eudora Welty's "Moon Lake"*¹

One of the most common topics of discussion in Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples* is the dichotomy between self and other in the stories. Several critics have considered specific issues of gender and otherness in the text, exploring how female characters figure as other and find a voice in a male-dominant society.² While Welty's treatment of self and other has received much

¹ Copyright © 2019 South Central Review. This article first appeared in *South Central Review*, Volume 36, Issue 1, Spring 2019, pp. 1-18. The section is revised from its first appearance.

² In particular, critics have written about how Welty uses text and subtext in her stories to explore and resist the othering of female characters. Joel B. Peckham, Jr. considers the Southern culture of masculine dominance depicted in the stories, exploring how female characters both resist and perpetuate that culture. Patricia S. Yeager investigates Welty's appropriation and subversion of phallogocentric language in her writing, arguing that through these actions the novelist confronts patriarchy and supports matriarchy ("Because" and "Case"). Suzan Harrison, in her turn, argues that patriarchal discourse becomes one of many self/other discourses in Welty's stories, reading masculine and feminine as self and other and suggesting that Welty "redefin[es] other as richness and mystery rather than as negation and lack" ("Other" 60-61). Laura J. Schrock takes the consideration of otherness in *The Golden Apples* a step further, bringing blackness into the conversation and suggesting that it is the presence of blackness in the stories that allows for the formation of a female consciousness. And Susan V. Donaldson considers

attention, the otherness of the collection's orphaned children has been largely overlooked, even though orphans are unmistakably othered by both narrators and characters throughout the collection. Indeed, at one point Louella, the Morrison family's African-American house help, uses "orphan" as a pejorative when the improperly dressed Cassie and Loch Morrison come in through the back door in "June Recital": "What orphan-lookin' children is these here? . . . Where yawl orphan come from? Yawl don't live here, yawl live at County Orphan. Gwan back" (92).

The story in the collection that most explicitly deals with orphaned characters is "Moon Lake," in which the "flock" of girls from the County Orphan asylum plays a significant role. While critics have to varying degrees considered the orphaned characters as such,³ and while Susan V. Donaldson and Suzan Harrison go so far as to discuss the character Easter as other because she is orphaned, no one has yet fully explored orphans as other or considered how their otherness affects our reading of the text. Addressing this gap in criticism, I will argue that the orphaned girls in "Moon Lake" function as other in a way that allows the Morgana girls to recognize "[t]he other way to live" (138)—to grasp the possibility of living otherwise—and so to understand the tenuousness of selfhood—to see self otherwise. More specifically, in order to cope with the trauma of orphanhood and gain a sense of self in a strongly familial society, Easter, the most prominent orphaned character in the story, creates personal

otherness in the stories on an even broader scale, arguing that the act of storytelling in *The Golden Apples* establishes unity amongst the Morgana community by silencing the other, a process that Welty subtly critiques.

³ In particular, Gail L. Mortimer and Sarah L. Peters explore the freedom from social constraint that the orphans experience, while Brandon Costello and Michael Scott suggest that that freedom leads to maturity and sexual awakening.

narrative, bearing witness to the trauma she has experienced and recreating herself through the act of narration, thereby becoming a representative of all the girls at the Moon Lake and allowing the Morgana girls who are in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood to face their imminent maturation and independence. In dealing with these topics, the story explores the possibility of witnessing trauma as a means by which both orphaned characters and empathetic listeners can gain an understanding of trauma and thereby comprehend the possibility of living and of seeing self otherwise.

The traumatic effects of orphanhood are perhaps more evident in this story than in any of the others that we have considered to this point. Remember that Cathy Caruth describes trauma as “an overwhelming event or events” which often leads to the delayed response of “repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors” known as post-traumatic stress disorder (“Introduction” 4). Caruth explains that PTSD stems from an inability to assimilate a traumatic event into one’s experience, and suggests that it is only after a period of forgetting or latency that one may remember, relive, and depart from the trauma. This process of departure is achieved through the act of narration, particularly of narrating the trauma to another, for, she explains, “the history of a trauma, in its inherent belatedness, can only take place through the listening of another” (11). It is thus the act of storytelling, indicated by the Act of the Imagination that constitutes the sixth function of the orphan story according to Chapter Two, that enables those who have experienced trauma to depart from it.

While none of the orphaned characters in Welty’s “Moon Lake” exhibit symptoms associated with PTSD per se, that they are affected by the trauma of

orphanhood is evident particularly in their relationships with each other. Kai Erickson explains that trauma can damage “the hardest earned and most fragile accomplishment of childhood, basic trust,” almost beyond repair (197). He writes, “The experience of trauma, at its worst, can mean not only a loss of confidence in the self, but a loss of confidence in the surrounding tissue of family and community, in the structures of human government, in the larger logics by which humankind lives, in the ways of nature itself, and often (if this is really the final step in such a succession) in God” (198). Welty’s orphans, who never rely on anyone but rather insist upon autonomy and independence throughout the story, exhibit this breakdown of basic trust and of belief in the structures of family and community. Thus, early in the story, the narrator describes the orphans as “at once wondering and stoic—at one moment loving everything too much, the next folding back from it, tightly as hard green buds growing in the wrong direction, closing as they go” (118). Though they may at first demonstrate signs of reliance and affection, the orphaned girls never fully invest in or commit to anyone, always withdrawing from whatever they perceive themselves to be trusting too much.

This lack of trust extends even to their relationships with each other. For instance, Geneva, one of the younger orphaned girls, seems to be very much attached to Easter during most of the story. She is described as Easter’s friend early in the narrative (119) and is with Easter and another of the orphan girls when Nina Carmichael and Jinny Love Stark decide to skip basket-weaving and spend the afternoon exploring Moon Lake (126). In spite of this apparent attachment, however, Geneva is able to say, as Loch attempts to resuscitate her unconscious friend after pulling her from the lake, “If Easter’s dead, I get her

coat for winter, all right" (149). Though Geneva has looked to Easter for comfort and protection, her trust has been so damaged by the trauma that she has experienced as an orphan that even her closest friend proves to be little more than a tool that she has used for entertainment and protection, but who is in no way essential to her happiness or survival.

In addition to the trauma that they face as a result of their orphanhood, Easter and her comrades face the additional trial of being othered by the society of which they are a part. Because Morgana is what Joel B. Peckham, Jr. describes as a "traditional southern society" built on the foundation of a "close kinship system" (195), anyone who does not have the history and the structure provided by family is necessarily othered by the members of the Morgana community. I mentioned earlier that Louella uses "orphan" as a pejorative in "June Recital." This same attitude toward orphans is evident in the Morgana characters of "Moon Lake." The first time we hear of the orphaned girls' presence at the summer camp, we are told that they had been "wished on them by Mr. Nesbitt and the Men's Bible Class" (112). Though their ability to attend the camp was a result of an act of charity, that charitability clearly does not extend to the Morgana girls who are at the camp. Instead, these familial selves view the orphaned familial others as a burden to be borne rather than seeing their presence at the camp as an opportunity to show kindness to or learn from those who are less fortunate than themselves.

Shortly after we learn how the orphaned girls happen to be at Moon Lake, Jinny Love makes a statement that clearly separates the orphans from the other girls attending the camp. As they prepare for their morning dip in Moon Lake, Jinny Love suggests to Mrs. Gruenwald, the camp matron, "Let's let the orphans

go in the water first and get the snakes stirred up.... Then they'll be chased away by the time *we* go in" (115; emphasis original). Jinny Love clearly has a separate category for the orphans, demonstrating an "us" versus "them" mentality that shows not only that the orphans are clearly other than the self that is represented by the Morgana girls, but also that they are an other that is disposable, viewed as lower than as well as separate from the self. Because the girls have experienced the misfortune of losing or being abandoned by their parents, they are outside the Morgana narrative of biological family, and are therefore othered by those who fit into that narrative.

Having thus established the trauma and otherness that arise from the orphaned characters' separation from their parents, we are left to explore how the orphaned characters function as individuals in the world of "Moon Lake." While the orphans are unmistakably othered by the Morgana girls, they yet have a degree of autonomy that inspires the Morgana girls at Moon Lake. Harrison suggests that this autonomy is a direct result of their otherness, arguing that the orphaned Easter transforms the lack that causes her otherness into a form of freedom: "Merely by virtue of being an orphan, Easter stands as an emblem of liberty from social constraints" ("Other" 60). Similarly, Jeffrey J. Folks suggests that the girl's "social existence is a form of absence, but also a kind of freedom" (24). Because the orphans do not have the structure provided by family, they have a degree of autonomy that is unfamiliar to the Morgana girls at Moon Lake.

This autonomy is especially evident in the way that the orphans, particularly Easter, create their own narratives. This narrational or storytelling function has been noted by Donaldson as a theme running throughout *The Golden Apples*. Donaldson suggests that storytelling is a means by which

Morgana “establish[es] communal unity” (490). At the same time, however, she argues that the act of storytelling is simultaneously a means by which that unity can be interrupted through “recovering the otherness within Morgana’s stories” (490). That is, the act of storytelling within *The Golden Apples* both creates the community that is Morgana and provides those who are outside of that community with an opportunity to assert their identity. This is certainly true in “Moon Lake,” where the orphaned characters not only tell their stories but also narrate themselves through their actions in a way that disturbs the social structures assumed by the Morgana girls. As they perform these acts of narration, the orphaned characters likewise demonstrate the process of remembering, reliving, and departing from trauma through narration that Caruth posits as essential in processing traumatic experiences. Thus, the characters in “Moon Lake” create their own stories, through which process they depart from their trauma and function in society.

The act of self-narration is most clearly demonstrated by Easter, the most independent and authoritative of the orphaned girls. Easter is first introduced as the one who “appeared to be in charge” of the girls from County Orphan (115). She is later described as “dominant among the orphans . . . for what she was in herself” (118). There is something about her that Nina, as we see through the free-indirect discourse of the narration, does not quite understand, but that she recognizes as unique. Yeager and Harrison have discussed this characteristic of the orphaned Easter, noting her simultaneous freedom from and resistance to the

specifically gendered expectations of her society.⁴ Peckham extends this observation of Easter's nonconformity, calling her "an in-between figure who seems quite in control of what she does and who she is" and who is "the author of her own identity" (204). Easter is indeed one of the most independent of the orphans, especially inasmuch as she resists the attempts of the others to assign her to some set space, but instead insists on performing the Act of Imagination that constitutes the sixth function of orphan stories by narrating herself.

Peckham's description of Easter as "author of her own identity" is especially interesting to us here, as it is her narrational actions with which we are most concerned. Throughout "Moon Lake," Easter acts independently of her society, writing herself rather than submitting to being written by another. When drinking from the spring, Easter "could fall flat as a boy," resisting the gendered compartmentalization of her society (117). She carries a jackknife—another unladylike characteristic, but one that earns her the respect even of the indomitable Jinny Love (120). And when Nina offers her a drink from her collapsible cup, Easter refuses even to acknowledge the object: "Easter wouldn't even try it. . . . She didn't say anything, not even 'It's pretty.' Was she even thinking of it? Or if not, what did she think about?" (122). Easter so defies the norms of her society that Nina cannot comprehend her actions and therefore is unable to narrate those actions or place her on any familiar social grid.

Easter's most obvious act of self-narration is seen in her account and defense of naming herself. One afternoon, Nina and Jinny Love "run away from

⁴ See Yeager, "The Case of the Dangling Signifier: Phallic Imagery in Eudora Welty's 'Moon Lake,'" and Harrison, "Playing with Fire: Women's Sexuality and Artistry in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples*."

basket weaving” to explore the area surrounding Moon Lake for themselves (125). On their way, they happen across Easter and two other orphaned girls who appear to have made the same decision. Geneva and Etoile run away when they see the Morgana girls approaching, but Easter remains resolutely where she is, and she, Nina, and Jinny Love continue to the shore of the lake. As they sit together near the water, Easter writes her name in the sand: “Esther” (133). This leads to a dispute between the three girls about the spelling and “reality” of Easter’s name. Jinny Love claims that “Easter’s just not a real name” (133). Nina argues that it is real if it is spelled as it is pronounced, and Easter herself resists the attempts of the others to force her to conform to the traditional naming system, insisting that her name is legitimate regardless of how it is spelled or pronounced simply by virtue of the fact that she has made it so.

Easter’s insistence on the self-created legitimacy of her name is especially important in the context of self-narration and departure from trauma. Easter, in arguing with Nina and Jinny Love, maintains that she is the only one responsible for giving herself a name; she has no family to create her identity for her, and so must create one for herself. In a moment of rare vulnerability, Easter explains, “I haven’t got no father. I never had, he ran away. I’ve got a mother. When I could walk, then my mother took me by the hand and turned me in, and I remember it” (134). After a few days of being at the camp, Easter is able to tell her story—to narrate the trauma that she has experienced—and to demonstrate departure from trauma by insisting upon the autonomy that that trauma has earned her. Easter has been abandoned by those who had a right to give her a name and a story, so is free to choose her own name and write her own story, thereby creating her own identity.

More than illustrating the self-narration that trauma theorists posit as essential to departing from trauma, both Easter's act of naming herself and the name that she chooses actively resist the identification structures of the world around her. Unlike the Morgana girls, Easter's name does not connect her with a family heritage. Jinny Love proudly explains, "I was named for my maternal grandmother, so my name's Jinny Love. It couldn't be anything else. Or anything better" (133). Her identity, as her name, stems from her family heritage; her title has value because it connects her with her familial past. Easter, in contrast, chooses her name for herself, independent of its familial value, writing her own story rather than being written into that of her biological family.

What is more, Easter's name itself resists typical naming conventions in its spelling and pronunciation. Not only does she name herself, but she chooses for herself a name that most would not even recognize as such. Early in their week at the camp, Jinny Love identifies Easter's name as "tacky" (118). Later, as they sit together on the shore of the lake writing their names in the sand, Jinny Love insists that "Easter's just not a real name. It doesn't matter how she spells it, Nina, nobody ever had it. Not around here" (133). More than merely being unable to partake in the familial naming systems of Morgana, Easter actively resists the community's cultural naming conventions in spelling and pronunciation, accepting the otherness that is hers by virtue of her familial circumstances and deepening that otherness through her own choice of a name.

While Easter's act of self-naming resists these cultural structures in one sense, in another her name plays off of culturally prevalent biblical motifs that add interest and meaning to the name. The name that Easter selects for herself—in both its spelled and pronounced form—is especially noteworthy in its double

suggestion of orphanhood and resurrection. The spelled form of Easter's name—Esther—evokes the orphaned biblical character from the book that bears her name. Esther, an orphaned Jewish girl who has been raised by her cousin Mordecai, is selected for her great beauty to be the wife of the powerful King Ahasuerus. Shortly after they are married, Esther saves the Jews from being massacred through her courageous actions in approaching and petitioning the king. In choosing this name for herself, Easter (or "Esther," as the case may be) writes herself into the story of the biblical queen, thereby suggesting, as Folks argues, her own "power of life and death as well as a sensuality that the more conventional young women of Morgana lack" (23). Easter's adoption of the spelled name of the biblical queen creates meaning and purpose for her own life in spite of the trauma and loss that she has experienced.

In addition to this spelled evocation of the biblical Esther, the pronounced form of the name "Easter" is a clear reference to the day of Jesus Christ's resurrection. In calling herself Easter, the character evokes life from death, existence from non-existence, in a way that mirrors her own act of self-naming. Just as Christ defied death in bringing life from the grave, so Easter defies the familial norms of naming and identity in personally adopting a name that is not commonly recognized as such. As Gail L. Mortimer explains, the girl "insists on her autonomy, as if—as her name implies—she had been reborn through her decision to make herself" (83). In giving herself a name outside of the context of her past and the traumatic experience she has endured in being abandoned by her mother, Easter remakes herself as an entity independent from her past or her society.

The theme of resurrection to which Easter appeals in choosing her name is further reflected in her resuscitation after falling into the lake. Many critics have discussed the obvious sexual overtones of Loch's life-saving routine, exploring both the cultural and physiological implications of his actions.⁵ As they do so, they assume that Easter's resuscitation is a result of Loch's endeavors. However, when one considers the length of time between Easter's fall and her first, gasping breath in the context of her self-narration throughout "Moon Lake," it becomes plain that Easter's recovery is an act of resurrection accomplished by the girl's own power rather than as an act of resuscitation accomplished by Loch's actions. As the girls watch Loch's life-saving endeavors, the narrator explains, "If *he* was brutal, her self, her body, the withheld life, was brutal too" (145; emphasis original). The language here suggests that Easter is actively withholding life by resisting Loch's efforts. Later Miss Moody tells the newly arrived Miss Lizzie Stark that "he's been doing that a long time" (146); Easter has already been unconscious for some minutes when that character appears, and it is not until several pages (and presumably several minutes) later that Easter at last begins to breathe. In the mean time, Loch continues to work his way up and down her body until blood comes out of her open mouth, her skirt dries on the table, and she is "abandoned on a little edifice" by the other girls, "beyond dying and

⁵ In an article about the homoerotic similarities between "Moon Lake" and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Harrison suggests that Loch's life-saving routine heterosexualizes Easter, ultimately disrupting Nina's attraction to the orphaned girl ("Playing"). Peters argues that Easter and Loch become aware of their sexuality through the life-saving experience, and Scott suggests that this sexual awakening acts as a catalyst for a similar awakening in the other characters in the story. Yeager takes the conversation about Easter's resuscitation outside of the more immediate context of the summer camp, arguing that Welty employs sexualized and specifically phallic imagery in this scene and throughout the story in order to subvert the patriarchal norms of Southern society as a whole ("Case").

beyond being remembered about” (151). Easter’s was “a betrayed figure, the betrayal was over, it was a memory” (152). She is dead; she is past saving.

It is at this point, when all seem to have abandoned hope but the determined boy scout, that Easter suddenly breathes. It is as if she is determined not to revive until the others have not only given up hope but begun to hope for her death in order that the awful ordeal might be over. Hers is an act of voluntary resurrection, carried out not at the wish of or in order to please those around her, but of her own accord. Just as Easter narrates her own story, so she enacts her own story, resurrecting herself just as she has narrated the story of her trauma. Both her narration and her resurrection, her story-telling and her story-living, are voluntary actions. In selecting a name for herself and in enacting her own resurrection, Easter creates her own personal narrative, departing from her traumatic past and insisting on purpose and autonomy in spite of being othered by the Morgana girls. Easter thus uses narrative as a means by which she can confront and take charge of the trauma she has experienced as an orphan in a world where familial others are ostracized and objectified by those around them.

While Easter’s self-narration is significant in its own right, especially in its relation to her position as an orphan, its purpose in “Moon Lake” extends beyond the development of Easter herself. Through the act of self-narration by which she recreates herself apart from her traumatic past and the familial structures of Morgana society, Easter becomes a double of all the girls at Moon Lake who are in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. In providing them with a picture of life apart from the structures with which they are so comfortable, Easter allows the Morgana girls, particularly Nina Carmichael, to face the prospect of maturation and the relative independence

that accompanies adulthood, encouraging them to take ownership in those changes and to see the possibility of living otherwise.

It is helpful here to return to trauma theory, particularly to theorists' discussion of the power that witnessing the trauma of another has in the listener. Caruth suggests that in bearing witness to the trauma of another, those who are not suffering from PTSD are enabled to recognize and come to terms with their own brokenness. She argues that the power of storytelling, of narrating the past, of "speaking and a listening *from the site of trauma*," arises not from the knowledge of the one who is listening, but rather from their lack of knowledge—from "what we don't yet know of our own traumatic pasts" ("Introduction" 11; emphasis original). Thus, she argues, "trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves" (11). In other words, trauma and its narration break down the divide between self and other, both enabling the "other" who is narrating the trauma to regain a sense of self and causing the "self" who is listening to the trauma to recognize the otherness of his or her own experience. Thus, the narration of trauma serves the double purpose of bringing healing to the speaker and to the listener, enabling both to understand themselves more fully.

Shoshana Felman explores this concept further, explaining that as the traumatized individual narrates the trauma he or she has experienced, that testimony becomes "a point of conflation between text [i.e. narration of the traumatic event] and life" which acts itself as "a textual testimony which can *penetrate us like an actual life*" ("Education" 14; emphasis original). In listening to

another tell about the trauma he has experienced, the listener undergoes an experience that is in some sense similar to that of the individual who has experienced the trauma. While this is the case, however, Felman is quick to explain the inherent strangeness of the traumatic experience, suggesting that the testimony to trauma cannot be “subsumed” into the familiar (19), but rather that bearing witness to the testifying of another allows the listener to glimpse the otherness inherent in the traumatic event.

It is this process of glimpsing otherness that we see at work in the relationships between orphaned other and familial self in “Moon Lake.” As Nina witness Easter testifying through self-narration to the trauma she has experienced, they enter into that experience and are thereby enabled to see the approaching break with their families as they become relatively independent adults. Because of the nature of this “trauma,” Easter’s trauma of orphanhood is particularly empowering. Easter, who is without the care and comfort of family, experiences a state of independence that all of the girls are likely to encounter to some degree in the future. In witnessing her testimony, the Morgana girls are forced to face the changes that are imminent in their own lives.

The knowledge of how near this orphaned otherness is to their own experience is especially obvious to the Morgana girls because of the setting of the story. In being at summer camp, away from the protection of home, the girls are forced to recognize the possibility of life apart from their families. Sarah L. Peters suggests that the summer camp acts as a “liminal landscape” that “allows [Welty’s] girl characters to linger in the wonder of the in-between, where they project meaning on to the woods, the lake, and the night, before returning to meet the expectations of their parents and community” (55-56). Though the

Morgana girls are aware that they have parents and community to return to, the setting of the camp makes them more conscious of their impending independence than they would be at home. In witnessing how Easter copes with her freedom from parental guidance and authority through the act of self-narration, Nina is enabled to consider her own forthcoming “freedom” and to see the possibility of self-narration as one means of growing in that freedom.⁶

Nina, the most prominent character in the story, presents an interesting example of familial self in relation to familial other. She has been described as “a child of ‘wonder,’ who responds with awe, thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the people she encounters at summer camp” (Mortimer 81). This wonder is particularly evident in her interactions with Easter. Throughout the story, Nina constantly assesses the orphaned characters around her, questioning their experience of the world and trying to understand it as different from her own. Especially in her interactions with Easter, Nina demonstrates an openness to the orphaned experience that is greater than that of any of the other Morgana girls.

⁶ In considering Easter’s representative status among the girls at Moon Lake, many critics have argued that Easter exemplifies the specifically sexual maturation that is approaching the Morgana girls. Peters reads Easter’s power in the liminal space of the summer camp as primarily sexual, exploring how she and Loch, through the sexualized life-saving experience, awaken to their heavily gendered sexuality. Scott understands the life-saving scene similarly, suggesting that through this episode Easter “lead[s] the way on [the girls’] frightening journey to sexual awareness” (37). And Costello suggests that Easter’s exploration of Moon Lake, both in the boat early in the story and in her unanticipated fall into the water, is metaphoric for her discovering of her own sexuality.

While there is undoubtedly a sexual element to Easter’s experience at Moon Lake, readings of the text as one of sexual awakening are limited in that they fail to consider the larger implications of the process of maturation that are magnified by Easter’s status as orphaned. The girls are not only facing the prospects of physical and sexual maturity, but also of freedom from the protection and authority provided by their parents and potentially from the norms of the society of which they are a part. Because adulthood thus implies more than physical or sexual development, Easter’s representative power becomes more significant in that it also provides the characters with the opportunity to view this freedom, and to see the possibility of self-narration as a means by which they can overcome the difficulties or “trauma” that often accompany adolescence.

Nina's openness to the orphan experience, and her subsequent attempt to enter into Easter's experience for herself, is most apparent in the brief scene where Nina lies awake in bed as the rest of the girls sleep around her. Interestingly, as Nina listens to the world settling into bed, she begins her meditation with the observation that the Citronella burning outside the tent has a name that is "like a girl's name" (138). Having witnessed Easter's self-narration and observed her insistence upon the reality of her unusual name, Nina begins to see the possibility of names in things that would not typically have that authority, such as the insect repellent that is burning outside the tent. Through her interaction with Easter, Nina is able to understand the power of personal narration as a means of functioning as an individual. Just as Easter, in naming herself, creates her own story in order to assert her personhood in a world where she has been ostracized and viewed as an object by those around her, so Nina is able to see through that act the possibility of living free from the constraints of her society.

As she lies awake watching Easter asleep in the bed beside her, Nina begins to meditate on "[t]he other way to live"—the life of the orphan apart from the constraints and comforts of family (138). Harrison observes that in this passage otherness becomes for Nina "a mysterious, exhilarating, risky, and rewarding mode of being" ("Other" 60-61). This is true both in the gendered sense with which Harrison is particularly interested, and in the familial sense that we are considering here. Nina acknowledges the appeal of Easter's experience, conflating the text of Easter's narration of her trauma with her own life and attempting to experience and to process the trauma of orphanhood. Her meditation begins with her noting the sounds that Gertrude Bowles (a Morgana

girl) and Etoile (an orphan) are making in their sleep. “Now I can think,” she decides, “in between them” (138). Even Miss Moody is sleeping so soundly that Nina “could not even feel [her] fretting” (138). It is in the interstitial place between Morgana girl and orphan, between self and other, and free from the protection of the authority figure of the camp, that Nina most clearly acknowledges her desire to experience the otherness of orphanhood.

As Nina thinks about those sleeping around her, she endeavors to enter into the orphan experience. She longs “to slip into them all—to change. To change for a moment into Gertrude, into Mrs. Gruenwald, into Twosie—into a boy. To *have been* an orphan” (139; emphasis original). This passage is significant on two counts. First, the degree of otherness increases with each of the changes that Nina posits. Her desire to change into someone else moves from Gertrude, another Morgana girl who is presumably fairly similar to herself, to Mrs. Gruenwald, the camp matron who is perhaps what Nina will be when she grows up, to Twosie, the African American woman the girls encounter while exploring Moon Lake who is different from herself in race, to a boy, different from herself in gender, to an orphan, different from herself in what she perceives to be the most fundamental sense in having grown up outside of the care and comfort of family. In that sense, Nina’s desire to change into an orphan is a desire to experience what she perceives to be the greatest form of otherness.

Second, it is significant that Nina’s desire is not present-tense “to *be* an orphan”, but rather past-tense “to *have been* an orphan.” While Nina wants to have an other experience, to enter into Easter’s experience of the world and to know what it is like from the inside, she qualifies that desire, acknowledging to herself that she desires to be now only what she is. In so doing, she

simultaneously recognizes the limitations of her understanding of Easter's orphaned experience, the otherness of that experience itself, and the fact that what she does know about it is not ideal. She understands, to use Felman's language, that the trauma of Easter's orphanhood cannot be subsumed into her own personal experience, but is rather inherently outside of it.

In spite of her recognition of the otherness and trauma of Easter's experience, Nina does yet attempt to enter that experience more fully herself. She observes the sleeping Easter's outspread hand beckoning to the night, and imitates the gesture, attempting through physical movement to inhabit Easter's emotional and psychological experience. In this gesture, "[i]n the cup of her hand, in her filling skin, in the fingers' bursting weight and stillness, Nina felt it: compassion and a kind of ecstasy, a single longing" (138). By imitating the position of Easter's hand, Nina imagines herself for a moment inhabiting the orphan's experience—an experience which proves, in the night with her dreams of wild beasts tearing at the flesh of her hand and in the "cluster of bees" with which it comes back to life in the morning, to be painful (138).

While Nina's attempted appropriation of the orphan experience could be seen as troubling in that it takes that experience and uses it as a mirror in which to view the Morgana experience, the story's depiction of the orphans as coming from one who stands outside the orphaned experience qualifies that appropriation. Though the third-person narration engages in free-indirect discourse, the narrator never gives us the thoughts of the orphaned characters. When the reader is allowed to enter the mind of one of the characters, it is always one of the Morgana "selves"—primarily Nina, though we occasionally get a glimpse into the minds of Loch Morrison and Jinny Love Stark as well. Thus, our

understanding of Easter comes not from direct access to her thoughts, but from an interpretation of her thoughts as given by one of the Morgana “selves.” We witness Easter’s trauma only second-hand, as the self witnesses the trauma of the other, leaving the inherent otherness of the traumatic experience embedded within the orphan’s personal narrative. In presenting otherness in this way, the narrator acknowledges the self’s inability to completely access the experience of the other, but instead understands that otherness as a means through which to interpret the meaning of the Morgana self.

In maintaining this distance between narrator and orphan, Welty honors the otherness of the orphan experience, simultaneously increasing the sense of difference between the Morgana girls and the orphans and listening to their story while not trying to claim complete entrance into that story. We know what we know about the orphans because of the Morgana girls’ observations, not because of what we see of the orphans’ thoughts and feelings. Accordingly, though we are allowed to see into the mind of the story’s familial self to understand how that self sees otherwise through the orphan’s experience, we are never left to assume that we have a perfect, unadulterated understanding of that experience. We see the other as representative, not as personal, and thereby the otherness of the orphan experience is honored.

More than that, Nina herself ultimately comes to understand her inability to access Easter’s experience, finally recognizing orphaned otherness as not merely something to be romanticized or rewritten for her own purposes, but as something to be seen as other and respected as such. In a moment demonstrating Freud’s postulation of the familiar-unfamiliar of the *unheimlich* experience, Nina’s realization of Easter’s difference comes at the moment when she identifies

most closely with the orphaned girl. When Nina edges away from Ran MacLain, who has just arrived on the scene of Easter's drowning and Loch's resuscitation, she "almost walked into Easter's arm flung out over the edge. The arm was turned at the elbow so that the hand opened upward. It held there the same as it had held when the night came in and stood in the tent, when it had come to Easter and not to Nina. It was the one hand, and it seemed the one moment" (150). Observing Easter's hand, Nina conflates the two moments: the one in the tent when she had tried to become one with Easter in her experience as an orphan, the other as the girl lies unconscious, undergoing the brutal experience of attempted resuscitation. Noting the similarity between the two moments, Nina faints, and awakes to find herself lying on the table beside Easter. She has in a sense achieved the similarity of experience for which she longed earlier, but now that similarity has become a threat: "was there danger that Easter, turned in on herself, might call out to them after all, from the other, worse, side of it?" (150). Nina now recognizes in Easter more fully than before not only the otherness but also the terror of her experience. She sees Easter as the familiar-unfamiliar of Freud's *unheimlich*, recognizing the similarity between herself and Easter and thereby feeling the implications of their difference.

In recognizing that otherness, Nina becomes even more keenly aware of the distance between herself and the orphan experience and of the trauma of that experience than she was before. This is especially true because of the way that Easter's trauma is highlighted by the "betrayal" that she at last experiences from the other girls at the camp (150). In bearing witness to Easter's self-narration-through-resurrection, Nina understands, as Felman suggests, that the traumatic experience of another cannot be subsumed into the experience of the self.

Though she may to some degree understand the otherness of her own experience through her observations of Easter, and thereby may be more prepared for imminent adulthood than she was before, Nina ultimately understands that she cannot fully enter into Easter's traumatic experience—that there is yet some degree to which the other experience is inaccessible.

In spite of that difference, however, the story as a whole does suggest that there is inherent value in attempting to enter into the experience of another. In viewing Easter as an other, Nina's experience of bearing witness to Easter's telling of trauma enables her to view her own experience otherwise—to see the possibility of life outside of the conventions of the world of which she is a part. As Folks suggests, "the Morgana girls find that orphans such as Easter possess a knowledge of life well beyond their own experience, truly an Easter-like resurrection of life, and some at least sense the importance of acquiring this knowledge" (22). Nina is undoubtedly among those who recognize the value of witnessing life lived otherwise. She is able to see Easter's orphaned status as "a form of absence, but also a kind of freedom" (24), and to see her own experience otherwise—to see self otherwise—in recognizing that freedom. Thus, as Harrison notes, Nina's "imagination is set afire by her encounter with Easter" because of the way that her orphanhood frees her from the social constraints placed upon the Morgana girls ("Playing" 303). Though Harrison is concerned primarily with Easter's freedom from gender restraints, her observation about Nina's reaction to Easter holds true in the context of trauma: through bearing witness to Easter's testimony of trauma, Nina's imagination is engaged, allowing her to see another experience of the world and thereby to face the imminent changes and relative independence in her own life brought about by the approach of adulthood.

In the last scene of the story, we observe the effect of Nina's experience of seeing herself, and therefore the world around her, otherwise. The evening after Easter's drowning and resurrection, Nina and Jinny Love observe Loch as he strips, examines his sunburn, and then steps proudly to the door of his tent. The girls had heard him beating a "wild tattoo of pride" on his chest as they approached, and Nina sees the "[m]innowy thing that matched his candle flame" and observes that "he thought he shone forth too" (156). Nina for a moment ascribes to Loch all the power and fame that he seems to think he deserves, seeing his act of resuscitation and subsequent glory as such through the eyes of the Morgana society. However, the next paragraph gives the lie to this reading of the situation: "Nevertheless, standing there with the tent slanting over him and his arm knobby as it reached up and his head bent a little, he looked rather at loose ends" (156). In spite of his apparent power, Nina—and Jinny Love, who a few moments later observes, "You and I will always be old maids" (156)—sees Easter's resurrection otherwise, finishing the story with what Yeager calls a "mimetic and metamorphic diminishment of the phallus" at the end of "a story which contains such vehement phallic imagery" ("Case" 447). Through her observations of Easter and her insistence upon self-narration as a means of overcoming the trauma of orphanhood, Nina is enabled for a moment at least to see her own experience otherwise, and to recognize the possibility of life outside of the familial norms of her society.

Thus, through its depiction of Easter's self-narration as a means of overcoming the trauma that she has experienced as an orphaned and consequently othered character, "Moon Lake" provides a figure who is representative of all of the girls at the summer camp in the liminal space between

childhood and adulthood, not merely in terms of sexual maturity, but also in terms of independence. As Easter creates personal narrative through the acts of telling her story to others and of naming herself, Nina is simultaneously made aware of the familial otherness of orphanhood and encouraged to see the tenuousness of her own familial selfhood. In highlighting the instability of the Morgana experience, Easter allows Nina to see herself differently, and so to see the possibility of life outside the society of which she is a part.

Trauma and Sin, Justice and Mercy in O'Connor's Orphan Fiction

As in "Moon Lake," the orphaned characters in Flannery O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away* embody orphanhood as a form of otherness.⁷ O'Connor's orphans, like Easter, insist on their own narrative over and against that imposed on them by their extended family members. However, unlike Easter, the otherness of Nelson Head and Francis Marion Tarwater leads them not only to acts of narration, but also to acts of opposition and violence that can be explained by their status as orphaned. In performing these acts, the characters increase the sense of distance between themselves and their readers,

⁷ Critics of O'Connor's stories have generally overlooked orphanhood in the stories, and particularly orphanhood as a form of otherness. Critics who write on "The Artificial Nigger" in particular are quick to discuss specifically racial otherness in the story, though often in contradictory ways. For example, Maris G. Fiondella, Jeanne Perault, and Jennie J. Joiner consider the story's racial power dynamics, looking at how the African American characters as well as the lawn ornament operate not as a redemptive figure, but rather as the means by which Mr. Head cements in his grandson an idea of white racial superiority over the African American other. In these discussions of otherness and power in the text, several compare Nelson to the African American figures in the story, but none consider how his orphanhood in and of itself serves to other him to both the characters in the novel and to the reader. Similarly, critics of *The Violent Bear It Away* have considered the topic of orphanhood in the story (Gary M. Ciuba in particular provides an excellent reading of Tarwater as an orphan, and Carol Y. Wilson discusses family in the novel), once again the relation between his orphanhood and his role as grotesque other is overlooked.

placing them more firmly in the category of other to the self of the reader and the characters in the stories.

However, while O'Connor's orphans are thus distanced as other from the self of the reader, they simultaneously act as an *unheimlich* double for the reader in the same way that Easter acts as *unheimlich* double for Nina, recalling desires and fears that are not as uncommon as the actions by which they are revealed. This is especially true in light of the clear Christian overtones of O'Connor's stories. In "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away*, O'Connor capitalizes on the orphan's role as representative of all humanity that is highlighted in the theological narrative interpretation of orphan story structure outlined in Chapter Two. In this interpretation, trauma functions in orphan stories in the same way that the biblical fall and consequent incapacity to "fully know and live the moral good" functions in the Christian metanarrative (Jeffrey and Maillet 71). In other words, as the orphaned child experiences a fractured relationship with her parents, thereby suffering varying degrees of trauma, so the human experiences a fractured relationship with God, thereby suffering the consequences of moral and natural evil. In the same way, the orphaned characters in "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away* provide a magnified view of the universal human condition as understood by O'Connor's Catholic faith. In this section, I will argue that O'Connor's stories present the symptoms of the trauma of orphanhood as indicating the fallen condition of the orphaned characters, from which they are redeemed through encounters with divine mercy that bring about partial but genuine spiritual healing in the orphans by causing them to recognize their dependence and accept their subordinate role. Through this process, the stories create an

unheimlich experience for the readers, warning them of “THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY” (O’Connor, *Violent* 242) by allowing them to see themselves otherwise in the orphaned characters in the same way that Nina sees herself otherwise in Easter.

For both Nelson and Tarwater, the psychological trauma of orphanhood magnifies their fallen condition. Like Easter and the other orphaned characters in Moon Lake, both Nelson and Tarwater live very much as orphans, with no trust in others and an insistence on their own independence and power. These are undoubtedly symptoms of trauma, especially the trauma of orphanhood. The damaged trust noted by Erickson as a typical consequence of traumatic experience is common to the orphaned experience, and often leads, as van der Kolk explains, to a variety of psychological disorders, including “separation anxiety disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, phobic disorders, PTSD, and ADHD” (“Developmental” 406).

The inclusion of oppositional defiant disorder in this list is especially relevant to O’Connor’s orphans. According to DSM-5, oppositional defiant disorder is “a pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness” (462). In order to be diagnosed with the disorder, a person must exhibit at least four symptoms from the following list:

Angry/Irritable Mood:

1. Often loses temper.
2. Is often touchy or easily annoyed.
3. Is often angry and resentful.

Argumentative/Defiant Behavior

4. Often argues with authority figures or, for children and adolescents, with adults.
5. Often actively defies or refuses to comply with requests from authority figures or with rules.
6. Often deliberately annoys others.
7. Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior.

Vindictiveness

8. Has been spiteful or vindictive at least twice within the past 6 months.
(462)

Several of these behaviors are evident in orphaned Nelson and Tarwater, who are characterized by blatant insistence on their own autonomy and power over and against the authority of their elders.

While Nelson and Tarwater's oppositional-defiant behaviors can be traced to their experience of the trauma of orphanhood, O'Connor clearly connects those behaviors with the sinful actions that are characteristic of humanity in the postlapsarian world. Though a short temper, opposition to authority, blaming of others, and a spiteful or vindictive attitude are clearly symptoms of a psychological disorder that is often the result of the trauma of orphanhood, O'Connor's Catholic faith understands them also as sinful actions that estrange the performer from communion with and joy in God. This attitude toward oppositional behavior is evident in both "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away*, where Nelson and Tarwater's actions and personal narrative of individual power are treated as lies from which the characters must be rescued by the terrible speed of divine mercy.

The connection between symptoms of the trauma of orphanhood and sinful actions is evident in "The Artificial Nigger" primarily in the narcissistic pride that is displayed by the orphaned Nelson. The boy is characterized early in the story as "a child who was never satisfied until he had given an impudent answer" (250), who is proud of his birth in the city, and who has a high opinion of his own intelligence (251). When Mr. Head awakes to find his ten-year-old grandson preparing breakfast—at three-thirty in the morning—he notes that "his entire figure suggested satisfaction at having arisen before Mr. Head" (251). Even

the boy's facial features indicate that he has a high opinion of his own understanding: "the boy's look was ancient, as if he knew everything already and would be pleased to forget it" (251).

Though these early descriptions are provided by a narrator who is clearly voicing the thoughts and opinions of Mr. Head, the child's behavior and conversation during the early part of the story confirm this description as at least partially accurate. The very fact that he is awake and preparing breakfast at such an early hour suggests that Nelson depends upon and asserts his own abilities over and against those of his grandfather; rather than taking the role of dependent child and allowing his grandfather to fill the role of responsible adult, Nelson reverses the roles and insists on his own abilities. The first conversation between Mr. Head and Nelson in the action of the story confirms the boy's impudence, as he avoids his grandfather's assertion of his lack of knowledge by noting, "You wasn't up very early" (252), and answers them by reminding the old man that he had lived in the city before (252). Even after Nelson begins early in their trip to understand "[f]or the first time in his life . . . that his grandfather was indispensable to him" (257), he still repeats that he was born in the city (read: that he is superior to his grandfather in having roots in a place of superior cultural and technological prowess; 259), and blames his grandfather for the difficulties of their visit that result from getting lost in the city and having lost their lunch (261). Though Nelson "often argues with authority figures" (*Diagnostic* 462), insisting on his knowledge and ability, he is equally quick to "blame others for his . . . mistakes" (462). Regardless of the situation, Nelson insists on his own superiority and moral purity, placing the blame always on his grandfather.

While Nelson's behaviors are similar to those exhibited by children suffering the consequences of the trauma of orphanhood, it is plain that they are meant to be read not as the consequences of psychological trauma in the life of an innocent, guiltless child, but rather as sinful behaviors manifested by a fallen human being. This is particularly evident in the clear connection between the stubbornly independent Nelson and his narcissistic grandfather, Mr. Head. The first description of the features of the two clearly connects them physically: "They were grandfather and grandson but they looked enough alike to be brothers and brothers not too far apart in age, for Mr. Head had a youthful expression by daylight, while the boy's look was ancient" (251). Their conversations, too, demonstrate shared narcissism as they both equally insist on their knowledge and ability, and thus authority, over and against that of the other. This, as Thomas F. Haddox writes, "should not be read as evidence of a genuine opposition between grandfather and grandson, but as confirmation of an essential similarity that their isolation has produced" (10). While this statement misses the mark in understanding that there is no real opposition between Nelson and his grandfather, it is correct in reading the conversations between grandfather and grandson as revealing the similarities between the two characters. In doubling Mr. Head in his grandson, the story paints Nelson's trauma-related oppositional defiant behaviors as distinctly sinful, not merely psychological. The narcissistic behaviors of the grandfather cannot be excused as merely psychological, and therefore neither can the narcissistic behaviors of the grandson. Both are guilty of the cardinal sin of pride and are therefore in need of redemption.

Moreover, Nelson's pride serves to magnify that of his grandfather in that the insistent narcissism of the child is more obvious and out of place even than that of his elder. A big head is more incongruous on the shoulders of a child than of an old man. Thus, while the story is primarily about Mr. Head and his transition from pride to partial but genuine humility, Nelson acts as the old man's *unheimlich* double, revealing in the absurdity of his own independence and pride the equal absurdity of his grandfather's narcissism. In that sense, Nelson's orphanhood magnifies Mr. Head's universally human sinful condition, presenting it to view not only as a distasteful, impolite tendency, but as truly despicable and as necessitating profound change.

Like "The Artificial Nigger," *The Violent Bear It Away* also connects trauma and sin in the actions of orphaned Francis Marion Tarwater. In this case, however, the novel takes the relation even farther than it is taken in the short story. Like Nelson, Tarwater is defiant in relation to authority figures, exhibiting symptoms of oppositional defiant disorder. "Spiteful and vindictive" are perhaps the most accurate words to describe the fourteen-year-old boy during what Giannone calls his "week's rampage of scorning the dead, pyromania, blasphemy, murdering his young cousin, being raped, wandering, hungering, thirsting, and setting a final conflagration to assert ownership of Powderhead, Tennessee" ("Dark Night" 22).

Horrific as these actions and experiences are, Tarwater's behavior is not without grounds, especially given his oft-repeated traumatic past. Early in the novel, the narrator explains that Tarwater "knew two complete histories, the history of the world, beginning with Adam, and the history of the schoolteacher, beginning with his mother, old Tarawter's own and only sister who had run

away from Powderhead when she was eighteen years old and had become—the old man said he would mince no words, even with a child—a whore” (57). The latter of these histories has a profound influence on the boy, as it directly affects his understanding of himself by placing his identity and significance in his horrific beginnings. The boy was born to an unwed mother in a car accident that killed her and her parents. When Tarwater’s father heard of his mother’s death, he committed suicide, leaving the infant to the care of his uncle Rayber. Rayber in his turn abandoned Tarwater to Mason after the old man kidnapped the baby. From that time, Tarwater had been raised by the ornery old man, who taught him all that he knew and prophesied of him that he would be a prophet to burn clean Rayber’s eyes (76).

This history understandably affects Tarwater’s view of himself and his significance. The narrator explains that the boy “was very proud that he had been born in a wreck. He had always felt that it set his existence apart from the ordinary one and he had understood from it that the plans of God for him were special” (41). Though Tarwater thus consciously recognizes his birth to be an indication of his own significance, it is impossible that Mason’s descriptions of how he had been born “out of the womb of a whore” and “was a bastard” not have some negative impact on the boy’s understanding of himself (41). Indeed, the juxtaposition of his roles as both important in his divine calling and unalterably tainted by his objectionable origins could itself be an explanation of the violence of the boy’s actions in attempting to discover his identity apart from that bestowed by his great-uncle.

Given Tarwater’s history, then, it is fair to understand him as suffering the consequences of the trauma of orphanhood. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that a

child born in a fatal accident, abandoned unintentionally and intentionally by his closest relatives, and raised by an old man who constantly reminded him that his mother was a whore and that he, though a bastard, was called to the high and difficult occupation similar to that of the Old Testament prophets would not exhibit symptoms of trauma. Tarwater, “a child of traumatic violence” (Ciuba 65), responds to his world as such, exhibiting the oppositional-defiant behaviors so commonly found in children who have failed to form an affectional, trusting bond with a parent or parent figure at a young age.

These behaviors are evident throughout the novel, particularly in the stranger / friend who haunts Tarwater throughout the story. This figure appears frequently, viewed by the boy with varying degrees of familiarity and always voicing the worst of his implicit and explicit thoughts and opinions. The stranger first appears when Tarwater exits the cabin after his great-uncle’s death to begin digging the old man’s grave. Tarwater declares aloud his intention to move the barbed wire fence in the middle of the patch of corn before he does anything else. He notices “The voice”—his own voice—“was loud and strange and disagreeable” (12). This “loud stranger’s disagreeable voice” continues inside the boy’s head, taking on a life of its own (13). As the stranger becomes more insistent, Tarwater grows more and more comfortable with him and with the ideas that he presents. At first the voice is referred to as “the stranger,” until he asserts Tarwater’s power over his own life and ability to dictate his own destiny by reminding him, “You ain’t a baby now” (38). At this point he is called Tarwater’s “friend” for the first time (38). A few pages later, after a litany of imprecations against the “crazy” old man and (self-)pitying statements about Tarwater’s own situation (44), he becomes Tarwater’s “kind friend” (46). Before

the boy drowns Bishop, the voice is described as that of his “mentor” (215). Tarwater gradually accepts the stranger’s words, increasingly understands the horror of his own situation, and grows in the belief that he must deny his upbringing and defame his uncle in order to live a fulfilled and mentally stable life.

This denial is first exhibited when Tarwater burns his great-uncle’s home and, he believes, his body. This dishonoring of the dead is one of the most horrific and blatant acts of vindictive resistance to his great-uncle in the novel, demonstrating Tarwater’s oppositional-defiant tendencies by directly and insistently going against the old man’s desire to be buried in anticipation of the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. As Tarwater digs Mason’s grave, he remembers his great-uncle’s insistence on being buried, with or without the coffin he had built, even if the boy has to roll him down the stairs to the spot he had selected. When Tarwater suggests that he go for help to his uncle Rayber, Mason’s estranged nephew, so that he can “tend to you” (15), Mason is outraged: “He’d burn me . . . He’d have me cremated in an oven and scatter my ashes” (15). This thought is horrific to the old man because it indicates that his nephew “don’t believe in the Resurrection, he don’t believe in the Last Day” (16). Mason sees cremation as directly opposed to his fervently held beliefs in the Christian hope of resurrection, and therefore insists on burial. Thus, Tarwater’s attempt to burn his great-uncle’s body is not only a rejection of his great-uncle himself, but also an active rejection of the old man’s beliefs. As he boasts to Rayber when he arrives in town, “My great-uncle is dead and burnt, just like you would have burnt him yourself!” (87). In performing this action, Tarwater openly

resists his great-uncle's desire to be buried, aligning himself with his uncle, who has always been presented to the child as eternally lost.

In thus identifying Tarwater's actions as performed in open rebellion against his uncle's Christian beliefs, *The Violent Bear It Away*, like "The Artificial Nigger," equates the traumatic effects of Tarwater's orphanhood with his fallen condition and inclination toward moral evil. Though Tarwater's actions are not without psychological cause, the novel clearly presents them as not only despicable in themselves, but awful in their rejection of the Christian metanarrative. Because this is the case, it is appropriate to read Tarwater's actions as indicating not only an othering experience of trauma, but also an alienation from and resistance to God that links him closely with O'Connor's understanding of the fallen, universal human self. As Giannone writes of O'Connor's works, "Throughout her fiction, unbelief is not an evolved intellectual position. Rather, unbelief is an event, a reaction against belief or custom that is untenable, undesirable, or untrue to one's willful experience of the world" ("Dark Night" 24). This certainly describes Tarwater, whose unbelief is plainly exhibited in his reaction against every aspect of the historical identity that his uncle has given him.

Because the stories thus equate the symptoms of trauma with sinful actions, "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away* put their protagonists in a position of need from which they can be rescued only by divine mercy. Unlike Easter, who breaks the structural pattern of orphan stories by performing her Act of Imagination without the assistance or sanction of a compassionate audience, both Nelson and Tarwater are clearly dependent on the

triune God⁸ for assistance in the Act of Imagination that enables them to overcome their sinful/traumatic past. More specifically, both Nelson and Tarwater require an act of divine mercy⁹ in order to overcome their past and accept their position as dependent and subordinate beings. Through this merciful action, the orphaned boys experience the partial but genuine spiritual healing that, according to the economy of these stories, is necessary for their final restoration.

Significantly, the acts of divine mercy that O'Connor's stories typically employ come in paradoxical, often horrific ways. This fact is important to both of O'Connor's orphan stories, particularly in light of Nelson and Tarwater's suffering from the trauma of orphanhood. "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away* do not deny that the boys are in situations that are far from ideal as a result of their orphanhood, even though they present those situations in terms that are bland and at times humorous. However, in the economy of the stories, the boys' orphaned souls are more important than their orphaned bodies,

⁸ According to the theological narrative interpretation of orphan stories, the triune God fulfills the structural actions of Companion and Sanctioning Figure, both of which roles are important in aiding the Orphan in entering the Community.

⁹ The presence of mercy is significant in each of these stories, especially in its relation to judgment. For example, Mr. Head recognizes his dependence on God for redemption at the moment that he realizes that "[t]he speed of God's justice was only what he expected for himself" (267). Mr. Head recognizes that he has sinned, and therefore deserves to be punished for his wrongdoing. However, later in the story he twice experiences "an action of mercy" (269) rather than of justice, in both instances bringing reconciliation with his grandson and ultimately with God. Similarly, toward the end of *The Violent Bear It Away*, Tarwater receives and submits to his call from the Lord to "GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY" (242). Earlier in the novel, Mason explains the boy's prophetic call: "The Lord is preparing a prophet with fire in his hand and eye and the prophet is moving toward the city with his warning. The prophet is coming with the Lord's message. 'Go warn the children of God,' saith the Lord, 'of the terrible speed of justice'" (60). These changes from justice to mercy indicate that, while both Mr. Head and Mason are right in their sense of the need for retributive action, that retributive action often proves restorative rather than punitive. Ultimately mercy triumphs over judgment, even in the horrific moments of life.

and therefore the stories prioritize spiritual healing over psychological healing, even when that healing comes through situations that would more than likely cause additional trauma. The movement of the stories and the way that they substitute “mercy” for “judgment” suggests that even their truly horrific events are meant to be read as merciful inasmuch as they lead the characters to admit their dependence on and subordination to God, and thereby to experience the spiritual healing that the stories hold to be of utmost importance.¹⁰

The salvific, healing movement of mercy is evident in “The Artificial Nigger” in a form not too horrific and not too pointed. While Mr. Head explicitly recognizes the “action of mercy” first at the feet of the lawn ornament that gives the story its title and then again when he and his grandson alight at the train platform (269),¹¹ the action of mercy toward Nelson occurs in a more subtle

¹⁰ In recognizing the mercy that is thus inherent in even the grotesque moments of O’Connor’s stories, we can understand the paradigm in her work as sympathizing with the traumatic nature of orphanhood while also maintaining a strong sense of the sinfulness of the actions performed as a result. This is evident for both Nelson and Tarwater, who experience in different ways the terrible speed of mercy, whereby they receive the spiritual healing that is of utmost importance by allowing them to situate their own stories in that of the gospel.

¹¹ It is worth noting here that critics disagree as to the effectiveness of O’Connor’s presentation of Mr. Head’s redemption. Some read the story as accomplishing the task that O’Connor proposed in a letter when she wrote, “What I had in mind to suggest with the artificial nigger . . . was the redemptive quality of the Negro’s suffering for all of us” (qtd. in Giannone, “Artificial” 6). Giannone is one such critic, arguing that in the moment at which the Heads encounter the lawn ornament,

Sorrow has twisted all three bodies out of shape, chiseled away differences in race and years to form one ageless figure of hardship. Adversity forges a communal tie that contentment does not make. The chastened white man and boy see their need for rescue in the artificial version of the black man they helped to oppress. Mr. Head and Nelson must be saved from their idea of being superior, good men. The scapegoat points the way. It exposes the wounds received from their displaced suffering. Grace, in their condition, allows them to experience the guilt they have repressed. Such is the direction of retribution. (12-13)

However, other critics suggest that the story only enforces the racism it purportedly seeks to undermine. For example, Haddox writes, “Viewed from the plane of Christian compassion, one can see in the story’s final epiphany a message that dissolves racial differences, but this message is, precisely, artificial. Rather than show the results of a more genuine racial overcoming . . . O’Connor stops with a heavy-handed symbolic, artificial reconciliation and then allows her protagonists to retreat to the smug comfort of their all-white rural country” (15). For the purposes of this argument, while it is worth noting these differences in interpretation, it is more important

manner. It begins on the train as he and his grandfather travel to town. After they have visited the dining car, Nelson realizes that “the old man would be his only support in the strange place they were approaching. He would be entirely alone in the world if he were ever lost from his grandfather” (257). This realization makes him “wan[t] to take hold of Mr. Head’s coat and hold on like a child” (257). This comment is remarkable because Nelson *is* a child. At ten years old, he is not yet so grown up that clinging to his grandfather would be entirely out of place. The fact that he considers it to be so unnatural is yet another example of his insistent, orphaned independence. Having experienced the trauma of orphanhood, Nelson has been psychologically conditioned to avoid attaching himself to his grandfather, and it is only in experiencing an unfamiliar situation that he begins to recognize his need. The fact that he finds himself wanting to take hold of his grandfather reveals that mercy is working through new and strange circumstances to show him his dependence.

A few paragraphs later, when the train approaches its first stop, Nelson is startled into a fuller realization of his need for his grandfather. The narrator explains, “For the first time in his life, he understood that his grandfather was indispensable to him” (257). This statement is once again remarkable. That the child realizes now “for the first time in his life” (257) that he needs his grandfather reveals how independently confident he has been in his abilities, and thus how blind to his own childhood powerlessness. The strangeness of Nelson’s surroundings begins the process of spiritual healing from a false sense of independence caused by his orphanhood, revealing the inaccuracy of the story

to understand that both Nelson and Mr. Head experience in this moment an action of mercy that brings real, if partial, change to the lives of each.

he has told himself of his ability and putting him in a position to retell the story of his life in light of his need.

Again, the work of divine mercy is evident in Nelson's encounter with the African-American woman in town.¹² After wandering the streets for some time, Nelson recognizes their need for direction and seeks help from the only source that offers: a black woman who is standing on the porch of a nearby house. In encountering the woman, orphaned Nelson experiences a sense of longing for the security and comfort provided by the mother: "He suddenly wanted her to reach down and pick him up and draw him against her and then he wanted to feel her breath on his face. He wanted to look down and down and down into her eyes while she held him tighter and tighter and tighter. He had never had such a feeling before" (262). This feeling is similar to Nelson's previous recognition of the importance of his grandfather both in that it reveals his need for parental protection and comfort, and in that it is the first time that he has recognized this need—in this case, the need for maternal love. Orphaned Nelson had not known his need for a mother figure, just as he had not known his need for his grandfather. In encountering the woman, Nelson once again experiences

¹² This encounter has elicited much critical conversation, and the woman herself has generally been understood in two ways. First, some critics see the woman as sexualized by Nelson in a moment of erotic attraction to her physical body. Edward Strickland even goes so far as to suggest that "she may be more specifically a prostitute, displaying her wares at midday in a skin-tight pink dress" (456). Others read the woman as an image of the mother, and Nelson's attraction to her as a movement toward "the security of the mother-figure's womb" (Goss 39). Doreen Fowler pulls both of these images together, reading the woman as "a figure from myth and psychoanalytic theory: the image of the phallic or preoedipal mother" (25). Given Nelson's status as orphaned, it is most reasonable to read the woman as a mother figure—or, as Ralph Wood suggests, as a Madonna figure, to whom Nelson is drawn by "an instinctive sense that this must be what the mother of God would be like . . . that there's some kind of accepting, embracing love of God that has this maternal quality that he's never known" (Wood).

the action of mercy revealing his dependence, causing him to rewrite his story in accord with reality so as to admit his need.

The climactic action of mercy in Nelson's movement toward dependence comes after he has been denied by his grandfather. For several pages after Mr. Head denies that he knows his grandson, Nelson follows his grandfather at a distance, full of righteous indignation at the old man's action. The narrator explains that "his mind had frozen around his grandfather's treachery as if he were trying to preserve it intact to present at the final judgment" (267). A few pages later, when Mr. Head receives directions to the station and seeks to rejoice with his grandson that they know the way, Nelson remains impassive: "The child was standing about ten feet away, his face bloodless under the grey hat. His eyes were triumphantly cold. There was no light in them, no feeling, no interest. He was merely there, a small figure, waiting. Home was nothing to him" (268). While the last statement may well be another free-indirect assessment of Nelson's attitude via Mr. Head, the description suggests a psychological withdrawal that is perhaps deeper than any that has come before. As Nelson has experienced movements of mercy allowing him to see his dependence throughout the day, he has become more aware of his need for his grandfather. Thus, when his grandfather denies him, Nelson is given a greater blow than any he has consciously received before. Like Tom, whose traumatic detachment increases after he has experienced some degree of communal healing, Nelson's distance from his grandfather is at its greatest after he has recognized his need.

Given that context, the encounter with the lawn ornament is immensely significant not only as an action of mercy toward Mr. Head, but also as quietly pointing Nelson toward divine mercy as the source of comfort and security that

he requires. The figure, which acts as familiar-unfamiliar double to both Nelson and Mr. Head in appearing neither young nor old and in its “wild look of misery” (268), reveals to both characters their own condition. Standing as “some great mystery, some monument to another’s victory that brought them both together in their common defeat,” the figure “disolv[es] their differences like an action of mercy” (269). In seeing their mutual defeat, grandfather and grandson are reconciled to each other. Though neither is perfected by this recognition, each receives genuine spiritual healing leading to genuine psychological and relational healing as they realize their own need and begin the process of rewriting their falsely narcissistic story of personal independence to take into account the necessity of mercy from God and, in Nelson’s case, of protection and comfort from his grandfather.

It is worth taking a moment here to recognize the racial component of Nelson’s merciful encounters. Both the black woman and the lawn ornament, and to some degree the moment on the train, help Nelson to realize his dependence in the context of interracial encounters. Many critics argue that Nelson’s dependence in these instances reinforces racist norms, and thus that the story fails in O’Connor’s purported intention of sympathetic representation of the African American community. For example, Fiondella interprets the statue not as bringing redemption, but as a place where grandfather and grandson can be united in projecting racist stereotypes:

Transformed by the subjunctive into a ‘monument to another’s victory,’ it seems to triumph over abandonment and reunite them. In fact, mutual projection of misery has driven them back into narcissistic identification, and they have become mirror-images, interchangeable . . . The ‘nigger’ is finally ‘artificial’ because it represents a type of signification that permits any subject, including readers, to exchange self-knowledge for a more desirable representation and to act on that basis in reality (126; 128).

Haddox writes of the artificiality of the story's attempt to dissolve racial difference, arguing that "Rather than show the results of a more genuine racial overcoming—which would involve actual human beings instead of a statue—O'Connor stops with a heavy-handed symbolic, artificial reconciliation and then allows her protagonists to retreat to the smug comfort of their all-white rural country" (15). Jeanne Perrault similarly argues that the trip to Atlanta is a trip to educate Nelson in white male patriarchy, suggesting that grandfather and grandson are reconciled by race in that are unified in their white maleness, though not in any other connection, at the end of the novel. And Jennie J. Joiner also sees the journey to town as a point of education in white male patriarchy, arguing that part of that process is putting Nelson in his place as perpetual child/slave to Mr. Head's father/master.

While these critics are correct in identifying the education in racism that occurs in the Heads' journey to town, we must recognize at the same time how Nelson's encounter with the black woman informs this interpretation. For Nelson, at least, this encounter with an "actual human being" has an effect similar to that experienced by both himself and his grandfather in the encounter with the lawn ornament. Thus, even while there is a sense in which Nelson is being educated in racism through his journey to town, it is more important that he is being educated in need, and that that need is at one point revealed by an African-American woman who exposes his need for a mother/Madonna figure. In that moment in particular, Nelson is put in a position of subordination to a racial other, as "the black woman is in the position of agency, controlling the communication with the boy and clearly amused by the exchange" (Perrault

403). Though Nelson's reactions to her may be self-focused and suggest "the possibility of (white not black) spiritual healing" (406), given his status as orphan and the way that he denies his dependence, even this acknowledgement of need that can be met only by another human being is significant. Thus, as Fowler argues, the meaning of the story is found in the deconstruction of the word "nigger" as a racist slur, created by white culture but not descriptive of the people it is meant to label: "the word, *nigger*, a term used to revile the racial other, is artificial, that is, a social construction, a fiction invented by patriarchal culture to enforce otherness and thereby to make possible the 'high estate' of the white male" (22). In other words, the story emphasizes the artificiality of racial slurs, undermining the racist attitudes of mid-century southern culture. Nelson's encounter with the African American woman confirms this interpretation by enforcing his divinely merciful education in need over and against his humanly limited education in racist attitudes.

Moreover, it is important not to write off the change that the characters undergo because they still exhibit racist attitudes. There is no doubt that Mr. Head's blatant attempt to train his grandson in racist attitudes is problematic. However, change does happen in both Mr. Head and Nelson, and that change is good, even if it does not extend to a full recognition of the problems of racial segregation. Thus, though Nelson and Mr. Head do become and remain racist even in their encounters with reconciling African American figures, we cannot deny that they experience the action of mercy. As James Goss suggests, Mr. Head's statement about the statue as indication that "[h]e is justified but not sanctified" (42)—that is, he has experienced an effective action of mercy that has removed his legal blame, but has not yet been made morally perfect. The story

does not pretend that the characters have been perfected by their trip to the city,¹³ so we can recognize the story as presenting the power of divine mercy even in the presence of continued sin in the form of problematic racist attitudes.

While the healing action of mercy for Nelson comes gradually throughout his story, bringing him to an awareness of his dependence on his grandfather, the healing action of mercy, or at least awareness of that action, occurs for Tarwater only at the end of the novel. After the boy has performed his ultimate act of rebellion/submission in drowning and baptizing Bishop, Tarwater experiences a series of horrific events through which he finally recognizes that his attempt to escape his great-uncle and his prophetic call has failed. In the hours following his murder of his cousin, Tarwater becomes increasingly aware of his gnawing hunger, but is unable to keep food down. He throws caution to the wind and takes drink spiked with narcotics from a man in a violet car who then rapes the unconscious boy and leaves him in the bushes. When Tarwater realizes that this last event has taken place in the woods near Powderhead, he makes his way to the clearing, experiencing intense conflict between triumph over his actions and a dawning recognition of the horror of the path he has chosen. Though he sees that “the clearing was burned free of all that had ever oppressed him,” he observes it “as if he had no further power to move” (237). This last indicates the conflict that Tarwater experiences as he begins to recognize his subordinate position: he sees the burnt clearing as a symbol of his

¹³ Goss interprets the double action of mercy, first in the lawn ornament and later after grandfather and grandson are safely at the station, as reflecting Catholic ideas of justification and sanctification (the latter of which is typically accomplished by the sacraments, but which can be achieved by a recognition of helplessness such as that Mr. Head experiences after he gets off the train home).

power, but at the same time experiences extreme powerlessness. He begins to understand that, though he has attempted to escape from his traumatic past by writing his own story, in doing so he has proven to be subject to the story of his need for Christ that his great-uncle had told.

While any realization of his subjection to an externally dictated narrative has previously caused him to react in opposition, Tarwater now begins to react against his oppositional feelings, accepting his subordinate, dependent position. As he looks out over the clearing, his "friend" appears, whispering triumph in his ear, reminding him, "Ever since you first begun to dig the grave, I've stood by you, never left your side . . . You're not ever going to be alone again" (237). Rather than listening to his friend's voice, Tarwater reacts against it: "The boy shuddered convulsively. The presence was as pervasive as an odor, a warm sweet body of air encircling him, a violet shadow hanging around his shoulders" (237). Tarwater clearly associates his friend with the stranger who had raped him, and recognizes in the voice that he had been following the evil that had overtaken him a few hours before. As the boy demonstrates his rejection of the rebellious attitude that he been cultivating by setting fire to the tree he had been standing at, "his spirits rose as he saw that his adversary would soon be consumed in the roaring blaze" (238). Tarwater begins to rebel against his rebellion, appalled by the presence of the stranger / friend / mentor whom he had to this point followed.

This first recognition of the evil of the path he has followed leads Tarwater to reinterpret his experience in light of his dawning knowledge of his need for God. When he reaches the clearing in which stand the remains of the house that he had burned, Tarwater "felt a crater opening inside him, and stretching out

before him, surrounding him, he saw the clear grey spaces of that country where he had vowed never to set foot" (239). One of the many doctrines that his great-uncle had insisted upon, and that Tarwater had violently rejected, was that of Christ as the bread of life. When the old man had spoken to the boy of Christ in this way, Tarwater was filled with "the certain, undeniable knowledge that he was not hungry for the bread of life" (21). Indeed, Tarwater "was secretly afraid . . . that [his great-uncle's hunger] might be passed down, might be hidden in the blood and might strike some day in him and then he would be torn by hunger like the old man, the bottom split out of his stomach so that nothing would heal or fill it but the bread of life" (21). Though he had dreaded this insatiable hunger throughout his life, as he recognizes the evil and emptiness of his own narrative, Tarwater understands that he, too, experiences hunger for the bread of life.

This recognition is finally driven home, and Tarwater experiences final defeat and ultimate victory, when he sees in the clearing a grave, "a dark rough cross" marking its head (240):

The boy remained standing there, his still eyes reflecting the field the Negro had crossed. It seemed to him no longer empty but peopled with a multitude. Everywhere, he saw dim figures seated on the slope and as he gazed he saw that from a single basket the throng was being fed. His eyes searched the crowd for a long time as if he could not find the one he was looking for. Then he saw him. The old man was lowering himself to the ground. When he was down and his bulk had settled, he leaned forward, his face turned toward the basket, impatiently following its progress toward him. The boy too leaned forward, aware at last of the object of his hunger, aware that it was the same as the old man's and that nothing on earth would fill him. His hunger was so great that he could have eaten all the loaves and fishes after they were multiplied. (241)

As this vision fades, Tarwater sees before him, "rising and spreading in the night, a red-gold tree of flame" (242), and "hear[s] the command. GO WARN THE CHILDREN OF GOD OF THE TERRIBLE SPEED OF MERCY" (242). After running from and

denying all that his fanatic great-uncle had taught him, Tarwater at last hears the divine injunction, not to prophesy justice, but to warn of the speed of mercy. As mercy had to take horrific form in order to change Tarwater's narrative so that he accepts not just the specialness of his traumatic birth but the primacy of his hunger for Christ, so he is now called to warn others of that mercy—to call them to retell their own stories in light of divine calling in order to escape the terrible speed that mercy takes.

In receiving and submitting to this call, Tarwater admits defeat, accepting his narrational dependence on and subordination to God. As Carter Martin writes, "In its simplest structural form, the novel represents the protagonist's resistance to beauty and baptism, the acceptance and administration of baptism of the child Bishop by water and drowning, and the acceptance of his own baptism by violation and fire and the consequent mission of prophecy in the city" (155). In this simple structure of the novel, the boy has for his whole life, and particularly since his great-uncle's death, actively rejected the old man's story of the world and of his place in it, demonstrating orphaned attitudes in insisting on his own autonomy. Tarwater has fought against Mason's biblical stories of dependence, writing himself only into those that could suggest the significance of the one called. Though his horrific experiences during the week after Mason's death, and particularly on the day of his return to Powderhead, Tarwater is humbled by the terrible speed of divine mercy working in his horrific circumstances. This, in turn, causes him to admit his limitations and his need for Christ, the bread of life, as giving spiritual fulfillment. As Ciuba writes, in accepting his prophetic vocation, Tarwater "will find his identity neither as the baby born in the wreck nor as the conflicted child of adoptive fathers who let violence bear themselves

away. Rather, the orphan will be reborn into a new form of sonship. Like his listeners in the sleeping city, Tarwater will live as one of the children of God" (83). In submitting to the call to tell of the terrible speed of mercy, Tarwater writes himself as sidekick to Christ's superhero, accepting the subordinate role by admitting his own need for a savior-protagonist.

In making this move, *The Violent Bear It Away* puts Tarwater into the universally human position of the sinner in need of a savior, turning Tarwater into a mirror for the reader in the same way that Nelson acts as a mirror for Mr. Head. As the theological narrative interpretation of orphan story structure understands the Orphan to represent all of fallen humanity in their alienation from God, so these stories present Nelson and Tarwater in their orphanhood as grotesquely magnified but accurate images of humanity left to itself in a fallen world. In placing the characters in the position of the orphan, the stories distance the characters from the self of the readers, maintaining a degree of difference that allows the reader to accept the horrific attitudes and actions of the characters as something that belongs to the other. However, in painting them as in need of and finally receptive to the terrible speed of divine mercy, the stories turn the character from a distanced other to a mirror of the self, suggesting the reader's need for divine mercy and warning of its terrible speed. As "The Artificial Nigger," though primarily about Mr. Head and his transition from pride to a partial but genuine humility, presents Nelson as the old man's *unheimlich* double, revealing in the absurdity of the boy's independence and pride the equal absurdity of his grandfather's similar characteristics, so both this story and *The Violent Bear It Away*, though "about" the characters in the book, present their

orphaned characters as the readers' *unheimlich* doubles, revealing their own need for the redemptive movement of divine mercy.

In recognizing the mercy that is thus inherent in the grotesque moments of O'Connor's stories, we can understand the paradigm of her work as sympathizing with the traumatic nature of orphanhood while also maintaining a strong sense of the sinfulness of the actions performed as a result. This is evident for both Nelson and Tarwater, who experience in different ways the terrible speed of mercy, whereby they receive partial but genuine spiritual healing—the kind that is, in O'Connor's economy, of utmost importance. As the orphaned boys perform narrational Acts of the Imagination that admit their position of dependence and subordinate their stories as secondary to the Christian story of Christ's supremacy, they overcome the trauma of orphanhood and are reunited with the Heavenly Father, separation from whom has caused their distress. In so doing, they present the othered orphaned characters as mirrors to the readers, suggesting human need for salvation from God.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I referenced two different readings of orphaned characters. In both Montgomery's novel and my response to my classmates' reading of "The Artificial Nigger," orphaned characters are recognized as other, distanced from the familial self by their experience of traumatic early-childhood abandonment. As we have seen throughout this chapter, southern gothic orphan stories capitalize on the otherness of these characters, using it to enhance the "creepy child" factor while also maintaining a degree of believability. At the same time, these stories use the othered orphan as

an *unheimlich*, familiar-unfamiliar double of the characters in the story or of the reader. The former is evident in Welty's "Moon Lake," where Nina sees herself otherwise as she attempts to enter into Easter's orphaned experience, at the same time recognizing the inherent difference between her experience and that of the orphaned girl. Similarly, in O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger" and *The Violent Bear It Away*, Nelson and Tarwater's "other" experience of the trauma of orphanhood acts as a magnifier of the "self" experience of human fallenness.

Recognizing the *unheimlich* effect of orphanhood allows us to see orphanhood as an other experience that challenges the normalcy of the biological family. Though this certainly does not mean that the biological family structure is a social or psychological evil—attachment theory in itself is enough to give the lie to such a claim—it does suggest the importance of looking outside of the biological family for ultimate belonging. The orphaned characters explored in this chapter do just that: Easter creates for herself personal narrative that suggests her significance independent of a biological family; Nelson implicitly and Tarwater explicitly come to see their significance as grounded in the Christian metanarrative rather than their familial past.

Significantly, O'Connor's stories directly challenge Easter's method of self-preservation. While Easter finds her sense of belonging in affirming her total independence from the world around her, Nelson and Tarwater are broken from the same attitude of self-narration by divine mercy which causes them to depend on and submit to their subordinate place in the Christian metanarrative. In challenging the normalcy of the biological family, O'Connor's stories maintain the necessity of participation in some sort of external narrative, and there is a

degree of finality in O'Connor's stories that comes from participation in the Christian metanarrative that is absent from Welty's story.

Regardless of the place in which the orphaned characters find their sense of ultimate belonging, acknowledging the pattern of orphanhood as *unheimlich* otherness provides a key for interpreting orphaned characters in southern gothic literature. In recognizing how Nina's realization of Easter's otherness helps her to understand the instability and potential for change in her own position and how Nelson and Tarwater's otherness helps the readers to understand their need for redemption from moral and natural evil, we see that orphanhood as otherness magnifies universally human feelings isolation and loneliness. In so doing, these stories emphasize the impossibility of perfection in individuals or societies—an emphasis proposed by Crow as one of the features of gothic literature (2). At the same time, in doubling their characters and readers in the orphaned orphans who do experience some narrational redemption, the stories suggest the potential value of narrative for all of humanity, orphaned like the characters in the stories by their various experiences. Thus, in putting all of humanity in the position of their *unheimlich* orphaned characters, southern gothic orphan stories redeem traumatic experience as providing a means of understanding the possibility of living, and thereby seeing self, otherwise.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

For the first several years after the adoption of my three younger siblings, my family operated on the assumption that they were “normal” kids, unaffected by the experiences of the first few years of their lives except in ways that could be overcome by love. Even the suggestion from other adoptive families of deeper issues was denied. My family had accepted the myth that, as Betty Jean Lifton puts it, “the adoptive family”—and specifically the adopted child—“is no different from the biological one” (4). My siblings were high-energy, yes, and didn’t like to be touched or cuddled, and there were certain behaviors that were puzzling and even disturbing, but surely if we treated them like any other kid they would eventually adjust.

Then my mom went to a seminar for adopted families in which the neurological effects of early childhood trauma were explained in detail, and things began to change. My parents started to understand that my siblings’ hyperactivity was a result of unhealthy neurological development, not just childish energy. They altered modes of discipline as they realized that the tactics that worked with my biological siblings and myself were not helpful for children who already believed themselves to be worthless. They tightened boundaries in an attempt to give my adopted siblings the security they needed in order to function well. And my siblings began to learn to regulate anxiety, attach to my parents, and understand that they did not need to be in control of their environment.

Seventeen years after the adoption, my family and I can attest to the importance of recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience. My siblings still struggle with anxiety. They still have learning disabilities that have made education extremely difficult. And they are still emotionally in their early teens, though the oldest is now in his early twenties. However, with the guidance and support that they have received from my parents and from the adoptive community of which my family is a part, they are much more stable than they would have been had my parents not realized the importance of interacting with them as children suffering from the trauma of orphanhood.

My family's story demonstrates the importance of understanding how we read the orphan experience. Before they understood the consequences of early childhood abandonment, my parents "read" my siblings as healthy children, and therefore made assumptions about how they should behave and relate, and therefore about how they should be disciplined and educated, that might be true of children who were given the requisite security for proper neurological development. When they realized the degree to which my siblings' orphanhood informed their physiological makeup, my parents were able to "read" my siblings in a way that allowed them to comfort and discipline them helpfully and appropriately, to see the real progress they made, and to aid them in functioning well as they moved into adult life. This shows that, on a real-world level, seeing orphanhood as traumatic experience changes the way we interact with and aid orphaned, adopted, and fostered children. And, more often than not, those interactions are informed by our understanding of orphanhood as it is shaped by the stories and struggles of orphaned characters in our favorite books.

Throughout this study, I have argued that recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience is essential to reading orphaned characters well. Even at a basic structural level, orphan stories illustrate what trauma and attachment theories have said of the difficulty of separation from parental attachment figures and of the importance of narration in overcoming traumatic experience. This is true in spite of the nuances of the character's gender and the setting and genre of the story, and even in cases like *The Professor's House* where the orphan is subjected to additional trauma that prevents his moving through the full course of healing. In books written for children and in those written for adults, in the fantastic land of Narnia and in the American South, in the rugged setting of the Limberlost and in the refined setting of upper-class New York, literary orphans illustrate the reality of orphanhood as traumatic experience.

As I conclude, I want to highlight and explain the significance of three features of orphanhood as traumatic experience that I have returned to throughout this study. First, recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience allows us to see how essential narrative is in coping with familial loss and integrating into a new community. In all of the stories explored in this study, we have seen the Act of the Imagination that is so important to orphan story structure demonstrated by each of the characters. For Shasta, Esmé, Freckles, Tom Outland, Easter, Nelson Head, and Francis Marion Tarwater, this imaginative act primarily takes the form of telling or learning the story of their past (function VI.a). For Sara Crewe and Lily Bart, it primarily takes the form of imagining for themselves an alternative life that is essentially different from their own (function VI.b). For Gilly Hopkins, Margaret and Helen Schlegel, and Miles Plastic, it primarily takes the form of entry into a literal or figurative imaginative

space (function VI.c). Varied as these imaginative acts may be, taken together they demonstrate the significance of narrative in the lives of literary orphans.

The importance of the imaginative act in orphan stories is noteworthy first because it informs how we read these acts in the stories themselves. If Acts of the Imagination are so consistent in orphan stories, then recognizing the presence of those acts, the shape that they take, and their effect on various characters is one important key to understanding the orphan story as such. Acknowledging the centrality of imaginative acts to orphan stories emphasizes the difficulty of the orphaned experience, and thus allows us as readers to correctly interpret the magnitude of orphaned characters' communal integration or to understand why they remain distanced from the other characters in the stories.

In addition, recognizing the Act of the Imagination informs real-world orphanhood, both for those who have not experienced that trauma and for those who have not. The variety of ways that the Act of Imagination takes place suggests several possibilities for how friends, family, therapists, and casual acquaintances can assist real-life orphans in coping with traumatic separation from their parents. For example, my siblings have participated in attachment therapy that involved guided storytelling about their lives from the womb to the present, which allowed them to integrate their experiences and form a coherent narrative in spite of the traumatic break that they have endured. This therapy has allowed them the space to accept and to tell their own stories, helped them to feel safe expressing concern about their unknown biological family members, and given them a more stable base from which to operate and to regulate their hyperactive emotions.

The significance of the imaginative act similarly suggests the value of reading orphan stories for children who have experienced the trauma of orphanhood. One of the things that my siblings have struggled with as a result of their early-childhood trauma is creativity and imagination. Where most children if left to themselves would imagine other worlds, my siblings would often spend their free time staring aimlessly into space or winding themselves up so that they could remain in their typical state of high anxiety rather than accepting a more healthy level of calm. By providing children like my siblings who struggle with the effects of the trauma of orphanhood with coherent narratives, orphan stories enable engagement in guided acts of the imagination that can help those children to tell their own stories and create their own worlds and thereby gain a degree of confidence that they would not have if they lived only in the reality of their own traumatic experience.

While the Act of the Imagination is thus important in itself, the consistency with which such acts appear and the important role that those acts play reveals the second point that I wish to highlight in this conclusion: that orphanhood is a form of otherness. This is of course true in the most straightforward sense in that these characters were raised or are being raised outside of the context of a biological family. Rather than experiencing the psychologically ideal loving biological family, orphaned characters are separated from their parents, abandoned to the often-dispassionate whims of a world that frequently sees them as a nuisance. For example, Sara is relegated to the role of household drudge, Freckles is overlooked and abused at his Chicago orphanage, and Easter and her companions are “wished on” the Morgana girls against their will (Welty 112).

In addition to this straightforward othering, orphaned characters are also othered by the psychological trauma that sets them apart from those who have been raised in the context of caring biological families. This is particularly evident when orphaned characters are fortunate enough to be formally or informally adopted into a loving family. In such cases, they often exhibit sensitivities and behaviors that would be confusing or even disturbing if exhibited by other children. For example, Gilly's intentionally manipulative behavior, Tom's reaction to Rodney's actions and to the St. Peter family, and Tarwater's insistence on his own autonomy and power set them apart from the other characters in their stories and would be inexplicable apart from a knowledge of their past. Only in understanding that they have already received a psychological wound that has weakened their ability to attach can those behaviors be adequately explained. The traumatic experience of orphanhood means that orphaned characters function differently than those who were raised by their biological parents. Thus, whether accepted or rejected by the biological familial communities of which they are a part, orphaned characters remain other, set apart from the familial self by their different experience of childhood and of family relations.

The fact that orphanhood is essentially an other experience is significant in reading literature because it allows us to understand characters and their actions appropriately. For example, by reading Nelson Head as an orphaned other, I was able to understand his role in the story while my classmates saw only that he was gothically overdrawn. In a very different case, recognizing orphanhood as otherness allows me to see Freckles not as a depiction of real-world orphanhood, but as a solidly sentimental character in a solidly sentimental novel, meant to

represent the ideal but not the reality. He is appropriate given the genre of the novel, but as a character of this genre he should not be read as a type of the real-world orphan—a mistake into which casual readers too often fall.

Similarly, orphanhood as otherness also informs our interaction with real-world orphans because it changes our understanding of the significance of separation from or abandonment by biological parents. This is important both for those who are in the process of adopting or who have adopted children, and for those who have more casual interactions with orphans, adoptees, and foster children in lower-stakes environments. The first of these is evident in my family's story. My parents adopted my siblings assuming that they would be "normal" kids with "normal" needs, but after several years they realized that treating them as "normal" was not helping them or our family. Only in recognizing them as other could they understand how to love and care for them well. Similarly, orphanhood as otherness informs lower-stakes interactions with adopted children. My siblings have had people respond to the information that they're adopted by saying, "Oh, cool! Do you remember Russia? Or your birth mom? Or life in the orphanage?" If orphanhood ranks with things like living in Canada or meeting the author of your favorite book as just one interesting experience among many, then such questions are appropriate. But orphanhood does not rank among such experience. Instead, it is one that is essentially different from those experienced by the one asking the question. Recognizing orphanhood as traumatic otherness helps up to treat the orphaned experience with the care and concern that it merits.

The third and final point to highlight here is that recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience allows us to see orphanhood as a magnifier of the human

condition. In various ways, orphanhood augments typical patterns of human experience. Orphanhood exaggerates the difficulties of growing up and learning to be an independent adult. It heightens the sense of alienation that people often feel in a world where social media and the fast pace of life makes relationships increasingly distanced and performative. It enlarges the possibility of success in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. As we watch orphaned characters learn how to operate without parental guidance and comfort, recognize the lack that separation from their biological parents has caused, and discover how to function as a part of a new community, we as familial selves can see our own comparatively small troubles played out at a larger level and thereby learn to function through our own imaginative, empathetic act.

In thus accentuating various aspects of the human experience, orphanhood magnifies both familial selfhood and familial otherness. Orphanhood magnifies familial selfhood in taking basic human struggles and blowing them up to show the possibility of triumph. At the same time, it magnifies familial otherness in focusing on the struggles and triumphs of one who has been separated from the care and comfort that family offers, thereby highlighting the fact that the orphaned character is inherently different from a member of the familial self. Because this is the case, we are left with two paradoxical propositions: that orphanhood is an other experience that we as familial selves cannot fully access, and that orphanhood magnifies certain universal elements of the human experience. Though these statements may seem to be opposed, they in fact compliment and enhance each other. Recognizing orphanhood as otherness makes its magnification of human experience so much more obvious: the orphan's experiences are not like our own but are instead an

exaggerated version of our own. On the other hand, recognizing that the orphaned experience is a magnified, exaggerated, augmented version of our own allows us to see how very different that experience is.

This point about the magnifying effect of orphanhood brings us back to the controlling question of this study, and thus to our conclusion. In Chapter One, I explained that this study arose from my dual recognition of the disjunct between real-life and literary orphaned experience and of the fact that these unrealistic characters are yet unquestionably compelling, even to those like my siblings who have experienced the traumatizing effects of separation from their biological parents. As I have shown throughout this study, though orphan stories may not always be true to life in their depictions of the orphan experience, recognizing orphanhood as a form of traumatic experience provides the key for proper interpretation of these stories. When we fail to recognize the traumatic import of orphanhood, we misinterpret the fictional stories that we read and the real-life orphaned, adopted, and fostered people whom we encounter in day-to-day life. This in turn leads to false assumptions and expectations that damage relationships with and prevent healing in the real-world orphans and adoptees with whom we interact. On the other hand, recognizing orphanhood as traumatic experience prevents us from underestimating the difficulty of orphanhood for children who have been separated from their biological parents. Moreover, such a recognition taken in conjunction with a realization of our tendency to read ourselves into orphan stories suggests the trauma that is inherent in the world around us. Though we may not have experienced the difficulties of being separated from the care and comfort of our biological parents, we resonate with orphaned characters because their situation is in a

lesser sense true of us all. And if they can overcome the seemingly insurmountable difficulties of their own stories, we are left with the hope that we, too, may find the comfort and order that they attain.

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